Tudor Richmond Palace built by Henry II. It was at Richmond that Elizabeth I died in 1603. Next to the Palace gatehouse is a wing where the unmarried daughters of monarchs once lived. To the south of Richmond Green (extending up to Hill Rise at the foot of Richmond Hill) are a series of enchanting little lanes full of boutiques, specialist shops and eateries.

Cholmondeley Walk dates from the C18th and was one of the water’s edge for everyone else. Richmond Riverside retains remnants of the landscape’s past. Remains of the medieval bridge were visible in the Stones and who owned and managed by the National Trust.

Between Ham and Teddington, the towpath meanders through the Ham Lands Nature Reserve, a haven for wildlife including squirrels, voles and orchids. Historically the area was part of the Ham House estate and it was managed as flood meadows grazed by cows. Gravel extraction and subsequent land-fill, using bomb rubble from central London following the Second World War, raised the height of the land by up to 0.3 metres in some places. The consequences of disrupting the natural cycle of the flood plain are today being felt as the land is too high for flood water from the river to spill onto, increasing the threat from flooding to adjacent areas.

Teddington Lock is the largest lock on the River Thames. It marks the place where the estuary meets the freshwater river. The Boundary Stone, located beside the towpath just below the lock, marks the upper boundary of the Port of London Authority, who are responsible for navigation on the tidal Thames. It was erected in 1809 when the Port of London Act was passed. Teddington Lock is the perfect place to picnic, and watch boats as they journey through the lock from ‘sea’ to ‘river’.

There has been a bridge at Kingston since medieval times. Kingston’s old wooden bridge was the only crossing over the Thames above London Bridge until 1579. In 1554, residents of Kingston broke the bridge deliberately to stop Thomas Wyatt and his rebels from crossing. For this loyalty Queen Mary Tudor gave Kingston, already entitled by Royal Charter to hold two annual fairs, the right to hold an additional fair on two days in July. In 1828 the wooden bridge was replaced by the structure that stands today. Remains of the medieval bridge were excavated, and along with the remains of a medieval ‘undercroft’, have been re-sited in the basement of the John Lewis Store.

The Ancient settlement of Kingston has a wonderful selection of Riverside cafes, pubs and restaurants, as well as enough shops to keep the most ardent of shoppers happy. The town’s history goes back to Saxon times when it was an important Royal settlement. Saxon kings were crowned at its church, which stood on the site of the current Market Place. The Coronation Stone can still be seen next to the Hosipital River, outside the Guildhall, a short distance from the Thames.

There is a series of healthy walks for all the family to enjoy

Explore the fascinating and historic River Thames on your doorstep. Places to see, wonderful river facts, access information, public transport, picnic spots and lots more.