

THE BCC 2024 SELF-GUIDED STROLL

Getting to the start. The ideal starting point is Blackheath Station (District Line one stop westbound to Whitechapel, then Overground five stops southbound to New Cross (you'll need a train with destination "New Cross"), then National Rail (Southeastern) three stops to Blackheath (check that the train does stop at Blackheath). The final change is cross-platform. There are no ticket gates at Blackheath, but *you still need to touch out* to avoid overpayment. ≤ 35 mins is a pro performance. Lose up to 15 minutes if you just miss a New Cross train and 15 more if the New Cross train has the wrong parity. Other routes are available.

Factoid. On the second leg, between Wapping and Rotherhithe, you pass through Brunel's celebrated 1843 Thames Tunnel, claimed to be the first tunnel under a navigable waterway.

- There are cafes in Blackheath town centre (15grams opposite the station does a good cup). Strike out north across the heath towards Greenwich Park, with extensive views in all directions.
- Enter the park. Very shortly after entering there is a pleasant detour through a garden to the right (through a gate in a low fence).
- Keep in a straight line, aiming for the Royal Observatory. Just beyond, the famous view appears, north over Greenwich, Canary Wharf and beyond. The Royal Observatory (entrance fee) contains a major collection of chronometers, telescopes and other instruments. Stand with one foot in the 'West' and one in the 'East' (optional).
- Go down the hill towards the town of Greenwich. The classical building just across the main road, marked by a large ship-in-a-bottle, is the National Maritime Museum (free admission). The "Astronomy Photographer of the Year" exhibition there is an exquisite testament to obsession (no admission charge currently, for some reason).
- Lying a little further towards the river is the Cutty Sark, a 'tea clipper', i.e., fast long-distance sailing ship for high value goods (entrance fee). From this point onwards, the route closely follows the Docklands Light Railway (DLR), providing many options for finishing the walk early.
- Nearby is a cylindrical brick structure which is the entrance to the Greenwich Foot Tunnel. . .
- . . . leading to Island Gardens, with excellent views back across the river towards Maritime Greenwich.
- Keeping the disused railway viaduct to the left, head north west. A little way north of Mudchute Station there is an underpass. Go under the railway to Millwall Outer Dock, then head north along the edge of Millwall Inner Dock. After a little way, there is a bridge that enables you to cross to the western side of Millwall Inner Dock.
- Heading north, your progress will eventually be blocked by South Dock. Head left (west) along the edge of the dock.

Factoid: The skyscraper in front of you, the Landmark Pinnacle, is claimed to be the tallest residential building in Western Europe.

- Coming to a curved pedestrian bridge, cross to the northern side of the dock.
- Now head due north to reach the Canary Wharf Elizabeth Line Station to return to base. One Canada Square may seem to be blocking the way, but you can walk (almost) straight through the lobby, taking in a whole quarry's worth of red and green marble. Be astounded and repelled in equal measure by the immense wealth on display all around.
- Alternatively head NNW (if I can be nautical for a moment) to cross West India Dock on a pedestrian bridge. Straight in front of you is a remarkable run of early 19th century warehouses. One of these is the Museum of London Docklands (free admission). If the museum has already closed by the time you arrive, the construction of the warehouses may also be appreciated from the interior of the Munich Cricket Club. The experience may be less edifying, but includes sausages, sauerkraut and Bavarian beer. . . and, if you are unlucky, an oompah band.

Getting back. Elizabeth Line from Canary Wharf to Whitechapel, then District Line.

Mark Jerrum, 2024 © ⓘ



With acknowledgement to Pocket Earth and OpenStreetMap.