

## Walk 02 (12) Osterley Park and the Grand Union

05 February 2012 – 10am start



### We meet at the Hare and Hounds PH car park, Windmill Lane (B454)

OS Explorer map 161 - ref: TQ 154783

#### Directions to meeting point

The easiest route is probably along the M4 towards London. Exit at junction 3 and take the A312 south. On reaching the A4, turn left towards Hounslow. Follow the A4 for about 2 miles. Soon after Osterley tube station on the left, turn left at traffic lights into Thornbury Road. At the end of the road, turn right into Jersey Road and follow it as it bends left around the perimeter of Osterley Park. Turn left at the mini-roundabout on the B454. The Hare and Hounds PH is about 300 yards on the right.

#### Walk description and brief history

This walk is about 5 miles long and it is easy-going. Osterley Park is an amazing area of park and farmland in the middle of the hectic, suburban and industrial sprawl of West London. The walk passes through the wooded River Brent Park to reach the Grand Union Canal. It continues along the tow path past the Hanwell flight of six locks and Brunel's 'Three Bridges' which has been designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument by English Heritage. The walk then cuts back through suburban streets, over the M4 and enters Osterley Park from the West. Crossing the park, it passes in front of the imposing House and through pastureland to reach the B454 and the Hare and Hounds PH again.

[At the end of the walk, we could take refreshments at the Hare and Hounds PH.](#)

**Guest walkers are very welcome. Please remember, guests will be expected to contribute £1.00 to the charity 'Friends of the Datchet Health Centre' on the day of the walk. Guests and occasional walkers will be asked to become members if they attend more than 2 walks in any one year.**

#### Walk instructions

1. Exit the PH car park and turn right along the pavement beside the B454. Immediately after passing through a tunnel beneath the M4, turn right along the marked River Brent Park Path. Follow the path through woodland alongside a stream and the M4 motorway to the right. Eventually, on reaching a T-junction of paths, turn left and walk along the path with a railway line close by to the right. After about 200 yards, turn right and **cross the railway line with great care**. Follow the road ahead as it passes through a small industrial estate.
2. Immediately after crossing the canal bridge ahead, descend some steps to the left to reach the tow path of the Grand Union Canal. Turn right and follow the tow path for about a mile. [It is worth reading the information boards along the towpath. The canal linked Birmingham to London and was part of an important network that helped to sustain the industrial revolution during the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century before the advent of rail transport. The Hanwell flight of six locks lifts canal traffic 53 feet over 600 yards. Each lock has a side-pool, a mechanism designed to conserve water during their repeated use.](#)
3. At the summit, the canal passes the high brick walls of what, in Victorian times was called Hanwell Lunatic Asylum, later named St Bernard's Hospital and now simply included within Ealing Hospital NHS Trust. The canal and tow path then cross a short aqueduct at the 'Three Bridges'. [Here, Isambard Kingdom Brunel designed a construction to take a branch of the Great Western Railway beneath the canal at a point where it is also crossed by the road bridge above – yet another "impossible" feat designed by the great engineer.](#)
4. Soon after passing another lock, cross the canal over a white bridge which, as the plaque states, is not suitable for "ponderous carriages". Continue straight ahead along Melbury Avenue and at its end, turn left and soon after, right at a mini roundabout. **Cross the road with care**. Just before reaching the Plough PH, turn left down a narrow path signposted to St Mary's Avenue. [The Plough PH dates from 1349 and is the oldest Fullers PH in the country. It was reputedly frequented by Dick Turpin.](#)

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5. Cross St Mary's avenue and continue along the footpath opposite. Follow the path across a farm field to reach some steps. Climb the steps and follow the lane over the motorway. At the end of the lane, turn right through a gate and along a driveway into Osterley Park.
6. The driveway passes outbuildings beside the main house. Osterley Park House was obtained by Sir Francis Child in 1713 in payment of a debt. In 1761, the family commissioned Robert Adam to modernise the building and its interiors. The result, with its classical elegance and grand interiors, is what we see today. The central core of the estate was inherited by the National Trust in 1949.
7. Continue along the driveway in front of the colonnaded entrance to the main House and follow it as it sweeps left, past a lake and then right past a National Trust car park. Continue down the drive and soon after passing a farm shop on the left, turn left through a kissing gate to walk along a path between fields. Follow the path as it bends sharp right and then left. It eventually emerges onto a grassy area. Continue in the same direction, past an entrance lodge to Osterley Park on the left and eventually on to the B454. **Cross the road with care** and turn left back to the Hare and Hounds PH.

