

Travel 6 London Wapping

Wapping is the most charming place of the old harbor of London. It is a MUST, if you like the feeling of the old commercial harbor. It has disappeared now, but still the atmosphere is there.

Travel 6 starts at Whitechapel, in the center of London and ends in Greenwich where they invented how to count the time.

Travel 6 is the most cultural tour of all.

You see Bell Foundry, old hospitals life, the poverty of the industrial workers, wharfs, Thames waters, banking center of Canary, the underpass of the Thames, and the famous Greenwich.

WAPPING, the harbor



Execution dock

This guide tour starts at White Chapel, where the famous murder Jack the Ripper was active in 1880. He was finally identified, in 2015, with the Dna-analyses.

White Chapel is now a bit boring zone, but if you take your time to look around and read the signs and inscriptions, you will feel, that this area was the real center of the Victorian industrial London and the top of the poverty of London.

You will find endless historical descriptions of this part of London, if you have eyes for these.

Let's start with White Chapel Art Gallery, just outside the Tube station.



Whitechapel Art Gallery

On the opposite site, there is a green space, a park now, but upon the time here lied a great church, St Mary Matfelon.
You can have the feeling of it, from the remains of its charming entrance.



Entrance of the disappeared, old church of St Mary Matfelon

Continue toward east on Whitechapel Road.
This is an historical road, the road that leads to East London, where cheap labour forces and industries were to find.
If you have time, you can make a long walk to Mile End. You will discover many interesting places.

Just after some few hundred steps from the disappeared church, on your right hand, you will find the entrance of the historical factory Bell Foundry. It is the oldest factory in UK.

An important consideration on London:

- Such an historical factory, as the Bell Foundry, is still here, in the centre of London, the world most famous and fashionable city.

Unbelievable.

But this is the real spirit of London.

A visit in the Foundry is free.



Entrance from Whitechapel Road



Not only church bells, but also bells to save streets from arrogant cars.

Continue toward east until you arrive to Royal London Hospital. Find its museum. A visit is worthy. You will learn how difficult live was for Londoners for only 100-200 years ago.



Entrance from Whitechapel Road

In the early 1700's deaths far exceeded births in London and other cities.

The people of London had begun to live outside the City walls: the rich settled in newly laid out squares and thoroughfares to the west, while the poor moved south over London Bridge to Southwark, to the north and in particular to the east beyond Aldgate. Alcohol abuse was a serious social problem and Gin Lane, an engraving by William Hogarth (1748) drew attention to the high consumption of gin among the working classes of London.

Immigrants settled in the area to the east of the City: Spanish and Portuguese Jews, Flemings and Huguenots from France were joined in the 1700's by Irish immigrants and Jews from Russia and Poland. Work was available in industries connected with a growing port – ironworks, lumber yards, mills, rope-making, brewing and ship-building.

The London Hospital, from its foundation in 1740 addressed itself to the health needs of this population, and within a year of its foundation had moved to the East End of the metropolis.

About the social situation of London in 1700

After the museum, walk toward south-east, cross Watney market until you arrive to Shadwell Station and continue beyond it, until you arrive to Tobacco Dock and further to Wapping.



One of London's many local, and perpetual markets, Watney market.

After Shadwell Station, there are 2 important places to visit:

- the Saint George Church, that was bombed by the Germans in 1940 and the
- famous wall painting about the protests in 1936, against the German sympathizer Mosley.



Direction to Wapping



The remains of Saint George Church, German bombs in 1940 destroyed the interior.



The mural painting of the Battle of Cable Street
(The best way to find it is from the garden of St George Church)

Then, continue down and toward Wapping.

Here you will find many interesting docks of the old London harbor.

Very, very charming places, where you will feel the power of the great history of harbor of London.



One of the many dismissed docks of the harbor of London

From Tobacco Dock, find Wapping Lane.

Take your time, enjoy the place and the environment here. The history comes inside your skin.



One of the many drawbridges over the waters, leading to wharfs

An historical and economical information:

- London harbor was NOT a huge and centralized harbor as modern harbors are. It was the sum of countless small harbors and wharfs, and they were totally privately owned.
- London's harbor was a herald of the free enterprises, not a central monopoly.
- In the 1500, London was called the city of 1000 wharfs. Every fisher build its own ship. They started as local fishers, but afterwards they went fishing more and more offshore. New territories were "fished", which was the real start of colonization and the empire.



Water leading to wharfs and canals from the Thames, near Wapping

Wapping is on the east of London, it was here in Wapping that the Thames starts deepening. This facilitated the sailing of bigger commercial ships/barges/etc. It is here around Wapping where the harbor of London lied.



The remains of an old wharf



A reconstruction of an execution dock, for piracy.
(Last execution Dec. 1830)

The cached pirates were chained to the grown of Thames and left there until 3 tides had washed over them. Then, the body was tarred "for preserving" and hung in cages along the Thames as a warning to aspirant pirates.

During the last decade, the dismissed stores have been refurbished to expensive apartments, which are residential areas for the bankers of Canary Wharf, in the nearby. You will find bankers everywhere here, because they use the river path for jogging. Very sporting people!



Promising bankers during a break from their offices in Canary

Walking alongside the left side of the Thames, you will arrive to Canary Wharf.

For 40 years, this zone was depressed and abandoned.

The government facilitated the establishment of new buildings, for new industries. It became a banking center. It turns to a very success.

The City of London could not afford to house all the needed offices. The idea of moving outside was very good and it fulfilled all the expectations.

You can spend some time in Canary Wharf. There are many interesting things to see and try.



Banking center of Canary Wharf

Continue toward Isle of Dog, which is the south part of the peninsula.

Here from Middle Age and until 1800, there were a lot of windmills. The open space in front of the Thames gave good conditions for strong winds.

Some streets or places in the zone have names like Windmill street, or Wind Wall. In 1750 there were 12 windmills here.

Difficult to imagine.



Here in 1750 stood 12 windmills, a wall of windmills.
Greenwich is on the other site of the Thames.



Keep going until you arrive at the tunnel under the Thames.



Entrance of the tunnel under the Thames, from Isle of Dogs to Greenwich.



Tunnel

After the tunnel, you arrive in Greenwich, just in front of Catty Sack. Catty Sack burned totally for few years ago, but was rebuilt.



The rebuilt Catty Sack

In Greenwich, there are many things to see, the Observatory is a Must. Visit it, even if there are a lot of school pupils from all over the world, and tourists, and crowd, crowd, crowd. Our time tourism destroys everything!

You can take the bus 188 to return to the centre of London. It drives through a beautiful sightseen.

Travel 6 is finished here