



Winning Endeavours

Exploring
the Olympic Park's
industrial past

CityHighlights Walking Tours

Walk time: 1½–2 hours

www.winningendeavours.org

Our walk starts from Pudding Mill Lane DLR station. Please note that in the period up to the opening of the Olympic Games in July 2012 and during the Crossrail project, both the station, and some or all of the route may be made inaccessible by ongoing construction works. Usually, temporary diversions and alternative routes are signposted. Walkers are advised to check Transport for London's website www.tfl.gov.uk for up-to-date travel information, especially at weekends.

It is possible to follow a largely step-free route (indications given) but, with regret, some parts of the route, especially footbridges and towpaths, are not wheelchair friendly and there is no wheelchair access to Bromley-by-Bow station. Parts of the walk also use towpaths where walking conditions may vary depending on the weather, and where care should be taken, especially with children.

Walkers may also want to extend their walk to visit nearby sites, like Victoria Park and along the Greenway. Parts of this walk follow the route of the Lea Valley walk and the Capital Ring.

On arrival at Pudding Mill Lane DLR station walk straight ahead from the station, and follow the blue-fenced route towards the Greenway. Take care of passing construction traffic.

Follow the temporary fenced route up onto Greenway and turn left keeping the new Olympic stadium to your right. Take care to keep to the left-hand pedestrian lane and avoid the right-hand cycle path.

1 The Olympic stadium, designed by architects Populous, will be the focus of the 2012 Games. It, and the other venues you can see from this point (e.g. the Aquatic Centre over to your right), occupies the area around former Carpenters Road and Marshgate Lane. Here were many small factories and warehouses, some of them dating from the start of the Industrial Revolution, one or two possibly older. This area was notable for its calico printers, dye works, soap factories and food processing plants.

Note the red steel framework of sculptor Anish Kapoor's *Orbit*, being erected to the right of the stadium which is rising to be Britain's biggest and tallest piece of public art. Not just a sculpture, *Orbit* will have a viewing platform reached by lift or by stairway, offering spectacular views across London. Approximately 1,400 tons of steel will be needed, supplied by Mittal and it's expected to be completed by December 2011.

2 You are now walking on the **Greenway** (formerly known as the 'sewer bank') which follows the line of Sir Joseph Bazalgette's Northern Outfall Sewer, still flowing under your feet. Bazalgette's intercepting sewer systems north and south of the Thames ended the practice of discharging untreated sewage into the river in the central built-up area, by moving it eastwards to a treatment works near Stratford. A magnificent pumping station was built at Abbey Mills, further along our route. Bazalgette's scheme, completed and working by 1875 finally tackled water-borne epidemics like cholera which plagued London in the 19th century. But it took the hot summer of 1858, when the smells from untreated human

waste in the Thames were so bad that the House of Commons had to suspend their sitting, for politicians to give Bazalgette's scheme the go-ahead. The Greenway is one of the designated walking routes to the Olympic Park, and was landscaped by the Adams and Sutherland practice, using reclaimed materials from the Olympic site.

3 The Greenway passes over the **Lea Navigation**, the canalised section of the river, and to your right you'll see Old Ford Locks. Notice here the new developments of residential apartments recently constructed along the river and next the Olympic site, but also notice the adjacent remains of older industrial premises, some still in use.

4 Continue along the Greenway, passing by WW2 concrete defences and a gun emplacement, called a **pill box**, because of its resemblance to drug packaging of the wartime years. Defences like these were built in the south of England in the early years of the war because of the threats of invasion. The slots or loopholes were for machine guns and allow for coverage of all angles of approach. The concrete slabs alongside the path would originally have held steel bars to hinder the enemy's transport.

5 Just before the end of the Greenway, take a right turn down a steep flight of steps into Dace Road. (Alternative step-free route: continue on to the end of the Greenway. Turn right along Wick road, keep to the right until you reach Dace Road – see map) Here you will find an area of small factory buildings, warehouses and wharves, mostly 19th and early 20th century, known as **Fish Island**, and typical of the kind of industrial buildings found across the area now occupied by the Olympic site, and examples of which you'll notice all along the remainder of our route to Three Mills.

The buildings to your left and right were **Old Ford Works**, where Percy Dalton's 'famous roasted peanuts' were produced from the 1930s (now processed in Suffolk). Today, most of these buildings are artists' studios. This area, and the adjacent area to the north around Hackney Wick, is said to house Europe's largest community of artists. No 43 Dace Road is, for example, one of the studios belonging to Bridget Riley, famous for her Op Art abstracts. In nearby Roach Road are the premises of H Forman, leading UK producers of smoked salmon, who also have a restaurant and an art gallery on the site. Pass by Crown Wharf Ironworks and Swan Wharf, noting the 19th century industrial buildings with bricked-in windows. (You can take a route here to Victoria Park, signposted)

6 Pass through a gate to reach Old Ford Lock. This is the **River Lea Navigation**. To your left this canalised section of the river takes traffic northwards to Enfield and beyond. **Cross over the lock by a footbridge.** **Reaching the towpath on the other side, turn right and follow over another footbridge.** Follow the towpath ahead towards a low bridge.

7 You are passing under the **Northern Outfall** sewer. On the other side, look back at the plaque on the sewer pipe recording the construction of the sewer by the Metropolitan Board of Works, and those principally involved, including, famously, chief engineer Sir Joseph Bazalgette. The

sewer continues to your right under the Greenway towards the Abbey Mills pumping station.

Just to your left take the path or stairs back up onto the Greenway (signposted), and turn right to retrace your steps. Take care to keep on the righthand pedestrian path.

8 On your right are piles of topsoil for the landscaping of the **Olympic Park** site. This area will eventually be a warm-up and practice area.

9 In the near distance look for the massive red brick building with tower. This is the former **Bryant and May's Fairfield Works** match factory, scene in 1888 of the famous match girls' strike. It has now been converted to residential apartments, called the Bow Quarter.

In the far distance, notice the towers of the City of London (including the Gherkin and the Heron Tower, currently the tallest). To the left of those, spot the central concrete core of The Shard at London Bridge, which when completed will be the UK's tallest building. Across to the left, you can see the cluster of towers at Canary Wharf.

10 Just beyond where you joined the Greenway you will find the bright green **Viewtube** and temporary outdoor exhibition area. You can take a break here, maybe have something to eat and drink, and, on the first floor, have an excellent view of the Olympic Site.

Retrace your steps back to Pudding Mill Lane station. On the right before the railway bridge notice the drainage plant with Victorian engineering designs etched into the concrete structure. *Before you reach the station keep to the lefthand side of the road, with the station entrance to your right and walk along Pudding Mill Lane past the Crossrail site.*

11 This is the route of the diverted Greenway caused by the building of the Crossrail east-west high-speed underground link. Crossrail, due to open in 2017 will have a station at Stratford, interconnecting with international and national rail services, and London underground lines. The next stations will be westward at Whitechapel and eastwards at Maryland towards Shenfield. Past the Crossrail site, you will see on your right behind a wire fence, various surfaces and finishes for paths and stairways, being assessed for the construction projects in the area.

12 *Where the road crosses over Bow Back River, take the towpath to your left.* The sloped access here was designed for horses, which were the major source of motive power for the river and canal barges to the end of the canal era. Occasionally a heavily-laden barge on a curve would pull the poor creature into the water; and ramps and steps into the river would allow them a way out. *When you reach the elegant lock-keeper's house to your left, leave the towpath and take the path up to Stratford High Street.* Here to your left, and on this side of the road, you can see the former Art Deco box factory of Yardley's, the perfume and soap manufacturer; here until 1960s. Notice the mural of a London street seller with her sheaf of lavender. Near here too, in the 18th century, was the

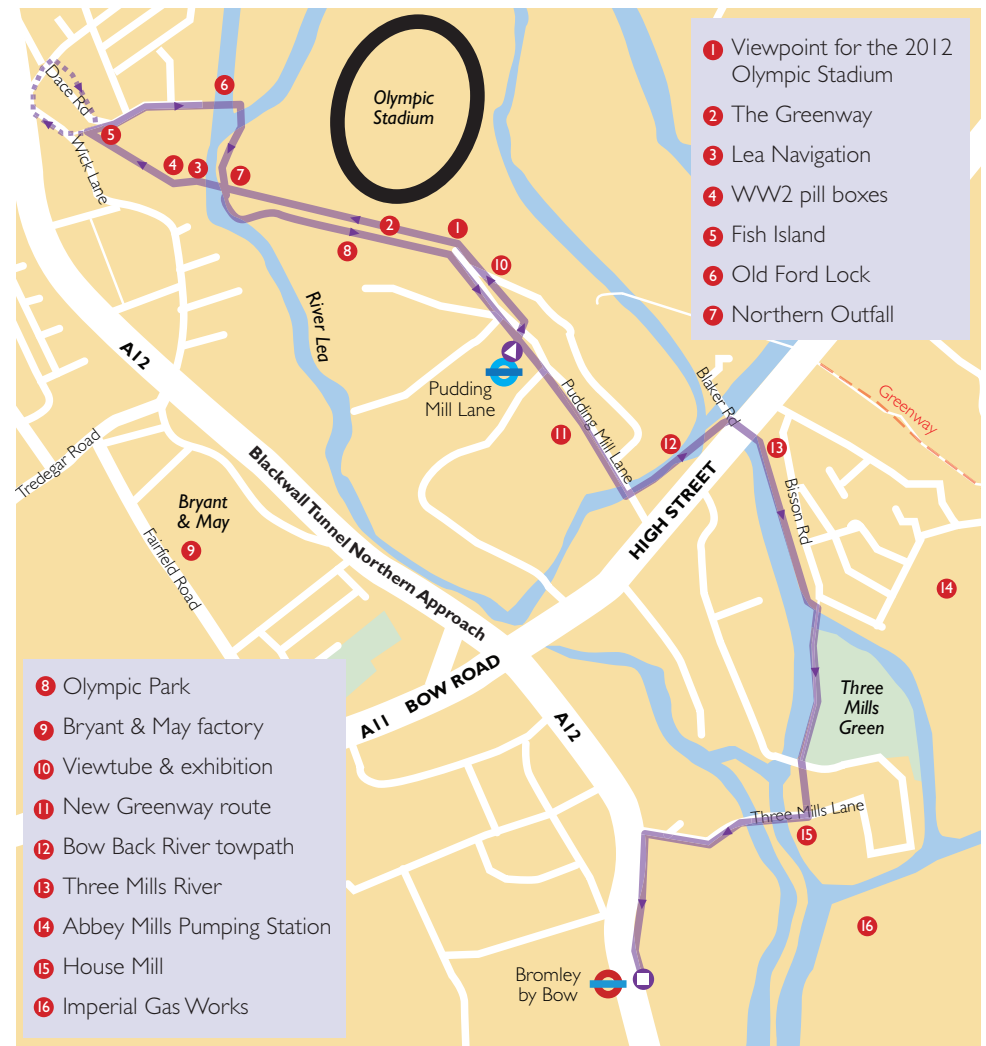
famous Bow Porcelain works. Cross the road to rejoin the towpath on the other side, using another horse-friendly ramp. (The Greenway to Beckton resumes further along Stratford High Street to your left).

13 This is **Three Mills River**, one of the Bow Back Rivers, where the Lea becomes a complex system of channels, some of them part of a 20th century flood-relief scheme. To your right are the backs of factories and wharfs along Sugar House Lane, some of them vacant, others now converted into studios and living spaces. There was a sugar refinery here from 1843.

Cross a foot bridge over a flood relief channel. On the right is a marina for narrow boats. These are the former working boats familiar on the UK's canals from the 18th century, carrying loads or towing barges, which are now popularly used for leisure or sometimes as residences. On your left a major landscaping project is in progress to turn what was an industrial area into public park. This area of Stratford housed many chemical, paint and printing ink factories. Towards the end of the towpath, you'll see a monument showing two clasped hands, dedicated to workers at one of these factories who lost their lives in July 1901, attempting to rescue a colleague overcome with fumes from a well on this spot.

Before you reach a bridge to your right, turn back and look across the Green and notice the elaborate Italianate cupolas and central tower rising above other buildings. This is the **Abbey Mills Pumping station** **14** built by Bazalgette (and finished in 1868) as part of London's main drainage scheme. It used huge steam-driven pumping engines (now replaced with electric pumps), housed in a magnificent cast-iron cathedral of a space. The Pumping Station, while not currently operating, is on 'stand by' reserve, but there is access from time to time, e.g. London Open House. To the right of it, you can see the curved roof of the modern pumping station and treatment works.

15 *Resuming your walk, ignore the bridge to your right and follow the path around to Three Mills Lane.* On the left is a gated area which is now film and TV studios, but turning right you will find the early 19th century Custom House; Clock Mill with its 18th century clock tower and oast house chimneys; and **House Mill**. A plaque dated 1776 records the addition of a house to the original mill, hence its name. The river is tidal here, and mills have operated from medieval times, grinding corn, making gunpowder and,



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until 1945, distilling gin. The House Mill is open every Sunday from May until October, 1.00–4.00pm, and on the first Sunday of the month from March until December, 11.00am–4.00pm.

16 *Pass the Mills and before a bridge over yet more Lea channels, walk onto the Green and look to your left* to see the remaining gasholders of the **Imperial Gas Works** (1878–882). These gasholders are listed structures. Beyond them is Twelvetrees Crescent, named after Harper Twelvetrees, a Victorian entrepreneur whose factories in this area were involved in producing everything from soap to the earliest washing-machines.

Cross the bridge, and with Tesco on your left, keep ahead to the pedestrian subway to reach Bromley-by-Bow underground station (Hammersmith & City and District Line).