

The Grand Union Canal, West London

There's a  
**secret world**  
on your doorstep



British  
Waterways  
London

*Yours to enjoy anytime*

# West London's Waterways

As the industrial revolution gathered pace at the end of the 18th century the demand for an efficient means of transportation from London and its ports to the rest of the country became increasingly pressing. By 1805 a waterway to link London and Birmingham was completed to meet this need. Carrying cargoes across its 137-mile course, this canal shaped both the communities it passed through and the industrial development of the country as a whole. Today, the stretch between Hanwell and the Thames, now known as the Grand Union Canal, showcases some of the historic feats of engineering which made the waterway so valuable. Now the factories, wharves and warehouses that once chequered its route have largely been replaced by picturesque green spaces offering the perfect backdrop in which to admire this historic navigation and the scenic structures along it.

## Key canal sites

### ★ 1 Thames Lock and Brentford Dock

A reminder of the navigation's role as a working piece of infrastructure which continues to carry a variety of cargoes, all be it largely the human kind, is provided by Thames Lock and the Dock alongside it. The large electric lock is manned by a British Waterways London lock keeper whose job it is to see boats safely through the structure. You could catch a boat passing by before you set off north along the towpath to Brentford Basin.

### ★ 2 Brentford Gauging Locks and Basin

*i* The locks here were once used to 'gauge' the amount of cargo being carried by craft hoping to cross the country on the Grand Union Canal. Tolls were charged to use the canal and recorded at the Toll House next to the lock. Step inside on summer weekends to see an exhibition on how it worked.

Today, the basin is a picturesque spot with some shops and eateries sitting alongside homes and house boats. For more information visit British Waterways London's office opposite the Toll House, open 9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday.

### ★ 3 Gallows Bridge

This iconic black and white iron footbridge is notable for its physical appeal, as it gracefully curves across the navigation, as well as its impressive lineage. Attributed to the famous industrial era engineer, Thomas Telford, the listed structure is a delightful reminder of the waterway's working past. This handy crossing point's steeply sloping sides also provide an interesting challenge for walkers, joggers and cyclists.

### ★ 4 Hanwell Flight

This scheduled monument is the jewel in the crown of West London's waterways. The series of six locks which raises the canal by 53ft in a third of a mile makes for a fascinating landscape to look around and explore. Whether it's watching the boats as they navigate the structure, or wandering down the towpath with the picturesque flight on one side and the impressive Victorian hospital and its wall on the other, this is a waterway attraction not to be missed.

### ★ 5 The Side Ponds

Five side ponds can be found alongside the flight on the south side of the navigation. Built in 1815, these were used to store water to re-fill the locks in busy periods. Today they provide a wide range of flora, fauna and wildlife on the waterside.

### ★ 6 Three Bridges by Brunel

While at first sight this may not strike you as a particularly fascinating feat of engineering, look a little closer and you can see how this structure is made up of a canal crossing a railway being crossed by a road. The combination of all three of these pieces of infrastructure intersecting at one point makes this, particularly for its time, a real wonder of the waterways and has earned it scheduled monument status. It was also one of the last structures built by Isambard Kingdom Brunel – a key figure in England's industrial revolution – and is deservedly admired by enthusiasts the world over.

## Where to eat and drink

### 1 **Grounds**

Overlooking the water at Brentford basin, there's no better place to watch the watery world go by than this excellent café and coffee bar.

*Unit 1, Brentford Lock, High Street,  
Brentford TW8 8JZ  
Tel: 020 8847 5777*

### 2 **The Weir Bar and Dining Room**

With a large garden running down to the water's edge this stylish gastro-pub offers a warm welcome off Brentford High Street.

*22 – 24 Market Place, Brentford TW8 8EQ  
Tel: 020 8568 3600*

### 3 **Watermans**

As if the waterside location and varied programme of this excellent arts space weren't enough, the café and restaurant should satisfy all appetites!

*40 High Street, Brentford TW8 0DS  
020 8232 1010*

### 4 **The Fox, Hanwell**

This friendly pub serving food a step away from the towpath is well worth seeking out. Pop in to hang out in the garden in summer months or hunker down in the cosy bar when winter's set in.

*Green Lane, Hanwell, London W7 2PJ  
Tel: 020 8567 3912*

### 5 **The Royal, Harvester pub and restaurant**

A short walk from the waterside, wander to this pub, which is part of the well known national chain, for its traditional menu and family-friendly atmosphere.


*Boston Manor Road, Hanwell, London W7 2AX  
Tel: 020 8567 3711*



### [www.wow4water.net/kids](http://www.wow4water.net/kids)

WOW stands for 'Wild Over Waterways'. The wow4water website is an educational resource full of fun activities for children that help them to learn more about the history and wildlife of canals and rivers, and about water safety. It also gives advice to teachers and youth leaders planning a visit to the canal.

### Find out more

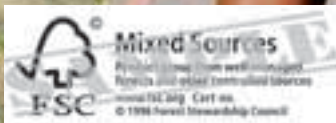
-  This guide, produced by British Waterways London, focuses on the Grand Union Canal between the Thames at Brentford and Hanwell. Whether you want to plan a day out, find a new waterside pub or restaurant or simply discover what's on your doorstep we hope it will offer you the information you need. To find out more about West London's canals or the waterways network across London and throughout the UK visit [www.waterscape.com](http://www.waterscape.com)

[waterscape.com](http://waterscape.com)

YOUR LOCAL CANAL

# It's free gym membership

Leave the monthly fees, machines and MTV behind and get fit for free. Your local canal is your chance to get out of the gym onto the towpath and remind yourself that getting fit is about fun, fresh air and freedom.



*Yours to enjoy anytime*

Find your nearest canal at [waterscape.com](http://waterscape.com)

## Just off the towpath

★ 7

### Kew Bridge Steam Museum

It's hard to miss the impressive tower of the historic water supply building, which now houses the Kew Bridge Steam Museum. Inside you'll find a magnificent collection of steam pumping engines, which tell the incredible story of how steam power changed the world.

*Kew Bridge Steam Museum, Green Dragon Lane, Brentford, Middlesex TW8 0EN*  
Tel: 020 8568 4757  
[www.kbsm.org](http://www.kbsm.org)

★ 8

### The Musical Museum

From the talented to the tone deaf, whatever your musical skills this fascinating museum has something for everyone. With an incredible array of instruments from the 'Mighty Wurlitzer' to the tiny clockwork musical box, a busy programme of concerts and temporary exhibitions as well as a museum café, it's well worth a visit.

*399 High Street, Brentford, Middlesex TW8 0DU*  
Tel: 020 8560 8108  
[www.musicalmuseum.co.uk](http://www.musicalmuseum.co.uk)

★ 9

### Waterman's

Combining an exhibition space, cinema, theatre, café and bar, this riverside centre is a really exciting waterside stop. Find details of upcoming events on their web pages.

*40 High Street, Brentford TW8 0DS*  
Tel: 020 8232 1010  
[www.watermans.org.uk](http://www.watermans.org.uk)

★ 10

### Syon Park and House

A short walk from Brentford Lock and Basin, this stately home of the Duke of Northumberland is an impressive estate. The beautifully landscaped grounds sweep up from the banks of the Thames to the house whose elegant façade hints at the breath-taking interiors inside. With a flourishing garden centre and café, London Tropical Zoo, children's activity centre and Great Conservatory among the other attractions also on this site, it's well worth a detour from the towpath.

*Syon Park, Brentford, Middlesex TW8 8JF*  
Tel: 020 8560 0882  
[www.syonpark.co.uk](http://www.syonpark.co.uk)



★ 11

### Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

This UNESCO world heritage site is one of South West London's most unforgettable attractions. The 300 acre site shows off an incredible collection of specimens, beautifully landscaped grounds, museum, wildlife areas, glasshouses, formal gardens, restaurants, cafés and much more.

*Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AB*  
Tel: 020 8332 5655  
[www.kew.org](http://www.kew.org)

★ 12

### Osterley Park and House

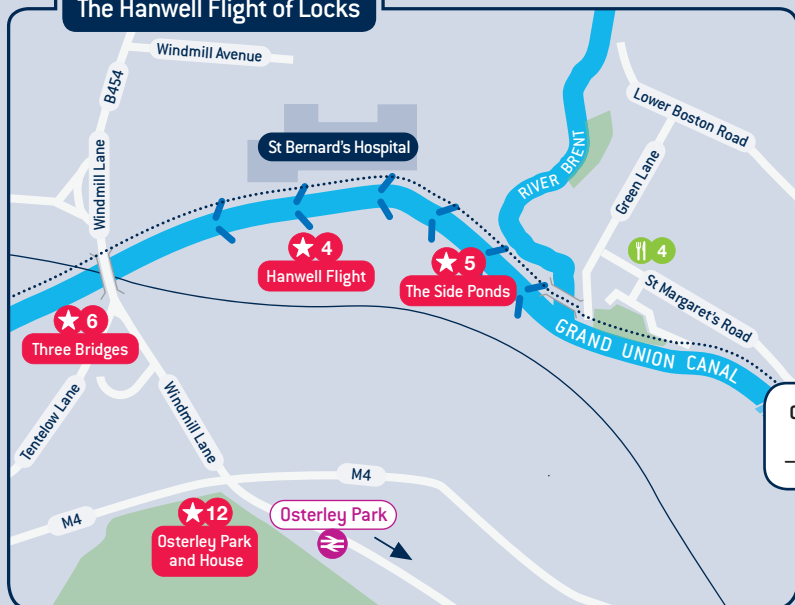
This National Trust property is a lovely site in which to while away an afternoon in West London. The drive curves round the landscaped lake and grounds leading up to the beautiful neo-classical house. With lots to see and do including a tea room, gift and farm shop and events throughout the year, you're sure to have an unforgettable visit.

*Osterley Park and House, Jersey Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4RB*  
Tel: 020 8232 5050  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/osterley](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/osterley)

# YOUR LOCAL CANAL

## The Grand Union Canal

### The Hanwell Flight of Locks



### Key

- |        |                 |                         |
|--------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Canal  | Towpaths        | Information             |
| Lock   | Railway Station | Pub, Restaurant or Café |
| Bridge | Tube Station    | Place of Interest       |

For further information please contact

British Waterways, 1 Sheldon Square,  
Paddington, London W2 6TT.

Tel: 020 7985 7200

E-mail: [enquiries.london@britishwaterways.co.uk](mailto:enquiries.london@britishwaterways.co.uk)

British Waterways Customer Service Centre.

Tel: 01923 201120

Find street level canal maps at

[www.waterscape.com](http://www.waterscape.com)

just click on the interactive map



**British  
Waterways**  
London

# Brentford Lock & Basin



A family of four is enjoying a walk along a canal. In the foreground, a young girl with long brown hair is looking through a magnifying glass. In the background, a man in a white shirt is taking a photo with a camera, a woman in a black top is looking on, and a young child in a pink shirt is sitting on the grass. The scene is set in a lush green field with tall grasses and yellow flowers in the foreground. A canal is visible in the distance under a blue sky with white clouds.

**YOUR LOCAL CANAL**

# It's a wildlife documentary

A canal is like a nature reserve, several metres wide and many miles long. You might see kingfishers, water voles, dragonflies, bats, or herons. They've all been seen on or by canals.

Who knows, on your local canal you could even be an otter spotter!



## More ways to take to the water

### Elsdale II – West London floating classroom

Available for private hire when its schools and community commitments allow, this exciting electric wide-beamed barge is a spectacular venue for up to 60 people from which to survey the scenic sights of West London's waterways.

Tel: 01895 839 849  
[www.elsdale.co.uk](http://www.elsdale.co.uk)

### Wizzbike

Whether it's cycle hire or advice on investing in two wheels, this Brentford based organisation is the one-stop-shop for all your cycling conundrums.

113 – 114 Brentford High Street, Brentford TW8 8AT  
Tel: 020 8326 2819 or  
The Toll House, Brentford Basin on some summer weekends. [www.wizzbike.com](http://www.wizzbike.com)

## The way forward for walkers

Walking is a wonderful way to see the waterways of West London. With wildlife to witness, water to wander by and heritage sites to hike around there's so much to see on foot around the Grand Union Canal. British Waterways London has produced two walking leaflets dedicated to the local area: Walking in Brentford and Syon Park and Walking in Hanwell. Download these or any of the other London walks in this series free at [www.waterscape.com](http://www.waterscape.com) or call British Waterways London on 020 7985 7200 to request a copy.

*More information on walking in the local area including group and guided walks can be found from:*

*Hounslow Heritage Guides*  
Tel: 020 8230 8583 [www.hounslow-heritage.org.uk](http://www.hounslow-heritage.org.uk)  
*Walk London*  
Tel: 0870 240 6094 [www.walklondon.org.uk](http://www.walklondon.org.uk)

## Wildlife around the waterway

The Hanwell Flight, and the waterway that stretches from it, hosts some of London's best natural environments. This green corridor is an almost entirely tree-lined haven for a number of common garden and field birds such as finches and sparrows. The quality of the water also attracts kingfishers who make best use of small fish which inhabit the underwater environment. Aquatic plants also make this their home as do dragonflies and damselflies until they emerge during the summer months as the gorgeous winged creatures which are an ever fascinating waterside sight. Set out to see what you can spot with more hints and tips at [www.waterscape.com](http://www.waterscape.com)

## Angling around West London

Angling is one of the many leisure activities that 'reel' people in to canals and rivers. Get a permit from British Waterways London (just £20 for adults, £10 for concessions) and see if you could fall hook line and sinker for this popular waterside pursuit.

For fishing on the Grand Union Canal between Brentford Lock and Thames Lock contact Barnes and Mortlake Angling Society Tel: 020 8741 1755



## Cycling with consideration

Saddling up and setting off on the towpath by bike is an increasingly popular pursuit across London. It's important that cyclists travel with caution and consideration for other users alongside canals and rivers. British Waterways London's Two Tings campaign identifies a code of conduct for everyone to adhere to. So make sure you review the rules before you set off at a stately speed.

*Find the Two Tings code of conduct at [www.waterscape.com/twotings](http://www.waterscape.com/twotings)*

## Canalside events 2009

### The Story of London

This month-long celebration of the past, present and future of the capital would not be complete without a canal-centred event or two. Join us on Sunday 7 June at the historic Hanwell Flight for walks to whet any appetite around West London's waterways. Come and enjoy boat trips, heritage tours, wildlife walks and even the chance to explore the famous Three Bridges with industrial engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel 'himself'.

**When:** Sunday 7 June 2009

**Where:** Hanwell Flight

*Find out more at [www.waterscape.com](http://www.waterscape.com)*

### Walking events with Hounslow Heritage Guides

With a busy and varied programme of guided walks throughout the year led by extremely knowledgeable local historians, stretching your legs has never been so stimulating. Walks cost £2 per person. Find the latest schedule on their web pages.

*Tel: 020 8230 8583*

*[www.hounslow-heritage.org.uk](http://www.hounslow-heritage.org.uk)*



### Telescope 400 – Thomas Harriot Day at Syon Park

To mark Harriot's first telescopic examinations of the moon which took place on the site in 1609, this event sees a spectacular at Syon Park which promises to be almost as impressive as the estate itself. See their web pages for information on the exhibitions, demonstrations and children's activities planned as part of the celebration.

**When:** Sunday 26 July 2009

**Where:** Syon Park and House

*Find out more at [www.syonpark.co.uk](http://www.syonpark.co.uk)*

### London Open House Weekend on the Hanwell Flight

This annual event sees local members of the Inland Waterways Association share their knowledge and enthusiasm for this historic structure with a series of free guided walks around the site.

**When:** Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 September 2009

**Where:** Hanwell Flight, Grand Union Canal

*Find out more at [www.londonopenhouse.org](http://www.londonopenhouse.org)*



## A day afloat is great fun!

### £25 off boat day hire

Not only is it fun it's also great value. Get a group of friends or family together and hire a boat for the day and enjoy a great day out on the water. Most boats hold eight people and hire starts from as little as £95 per boat per day.

And, if you log on to [waterscape.com/offers](http://waterscape.com/offers) you can download a voucher to get a £25 discount off your booking. It's yours to enjoy for even less!



*Offer for a limited period only and may be withdrawn at any time. Terms and conditions apply. See [www.waterscape.com/offers](http://www.waterscape.com/offers) for details.*