



History Walks

Walking 1066 Harold's Way: Path Diversions



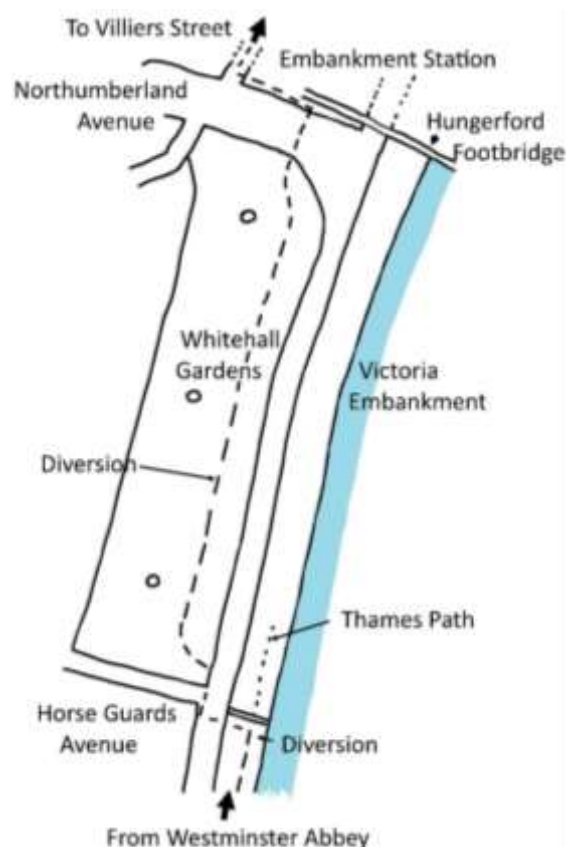
Walk 1: Westminster Abbey to London Bridge - The Thames Path

Page 22: Victoria Embankment

The Victoria Embankment dates from 1870 and covered the new sewer for a healthier London, a cleaner Thames and the new District Line Underground. Gardens and walkways were created and the new road relieved the notorious congestion on The Strand and Fleet Street.

Now those historic improvements are being upgraded with 'Tideway', London's new super sewer, and those same gardens provide diversionary relief for the parts of the Thames Path that are subsumed by the project's digging out of new tunnels, some 60 feet below the river.

The first diversion is on the approach to Charing Cross Station, where the path is blocked.



Signs request that you cross the road to the junction with Horse Guards Avenue and instead of walking along the road, it is an opportunity to stroll through Whitehall Gardens that were laid at the same time as the Embankment Gardens.

One statue is of William Tyndale, famous in the early 16th century for his first translation of the New Testament in English but the other two statues pay tribute to a different world and a different stage with Sir Bartle Frere, a rather controversial 19th century colonial administrator and General Sir James Outram who took part in the relief of Lucknow and with a reputation for chivalry.

They all stand resplendent in this hidden oasis.

The building behind the gardens has more than a touch of French style and is the Royal Horseguards Hotel.

Its dining room opens out onto a terrace that overlooks the river and perfect for watching the New Year's Eve firework display on the Thames but as you can imagine it is fully booked for the foreseeable future. Next door, One Whitehall Place was once the headquarters of the Secret Service during the First World War but the spies and their secrets have moved further upriver.

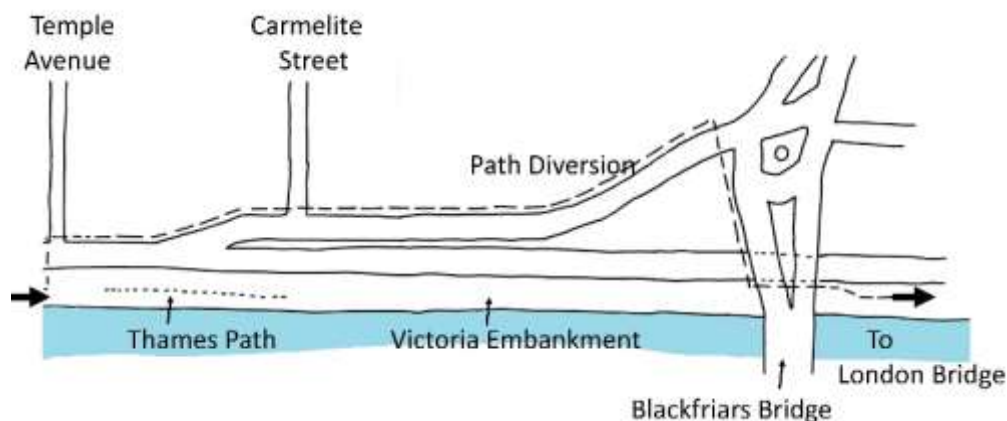


David Clarke - History Walks, Talks & Books
W: www.1066haroldsway.co.uk - E: historywalks@aol.co.uk
T: 01424 425 888 - M: 07766 604 654

Leave the gardens and cross Northumberland Road where it is worth taking the time to climb up to and walk part way over the Hungerford Footbridge for a view along to Westminster where little has changed since Monet painted his 'View of Westminster' in 1871 and, although Big Ben is cloaked in scaffolding and the Tideway excavations pound away below, it is still good for a photograph.

Back down the bridge to continue 1066 Harold's Way

Page 24: Blackfriars Bridge



The Embankment Gardens, lined with statuary and shaded by trees, provide a moment's respite before the return to the river but it is not long before 'Tideway' forces another diversion from 1066 Harold's Way and the Thames Path.

After Temple Station and the green gardens of all the Inns of Court, there is a need to cross the road to walk over Blackfriars Bridge rather than under it, before re-joining the path to London Bridge.

Close to the bridge, the embankment path is blocked.

Cross the road and turn right and bear left again to walk up the ramp to Blackfriars Bridge.

At the top, cross the ramp on the right and walk towards the bridge to cross Blackfriars Road behind Queen Victoria's imposing statue.

Down the steps, that lead towards Blackfriars Pier, and re-join the Thames Path and 1066 Harold's Way towards London Bridge.

Walk 2: Greenwich to Lesnes Abbey - The Thames Path

Blame all the new builds between Greenwich and the O2 Arena - it is a true nightmare. There should be a claim under the Trades Description Act as the path is so far from the Thames.

It is the stuff of nightmares and I would suggest the alternatives of catching the Thames Clipper from Greenwich to the O2 Arena or the DLR to North Thames Station to start the days walk from the Dome. Walk the bit you have missed whenever the Thames Path is restored - promised at the end of 2018 until the next project of course!



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If you do want to walk, be prepared for a lengthy detour by building sites, along terraced streets and traffic filled roads with cars and lorries queuing for the Blackwall Tunnel and all highlighted by an absence of temporary waymarks.

When I walked the path in the summer of 2018, building work was decimating the original path along the waterfront and despite the promises there are likely to be diversions well into 2019.

You can also check the Thames Path National Trail website for updates on diversions to the Thames Path:

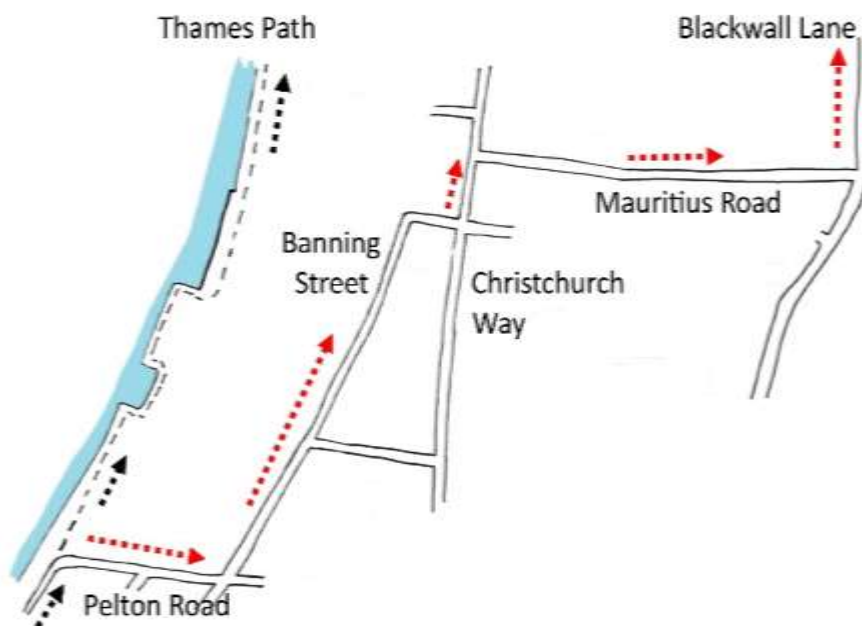
www.nationaltrail.co.uk/thames-path/trail-diversions

Page 39: The Thames Path

It all starts to go wrong just after Pelton Road (TQ 3901 7837) where the Thames Path is blocked by a wooden wall that guards a building site and forces you to turn right towards Banning Street.

Turn left at Banning Street and walk along to the end where the road bears right.

Left again into Christchurch Way and first right into Mauritius Road and at the end, turn left along the busy Blackwall Lane.



Continue past Telcon Way and Salutation Road to bear left towards the Blackwall Tunnel along Tunnel Avenue.

On the approach to the tunnel entrance, just before the traffic island, is a surprisingly waymarked path left that leads back to the Thames Path.

This fenced in dusty path leads to the river and a wharf, where the old rails for the cranes can be seen on the path, and to a more pleasant walk around the peninsular to the Thames Barrier, away from all the industry and building.

On my hot day, looking for ways back to the river, it added at least 30 minutes to my walk and the only consolation was the discovery of the Meantime Brewery and Brewery Tap - but it was far too early to stop.

The rest of the walk went without a hitch with The Abbey Arms at Abbey Wood providing a welcome and surprisingly good end to the walk.



As at November 2018, that is the sum of the Path Diversions.

Please let me know if you find any alterations to the above or to the route in the abridged Walkers Guide.

New 1066 Harold's Way Walker's Abridged Version

To meet the needs of walkers and for the runners competing in 1066.run, prior to the publication of the new Guidebook, a spiral bound abridged guidebook will be available from History Walks during November 2018. This abridged version will include all the updated walking notes, maps, links to Ordnance Survey routes and information needed to complete 1066 Harold's Way but without appendices and some of the background to that tumultuous year 1066. The route amendments are all reflected in the updated OS routes for 1066 Harold's Way.

These notes and the new guide have been written to ensure that you are able to continue to enjoy walking 1066 Harold's Way in 2019, inspired by King Harold's epic march to the Battle of Hastings.

David