

## Putney Society Buildings Walks No. 5 Putney Embankment



This walk takes you from the west side of Putney Bridge, along the Embankment (with a little excursion to the Lower Richmond Road nearby) and allows you to enjoy views for which Putney is (almost) world-famous. Putney Bridge station (on the north side of the river) or any of the bus stops on Putney Bridge provide easy access to this flat walk.

Do look and admire from outside but please note that private homes are just that and even 'public' buildings may have restrictions on entry.

**Start from the south-west corner of Putney Bridge opposite St Mary's Church** and look across the road to **The White Lion Hotel**. Empty for decades with current ideas for a boutique hotel, this Grade II listed property dates from 1887. Decorated with ornate stone pillars and caryatids, it is topped with a stone lion and a French pavilion slate roof with elaborate iron work.



**Turn right onto the Lower Richmond Road and head to the riverbank at the Thai Square restaurant** (designed in 1996/7 by Paskin Kyriakides Sands). In front is 'Load', one of Alan Thornhill's nine sculptures erected in the 1980s which form part of his Putney Sculpture trail.

**Look back at Putney Bridge.** Designed in 1884 by Sir Joseph Bazalgette (of London sewer system fame) and modelled on London Bridge, this is Grade II listed and replaced the wooden toll bridge built in 1729. The current Thames Tideway Tunnel construction works make Putney Pier (further along) a better vantage point. The Tunnel will have a new area of embankment including a line marking the start of the University Boat Race between Oxford and Cambridge rowed from Putney to Mortlake.



**Continue along the riverbank to the Dukes Head.** A public house is thought to have stood on this site since 1774, but the current building dates from an 1864 rebuild with an 1894 extension. Attractively filling the corner site, the building has a relatively intact Victorian pub interior. It is a popular place to watch the Boat Race or enjoy a pint on a summer's evening.



**Turn up Thames Place** towards the main road and look across to see a group of **early 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages** (37-41 Lower Richmond Road). Locally listed, these are good examples of workers cottages. Simple yellow stock brick with pantile roofs, they are much plainer in style than the later Victorian and Edwardian terraces which form much of the rest of Putney.

Turn right to see **Winchester House** next to the pub. This Georgian building now houses the Putney Constitutional Club. A handsome mid 18<sup>th</sup> century brick building with some parts dating back to 1730, it includes an attractive wooden doorcase with Doric columns (just visible through the iron gate).

**Now look right back towards the Bridge** to see the **Star & Garter Hotel and Mansions**. Dominating the area, they were built in 1899 by W.R Williams who also designed the large houses of Gwendolen Avenue (off the Upper Richmond Road). The east roof dome was lost to bomb damage in World War II, but the central iron-trimmed one and the western one survive.



**Cross to the eastern side of the top of Thames Place** and look across the road where the Edwardian **University Mansions** by Palgrave & Co echo the style of the Star & Garter opposite and feature an ornate Art Deco style entrance. Palgrave also designed Ruvigny Mansions which you will find next to Chas Newens Marine (see below).

**Return back down Thames Place and head left (west) along the Embankment.** Until the 18<sup>th</sup> century when a towpath was built, the boatmen would shore their boats here. It was formalised into the present



LRC and the Embankment 1896

Embankment in 1887 by the Borough surveyor, J.C Radford. He laid out the main slipway, the extension of the towpath and the footbridge over Beverley Brook into Leaders Gardens to create a recreational area focussed on rowing and the river.

**Chas Newens Marine** was formerly the home of Searle/Aylings 'oar and scull manufacturers and boatbuilders' and retains its distinctive long white painted elevation.

**On the other side of Glendarvon Road** is the London Rowing Club (LRC), one of the oldest boat clubs founded in 1856 (in the Craven Hotel, Strand) to 'encourage rowing on the River Thames'. The current building dates from 1871 and is remarkably unchanged. Look up to see the original iron balustrade on the parapet roof.

Of varying styles and construction, many boathouses have been altered and extended over the years. **Westminster School** added a modern side extension to the original brick. The building was formerly the home of boatbuilder J.H. Clasper, whose name you can see picked out in red bricks.

**Crossing over Rotherwood Road** you see Thames Rowing Club which moved from the Chas Newens building to this corner site in 1879. The club was formed in 1860 predominately by clerks and salesmen in the rag trade, in contrast to the gentlemen of LRC.

**Continuing along the Embankment**, the Imperial College Boat Club stands in glorious architectural contrast to those around it. Designed in 1937 by architect Brian Sutcliffe in the Moderne style, you can still see the original rendered wave motif behind the new balcony and a few surviving Crittall windows on the side elevations.

**You have now arrived at Leaders Gardens:** upriver on the opposite bank is the new **Stadium** (by Putney-based architects Populous) at Craven Cottage, home to Fulham Football Club since 1896.

**Turn left away from the river up Festing Road.** A typical Victorian terraced street, it became Festive Road, the fictional home of the popular BBC cartoon character Mr Benn, created by former resident David McKee. You can see a commemorative paving stone set into the western side of the pavement at the top of the road.

**Turn right along the Lower Richmond Road and continue across Ashlone Road and Danemere Street** after which on your right you will see the entry to a housing estate at 152 Lower Richmond Road. This was the entrance to the original manor house of Barnes, Barn Elms Park, the mansion of Sir Francis Walsingham, Secretary of State to Queen Elizabeth I from 1579-90. Rebuilt as a Georgian mansion, it was destroyed by fire in 1954.

**Continuing along the Lower Richmond Road**, on your right you arrive at Comondale, the last road before Putney Lower Common. Two groups of these mid-Victorian terraced houses are locally listed: 2-5 Comondale and 15-36 Comondale. The latter are labourers' cottages built in 1862 to replace the pest (or plague) house that had stood on the site since 1665. At the top of the road stands the mile post indicating 5 miles to Hyde Park Corner.

Only a few of these buildings are listed. However, you may have spotted the listed Victorian street bollards at the beginning and end of the Embankment and at Spring Passage (next to LRC).

Further information about Putney rowing and rowers can be found on the [Society's website](#)

**The 22 or 265 bus will take you back along the Lower Richmond Road to Putney Bridge and the High Street.**



Thames Rowing Club



The mile post on the corner of Putney Lower Common



The listed bollards next to LRC