

A WALK IN TEDDINGTON: 2 The Grove Estate and Teddington Lock

Start and finish at the Ferry Road traffic lights (1). This walk is approx. 2.7 miles in total

Ferry Road goes to the river in one direction and to the High Street past the church in the other; Kingston Road goes off towards Kingston, and **Manor Road (2)** heads to Twickenham. Manor Road was built some time after 1860. Before then, the old road from Kingston to Twickenham made the sharp turn round the church from Kingston Road to Twickenham Road. The church of **St Mary with St Alban (3)** was the old parish church of St Mary, parts dating from the 16th century. During the incumbency of the Rev Stephen Hales (1709-61) much rebuilding was carried out, the north aisle and the tower being added. The church was continually too small for the increasing population, and in the 19th century more enlargements were carried out until a new church seemed to be the only solution. So the church of **St Alban the Martyr (4)** was built on the opposite side of the road.

The building, which is in the French Gothic style on the scale of a cathedral, was opened in July 1896. When the new church was opened the old one was closed, but not everybody liked the new church and by popular demand St Mary's was repaired and services were held in both churches until 1972. But by this time the number of worshippers had diminished and running expenses had risen, meaning that two churches could no longer be maintained. St Alban's became redundant and was to be pulled down. However, the building was eventually renovated and the Landmark Arts Centre opened there in 1995.

Teddington had a Lord of the Manor until 1860. The Manor House was nearly opposite St Mary's church off Twickenham Road near **St Albans Gardens (5)**, but was demolished in 1895. The land of the estate, nearly half of the parish, was sold in 1861 to make way for more roads and houses.

In 1800 the population of Teddington had been under 700, living in about 100 houses. Within 60 years the population had increased to more than 1,000. Apart from those living in the large houses, most people either worked on the land or as domestic servants. However, the railway came to Teddington in 1863, resulting in both a population and building boom, so that by 1881 the population had increased to 6,500 and by 1901 it had reached 14,000.

Houses 7-17 in **Twickenham Road (6)** were built around 1909 and won the architect a prize for their unusual design, which includes stone mullion windows. At the end of this road on the corner you will see a hedge where the road used to go towards Twickenham. Beyond is a terrace of older Victorian houses built before 1870 when they were known as Montpelier Terrace. They were later renamed **Riverside Terrace (7)**. Turn left along Manor Road, and at the end on the right (No 50-56) are some **Span houses (8)**. This development of 14 houses was built in 1955 and designed by the renowned architect Eric Lyons, in his day one of the most imaginative and important influences in town planning design. Turn right into Cambridge Road.

The Grove Estate is built on the site of an 18th century house called The Grove. It was demolished in 1920 and the land was acquired by the Royal Dutch Shell Oil Company who erected more than 100 houses for their employees using a Dutch architectural design. In the centre of this development is a small park, Grove Gardens, which was sold to the local council in 1934 and the rest of the estate to private owners. This is now a conservation area. Continue along Cambridge Road and pause to look at the interesting **'Shell' houses (9)**. Then turn right into The Grove and continue until you see a pedestrian pathway to **Grove Gardens (10)**.

(There is a short cut from Cambridge Road along a footpath signed to the Bowling Club.)

The **Teddington Bowling Club (11)** moved here in 1935. Between the two pavilions you will see a statue of **Diana the Huntress (12)**. It's a copy of a Roman statue in the Louvre. As you leave Grove gardens the Teddington Society **information board (13)** provides more history of this area.

Walk down to Twickenham Road. Look left and you will see **No 91, The Coach House (14)**. This is the only remaining building of the original Grove House estate.

Cross the road and turn right. At the sign for the Wharf Restaurant, turn left. The large blocks of flats here are on the site of the former Tough's Boatyard, which built many vessels, including boats for the Admiralty in WW1 and WW2. It's most notable for assembling and fitting out more than 100 boats used in the 'Little Ships' evacuation of Dunkirk in WW2. You can see a memorial commemorating this remarkable event on the **Teddington Lock (23)** island.

Tough's also built *Royal Nore*, the Queen's official barge which preceded the *Gloriana*, and *MV Havengore*, which carried Sir Winston Churchill's coffin during his state funeral in 1965. By the 1990s the boatyard was in decline and was redeveloped into today's luxury flats. As you pass Fairmile House, going towards the river, you will see the **Teddington Lifeboat Station (15)**. This is one of the RNLI's newest lifeboat stations and is one of only four on the River Thames. It operates 24 hours a day every day of the year, and is run on a completely voluntary basis.

The Wharf Restaurant (16) is housed in an old boatyard building on the riverfront. From here you can get a good view of Teddington Lock. Take the footpath into **Manor Recreation Ground (17)**. Walk towards the river, then turn right on the footpath alongside the river in front of the flats, towards Teddington Footbridge. This is a public footpath, on the site of another previous boatyard, and goes behind **The Boathouse (18)**. This building, dated 1862, was originally owned by James Messenger, boat builder and Queen's Bargemaster from 1862-90. He built *Lady Alice*, a five-sectioned boat commissioned for Sir Henry Morton Stanley for his second African expedition. The Tough family acquired the yard in the 1930s. The Boathouse now houses The Boat Shop, a chandlery on the ground floor with a Design Studio above. The Flying Cloud café outside may be open for refreshment.

Turn left to cross the **Teddington Lock Footbridge (19)**.

Before the bridge was built, a ferry crossed from Teddington to Ham and continued until the 1950s. The footbridge was constructed in 1889, thanks to funds raised by public subscription. There are two sections: the main suspension section from the Anglers to **Weir Island (20)** and the second section across the Lock Cut to the Surrey Bank. This is a fixed section and was originally part of Hammersmith Bridge.

As you cross the bridge you will see **Teddington Weir (21)** on the right, which marks the river's usual tidal limit and is the lowest full-tide lock on the Thames. It comprises 20 gates, two roller sluices and two fish gates. **Teddington Lock (22)**, on the left, is a complex of three locks and is the largest lock system on the non-tidal Thames. Together, the locks and weir allow the level of water to be controlled all year round. You can usually cross onto **Lock Island (23)** and watch the locks operating (*temporarily closed in the Covid era*).

The first lock was built a long time before the bridge was constructed. Navigation of the river had frequently been difficult with as many as 20 barges sometimes held up for want of a deep water channel. It opened in 1811 (as did the weir) and was similar to the present launch lock, but in a different position further upstream. At first, the lock was highly unpopular with the local fishermen and bargemen – and after attempts to smash it, the lock keeper was apparently granted permission to keep a blunderbuss with a bayonet attached to ward off attacks!

By 1827 the original timber lock needed considerable repair and by 1853 the channel at Teddington was getting shallower so it was decided to build a new lock. This, together with the small skiff lock, opened in 1858. A boat slide was added to the rollers in 1869 so that small craft did not have to open the lock during the Victorian ‘golden age’ of boating.

The huge barge lock – the largest on the Thames – was then cut through the mainland in 1904, creating a **Lock Island (23)** between the two on which the lock keepers’ office was built. Monty Python’s fish slapping dance was filmed at Teddington Lock in the 1970s.

Large paddle steamers were able to pass through the barge lock and were popular with Londoners until the Second World War. The launch lock was rebuilt in 1950. The weir has also been rebuilt several times. It burst in December 1870 and was rebuilt the following year. There have been other renovations since.

Return over the bridge along Ferry Road passing **Tide End Cottage (24)** on the left. This dates back to 1820. It has been suggested that the derivation of the name Teddington was 'Tide End Town' but this is a 19th century idea and is unlikely to be correct as the village had been called Totyngton, Tuddington or Teddington since Saxon times, and the tide did not end here until the first lock was built in 1811.

Turn left down Broom Road and you will see **The Anglers (25)** which for well over 100 years has supplied sustenance to anglers (and others!) Several very large houses were built on the river side of Broom Road in the 1850s. **Weir Cottage (26)** was probably the original lock keeper’s cottage and then a gate house for Weir House. It has been refurbished as part of the Riverside Development which is on the site of Weir House and latterly the **Thames Television Studios (27)**. Film-making began at the studios in 1912 and boomed when it became Warner Brothers in the 1930s. The studios were rebuilt after being bombed in WW2 and switched to television production. Many popular TV programmes were made here – for example *This is Your Life*, *The Morecambe and Wise Show*, *Birds of a Feather* and *The Office*.

A public footpath between the blocks of flats leads down to the river and the **Riverside Walkway (28)** where you not only get a good view of the weir, but also a number of ‘blue plaques’ commemorating some of the entertainers who performed in the studios – among them Tommy Cooper, Kenny Everett and Sid James. To see these, go down the steps onto the walkway alongside the river, turn right and then turn round to see them on the wall. There’s an information board about the history of the Studios there, as well.

Return to Broom Road. Next on the left is **The Lensbury (29)**. This is now a hotel, conference centre and members' club which previously belonged to the Shell Oil Company. The Lensbury Club was founded in 1920 as a sports club for employees of the Royal Dutch Shell Group, many of whom lived in the 'Shell' houses on the Grove Estate. There were active sections for cricket, rugby, football, rowing, ladies hockey and tennis, together with large grounds on both sides of Broom Road. Four large houses were acquired by the Shell Company – Rock Hall, Dunbar House, Weirbank and New Broom Hall. All were demolished in the 1930s and the Georgian-style clubhouse building was opened in 1938. It boasted 162 bedrooms, a ballroom and a dining room. A conference block, a swimming pool and other fitness facilities have been added over the years and team sports were phased out. In the 1990s membership was widened to the local community and 15 acres of playing fields on the other side of Broom Road were sold to St Mary's University. In 2019 Shell sold The Lensbury to London & Regional Hotels.

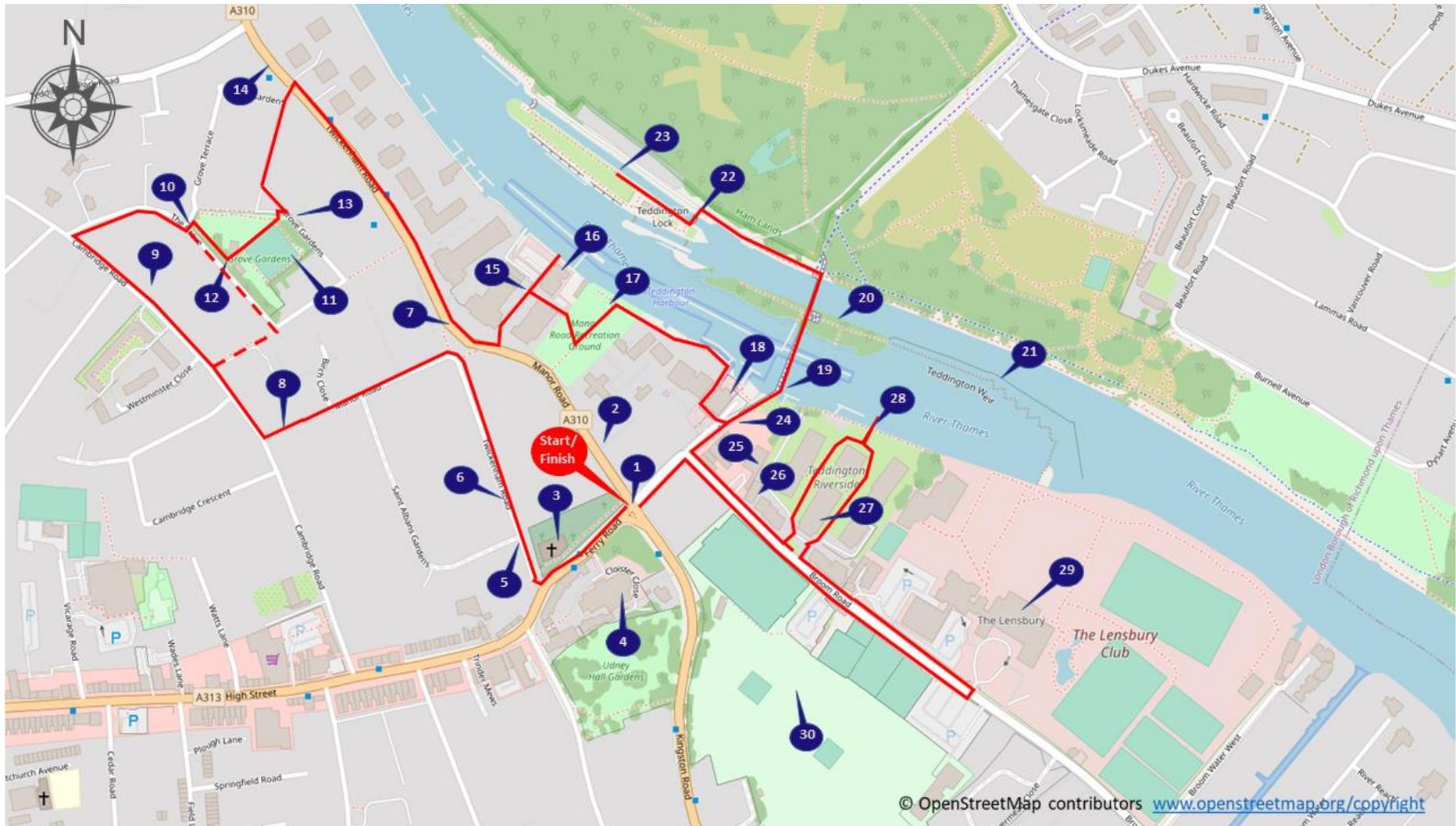
Cross Broom Road where you will see The Lensbury has retained tennis courts, squash courts and a car park. The rest of the **sports fields (30)** are now part of the University and are sometimes used by other schools and clubs.

Retrace your steps along Broom Road, where the houses on your left have features similar to those on Twickenham Road. Turn left into Ferry Road and back to the traffic lights.

*This Teddington Society guide has been researched and written by **Jenny Michell**. We hope you have enjoyed it, and if you have any comments please email info@tedsoc.org.uk*

If you are not yet a member of the Society, do please consider joining us – because the more members we have, the stronger our voice becomes. You'll find an application form on our website: www.teddingtonsociety.org.uk

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KEY

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|-----|--------------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------------|
| 1. | Ferry Road traffic lights | 16. | The Wharf Restaurant |
| 2. | Manor Road | 17. | Manor Road Recreation Ground |
| 3. | St Mary with St Alban Church | 18. | The Boathouse |
| 4. | Site of St Alban The Martyr's Church | 19. | Teddington Lock footbridge |
| 5. | St Albans Gardens | 20. | Weir Island |
| 6. | 7-17 Twickenham Road | 21. | Teddington Weir |
| 7. | Riverside Terrace | 22. | Teddington Lock |
| 8. | Span Houses | 23. | Lock Island |
| 9. | 'Shell' houses | 24. | Tide End Cottage |
| 10. | Grove Gardens | 25. | The Anglers |
| 11. | Teddington Bowling Club | 26. | Weir Cottage |
| 12. | Diana the Huntress | 27. | Site of Thames Television Studios |
| 13. | Grove Gardens Information Board | 28. | Riverside Walkway |
| 14. | No 91, The Coach House | 29. | The Lensbury |
| 15. | Teddington Lifeboat Station | 30. | St Marys University sports fields |