

Institute of Physics

LONDON AND SOUTH EASTERN BRANCH REMS SECTION

Sunday Afternoon Walk Canary Wharf and surrounds. Sunday 9th November 2003

This visit has been organised by Ian Williams

This is a joint walk with the University of Hertfordshire Walkers arranged by Ian Williams.

Starting from the west exit of Canary Wharf Underground station to walk around the financial district, the underground mall, Isle of Dogs (Mudchute Park and farm) across to Greenwich to see the new statue of Peter the Great on the south bank. Return via Docklands Light Railway.

The famous 'U' bend in the River Thames borders the Isle of Dogs with the tallest building in Britain, Canary Wharf, marking out this thriving community. Much of the London docklands area is concentrated around the Isle of Dogs. The history of West India Docks is typical of many of the developed docks on the Isle. They were opened in 1802 by Prime Minister Sir Henry Addington and made a strong contribution to the economic life of London. What remains today are among the most elegant and historically important of docklands warehouses. In the last 10 years it has undergone a massive, landscape-changing redevelopment. The area comprises a blend of restored warehouses and historic buildings, contemporary housing complexes and office developments, many with award-winning glass and steel designs

The Mudchute Association, a registered charity, manages the Mudchute Park and Farm. At 32 acres it is the largest inner City farm in Europe; a real Community asset and Service. They have horse riding lessons, cows, sheep and pigs of all types, rabbits and chickens and even a llama.

Tsar Peter I of Russia 1682 –1725 is more usually described as 'Peter the Great'. As a young man, he travelled to Europe in 1697-8 to study new developments in technology, especially shipbuilding. He lived in Deptford, at the home of the writer John Evelyn, for much of his four month stay in England. Although officially meant to be travelling incognito, most people seemed to know Peter's identity. At a height of six feet seven, it would have been hard for him to blend into a crowd! Peter was interested in astronomy because of its link with navigation, so visited the Royal Observatory at Greenwich, observing Venus with the first Astronomer Royal, Flamsteed. Here too, the Tsar and his group broke several items!

Deptford gets its name from the 'deep ford' over the Ravensbourne, which joins the Thames at Deptford Creek, one of the few remaining navigable creeks off of the Thames in London. Deptford was where England's navy was first built under the orders of Henry VIII; Peter the Great came from Russia to learn shipbuilding here, though like many students he apparently preferred more riotous living. Little river traffic now uses the creek, and the swing bridge opens only occasionally.

The walk is approximately 4 Miles and will start from the west exit of Canary Wharf Underground at 13.30. While there is no need to book, there is no charge and you can just turn up; an indication of intent would be appreciated.