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TOWER HAMLETS

eastendlife

THE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER FOR TOWER HAMLETS PRODUCED BY YOUR COUNCIL

Wrap up well and head out with **Graham Barker** on his walk this month around the illuminations, architecture and docks of Canary Wharf. Photos by **Mike Askew**.

Walking in a winter wonderland

IT'S a wonderful time of year to walk around Canary Wharf, especially after dusk. With festive lights, an ice skating rink, and plentiful opportunities for shopping and feasting, there's something for everyone. Why not walk up an appetite for Christmas, or have a healthy start to your New Year?

We begin this month's walk at South Quay DLR station in the heart of Docklands. As you leave the station and face South Quay Plaza, stay on the red brick pavement and walk towards a set of raised safety barriers. There's a fine two-way view of the docks here, with South Dock on your left and Millwall Dock on your right.

At the end of the railings cross the road, head left and nip through a gap to follow the signpost to South Dock, with the water on your right-hand side. As you reach the dock corner (1), the view broadens – you can't help but marvel at the complex of buildings looming up ahead, and the O2 dome away to your right with its fiery prongs spiking skyward.

You're heading for the opposite corner of the dock. To get there, first walk along the brick roadway with speed bumps. You'll soon spot the footbridge (2) spanning the dock, with its distinctive upright cable support. Cross the bridge, gradually curving upwards and over the water. It's a popular and useful pedestrian link.

At the end of the bridge, turn right. Peek inside the West Wintergarden (3), a glass hall at the bridge end with indoor trees and jazzy marble flooring. Then walk, with the water on your right-hand side, under three covered sections all the way to the far end. En route, you might spot a concert or comedy gig in the glass-arched East Wintergarden (4).

At the corner of South Dock curve left and slope downwards to join the water's edge, with a row of trees to your left. Just before you reach the glass footbridge, walk up the second set of steps, heading forward to Montgomery Street (to avoid the steps,

take the service road before the trees).

At the traffic lights you'll glimpse the yellow, red and blue lights snaking above Canary Wharf Idea Store (5).

Cross Montgomery Street to your left, towards Nat West. One Canada Square (6) towers up ahead. Built in 1991, this iconic skyscraper is the centrepiece of the Canary Wharf development, visible from far and wide. At the crossroads with Upper Bank Street you might detour to the opposite corner, for a festively-lit tree grove and ice rink (7) – but get your skates on, it only runs until February 21!

Otherwise, turn left along Upper Bank Street. It soon opens out into Montgomery Square (8), a plaza dotted with twisted tree benches and Centauro, a bronze horse sculpture by Igor Mitoraj. At the second set of lights, cross Upper Bank Street towards a pillar-box. Then head through Jubilee Park, a delightfully landscaped green grotto, currently dotted with 'red worm' Christmas lights. Follow the main tarmac path through the gardens, beside a series of five stepped waterfalls, to emerge in West Plaza – by the main entrance to Canary Wharf Tube (9), designed by renowned architect Sir Norman Foster.

Ahead of you is Middle Dock. Head down the right-hand side, beside the strangely captivating orange ticker tape display as it

curves around. Go underneath the large blue DLR bridge, ignoring the first turning right, and continue to the Two Men on a Bench bronze (10) by Giles Penny.

Climb up Cubitt Steps and cross into Cabot Square. This is especially magical at this time of year, with its cascading water and fairy-lit trees. Walk leftward around the gravelly, tree-lined boulevard, past the plaque to financier Michael von Clemm, until you reach the Couple on Seat bronze (11) by Lynn Chadwick. Here you turn left and cross the road.

On the far side, follow the pavement leftwards, under the Credit Suisse colonnade and around into West India Avenue. A short distance along on the right you'll spot ornate metal gates at Willoughby Passage. Press the button to open the side gate and walk down the covered service road to emerge at North Dock (if the gates are locked, then continue to Columbus Courtyard and down steps to the dock). Head on, with the water on your right-hand side and soon, with large cobbles underfoot.

You'll pass through a replica arch (12) crowned with a model of The Hibbert, a 405-ton vessel known as a West Indiaman. In the dock corner take a look at Knocker White and The Varlet, two preserved Thames tugs. The Museum of London Docklands (13) is ahead of you, housed in an imposing Georgian warehouse that echoes back to the days when these docks buzzed with international trade.

At the large green Wreck buoy, cross over North Dock on the yellow 'moving' footbridge (14). And on the far bank, follow Fisherman's Walk leftwards, under the blue bridge and around the corner to find steps leading back up to Canary Wharf.

Thanks to Rachel Maile for trialling this walk.

To find out more about joining Healthy

Walks in Tower Hamlets, contact Rachel Maile on 7364 6940 or email rachel.maile@towerhamlets.gov.uk





Canary Wharf sports an ice rink – but only until February 21



The ‘moving’ bridge over the Museum of London Docklands



You can't help but marvel at some Docklands buildings



Christmas is a perfect time of year to explore Docklands



Cabot Square is magical at this time of year



The stunning footbridge over South Dock