Places of interest

This chapter covers many of London’s historical buildings and attractions. Museums, galleries and places of worship, are nearly all cross-referenced to other chapters, as we were anxious that the write-ups don’t get too ‘chunky’. Entries are split into geographical areas and are then, generally, listed alphabetically. There’s an extensive Index.

The grouping of nearby sites/sights is taken further under Recommended itineraries which we will put in much fuller detail on the website. The itineraries aim to include places of contrasting nature, outlining smallish areas where a visitor might spend a whole day with relatively short distances to travel.

There will also be suggestions about places to go if it’s raining.

There are enough ideas in our write-ups to keep you busy for several weeks if you take advantage of all the opportunities.

We will add new places and Updated information to our website, which is also where we have put some sites/sights which are outside the north/south circular roads.

If you want print-outs of any of the website material, please let us know.

An increasing number of the sights are accessible without much hassle, and a great variety of things can now be seen with minimal difficulty. In addition, staff attitudes and understanding have improved, although the best person to understand your particular limitations and needs is yourself. Sometimes, clearly and patiently (!), you may have to explain.

There are, some inevitable challenges. These are usually because the buildings are old with inbuilt barriers, because there are long distances involved and, of course, because disability awareness is by no means universal or uniform.

Many people do not understand the importance of distance when describing accessibility. Signage is often poor, and certainly not put there by people who understand access. The ‘accessible toilet’ may have been installed many years ago to a rather poor specification.

In addition there are serious problems/challenges associated with the transport system, and with parking. Hence the importance of the chapter on Getting around.
Note that the information about access on the websites in our listings is highly variable - some is really good, while some is just awful. Sometimes there’s so much of it, that the key relevant bits become difficult to identify.

Many places offer special facilities and visits/tours for both visually and hearing impaired visitors, and sometimes for visitors with learning difficulties. BSL tours and Touch tours may be provided.

These are nearly all available on an occasional/intermittent basis, and we feel that it is best for people to get this information by making direct enquiries to the venue concerned, since this will be necessary anyway. In addition, information for those with other disabilities is best researched by those with the appropriate skills.

See our website page/s on Methodology.

We don’t set out to duplicate information about opening times and entry fees which can easily be obtained elsewhere, and which change more often than does the physical accessibility of the building. Generally we will only indicate if a facility has restricted or unusual opening times, and we will say if there was an admission charge when we made our visit.

Most major museums and galleries are open every day, and currently offer free entry. There may be a charge for special exhibitions. They offer a wide range of different things to see and do. At some smaller galleries and at some major sights, there is an entry charge, and if it is more than about £10/person we describe it as a ‘significant charge’.

A number of major sights, including those operated by Merlin Entertainments, a couple of London’s big churches and most of the Royal Palaces, do make a ‘significant charge’. Note that if you get a ticket to several attractions run by Merlin, or to several of the Royal Palaces, there’s a discount - as there is for family groups - but check first on the practicalities of travelling before buying a multiple-site ticket.

If the cost is more than £20/person, we describe it as a ‘very significant charge’.

What you can see from the pavement
There are plenty of opportunities for seeing famous buildings and getting a feel for important aspects of London’s life and history without actually going inside the buildings. You can wander around the City, for example, and have lunch in a pub there - and get a sense of its busyness. If you go near the Royal Courts of Justice and the Inner and Middle Temple Gardens, you will get a flavour of the legal world.

Some major sights do not have an ‘inside’ which you can visit, such as Admiralty Arch, the Albert Memorial, Big Ben, Cleopatra’s Needle, Marble Arch, and
PLACES OF INTEREST

Trafalgar Square. In each case some sense of the history comes from the architecture, the facade and the location.

**Taking in history from the statues and monuments**

There are statues and monuments all over the place, most of which, by their very nature, can easily be seen. They are generally overlooked and undervalued. Some are described on [www.londondrum.com/cityguide/monuments-and-statues.php](http://www.londondrum.com/cityguide/monuments-and-statues.php). There are more extensive descriptions in books, and you can pick up an enormous amount of interesting information about London and its history from a study of the statues and monuments. You discover, for example, that Marble Arch was originally a gateway into Buckingham Palace but was moved to its present location in 1851 when the Palace was extended.

There are particularly good descriptions by Rupert Hill in *Walking London’s statues and monuments* published by New Holland in 2010. This sets out thirteen fact-filled walks with maps and distances, and while individual walks may be too long for some people, it’s easy to pick out the best bits which might suit both your interests and capabilities.

A much bigger book published by Merrell is *The statues of London*, by Bullus, Asprey & Gilbert. This contains some brilliant photos of eighty of London’s major monuments. It is certainly not something that you would want to carry around with you (because of its size and weight), but having a look at both the pictures and descriptive history would add an extra and enriching dimension to your visit.

**Getting good overviews of London**

There are now a number of places where you can get good views of and over London, and they include the Shard by London Bridge station, the London Eye, Tower Bridge Walkway and from the Orbit in the Olympic Park, which is due to reopen late in 2013. In addition, there are good (free) views from Waterloo Bridge; the OXO Tower; the Royal Festival Hall level 5, and the upper levels at Tate Modern. Good vantage points are also to be found further out from Hampstead Heath, Primrose Hill, Greenwich Park (by the Observatory), and Alexandra Palace. All of these can be reached step-free.

A completely different approach is to take a trip on the DLR, or on the Overground, as there are places where you’ll get a rooftop view of different parts of London, even if this is slightly fleeting. You will see all kinds of different things reflecting London’s diversity.

Remember that our write-ups are descriptive, and a listing does not mean, and is not intended to mean, that a site is fully accessible. In all cases we describe the barriers, if any, and in some instances we are describing serious challenges!
Inner London

City area

This comprises the City itself, together with the area just to the north and east. It includes the Tower, which is not strictly in the City, Tower Bridge and the St Katharine Dock. The write-up covers two areas in the Eyewitness guide; the City and Smithfield/Spitalfields.

The so-called Square Mile is an area with a high concentration of commercial buildings where millions of pounds change hands every hour. The pavements in the City are often a bit narrow, and can be crowded during the week. However, it’s a fascinating area and there are many old and famous buildings. Remember that many of the pubs and restaurants will be shut on both Saturdays and Sundays, although this depends on exactly where they are.

If you need specific information, for example about opening times, then visit the City Information Centre just south of St Paul’s Cathedral, and across the road (St Pauls Churchyard, EC4M 8BX, Tel: 020 7332-1456 website: www.visitthecity.co.uk). The staff were helpful, but we found that they knew relatively little about access or the practical issues involved, and we left them a copy of the PHSP guide!

The City Access Group publish a booklet which is updated every couple of years giving details about access to various buildings, parking and the location of accessible toilets. It is available on www.cityoflondon.gov.uk - go to A (in A-Z menu) and then Accessibility and then Access to city buildings, or via:

Access Team, Department of Community Services,
Corporation of London, PO Box 270, Guildhall, EC2P 2EJ

Accessible rail and tube links are very limited, although the DLR goes to both Bank and Tower Gateway. For many the best way to come will be by road (bus, car or taxi) or from ‘accessible’ tube stations on the JLE south of the river. Blackfriars and City Thameslink NR stations are ‘accessible’, as are those at Liverpool Street and Fenchurch Street. Blackfriars also has an ‘accessible’ tube station on the District line.

Parking in and around the City

Parking is inevitably difficult, and the normal BB rules do not apply, see Getting around. There are more than 200 roadside BB spaces, which can be used by Red Badge holders (who work in the area) with no time limit, as well as by BB holders with a prescribed time limit.

Groups of BB spaces (with, of course, no height restriction) can be found at/in:
Aldermanbury Street - with 4 separate BB spaces along the length of the road. 4hr max.
Bartholomew Close - with 16 BB spaces in small groups along the road. Because of one way systems, these can be approached from either Edward Street or Cloth Street. 6hr max, and,

West Smithfield - where there are 13 BB spaces outside St. Bartholomews Hospital around the circus, with a wheelchair toilet (D85 ST70 NKS) nearby on the inner ring.

There are CPs at Minories, West Smithfield, White’s Row (Spitalfields) and the Barbican, and there’s a good CP near the Tower in Lower Thames Street (SatNav EC3R 6DT). All have BB spaces, although holders pay the standard charges. Most have low costs/charges at weekends. For more details see www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/Corporation → Services → Transport and streets → Parking → Car parks - council.

The Minories CP (SatNav E1 8LP) is of particular interest, as the GF has a height restriction of 4.26m and so it can be used by taller vehicles.

All-Hallows-by-the-Tower (for brass rubbing) see chapter on Places of worship.


The Barbican is a sizeable area which has been redeveloped on two levels. It is bounded by London Wall, Moorgate and Aldersgate Street. There are historic sites, high-rise blocks of flats, offices, pubs and shops, both at ground level and on the high-level walkway called the Podium, which covers much of the development. The most interesting places are the Barbican Centre (see the section on Entertainment), St Giles Cripplegate church, restored after extensive bomb damage, and the Museum of London (see chapter on Museums & galleries).

Signage around the area has been improved, but having a good map helps you find your way around.

Broadgate is a massive complex, built near Liverpool Street station. It consists mainly of office blocks, but there are shops, bars and restaurants. Broadgate Arena is a skating rink in winter and an entertainment venue in the summer. When we visited, there were some radio controlled car races taking place. Access is pretty good with ramped/lift routes to most places, although a lack of signposting makes it confusing to a stranger, and there is only stepped access to the arena. There’s a wheelchair toilet in Liverpool Street station by platform 10, and several others around the development.

Guildhall

Guildhall Yard (PO Box 270), EC2P 2EJ  Tel: 020 7606-3030
website: www.guildhall.cityoflondon.gov.uk
e-mail: guildhall.events@cityoflondon.gov.uk

This has been the administrative centre of the City of London for nearly 900 years. The current building dates from the 15thC. Guildhall Yard outside has
been pedestrianised, with some slightly bumpy surfaces. Around the Yard you will find the Guildhall Art Gallery; the Guildhall itself; a modern building with a large crown/porch jutting out, and the St Lawrence Jewry church. There are 4 BB spaces in Aldermanbury.

In the Guildhall, you can visit the famous Great Hall, unless there’s a council meeting or other event. The entrance and security check are located to the left of the modern building (opposite the Art Gallery). It is all flat, and the +3 steps into the Hall can be bypassed by a ramped route. It is less than 100m from the Yard, and there’s a **wheelchair toilet (D80 ST70)** just past the security/bag search point.

There are other halls in the building, used for special events. The main access to these is from 71 Basinghall Street. In the basement that are two crypts and the Livery Hall, while the Old Library is on the first floor. There’s a lift quite close to the Basinghall Street entrance linking all three floors. In the basement there’s a **wheelchair toilet (D80 ST80)** between the Livery Hall and the Crypt. An alternative access can be provided to the basement via a platform lift (D90 L130) near the entrance to the Guildhall Great Hall, and the two crypts are linked by another platform lift bypassing −4.

Just around the corner in Aldermanbury is the **City Business Library (CBL), Guildhall Library, Clock Museum** and a bookshop. All are reached via +3 steps with a platform lift (D80 L110) bypass. Inside, the CBL has flat access while the Guildhall Library is reached via a platform lift (D80 L130) bypassing +12 steps. The Clock Museum is flat from the CBL, to the left of the entrance. There’s a **wheelchair toilet (D80 ST80)** on the 2nd floor in the admin area, reached via a separate staff operated lift.

**Guildhall Art Gallery and Roman Amphitheatre** see chapter on *Museums and galleries.*

**Leadenhall Market**
Gracechurch Street, EC3V 1LR  *website:* www.leadenhallmarket.co.uk
A small but attractive Victorian market located near the Lloyds building and another entrance from Leadenhall Place. It has a variety of clothes and food shops. It’s generally flat and compact but the main roadway is cobbled and there are kerbs. The nearest accessible toilets are in the Royal Exchange or in Fenchurch Street station.

**Lloyds of London**
1 Lime Street, EC3M 7HA  *website:* www.lloyds.com
This is an interesting modern ‘inside out’ building with the piping, ducting and the lifts built on the outside. Lloyd’s is the centre of the world’s insurance market. The public gallery was closed some years ago although the building is open on one of the Open House weekend days. A virtual tour of the building is available online from the website.
Mansion House
Walbrook, EC4N 8BH  Tel: 020 7626-2500  website: www.cityoflondon.gov.uk
Located between Walbrook and Lombard Street, almost opposite the Bank of England. It is the residence and office of the Lord Mayor of the City of London. It is therefore very much a working building.

There are tours once a week on Tuesdays at 14.00, when you just come along and join the queue. The tour lasts about an hour, and you will go only about 200m. Admission charge.

Entrance +2 small steps, but there’s a step-free alternative about 10m away which can be made available. You enter the Walbrook Hall, coming in the same way that all visitors come, including the Queen. There’s a security/bag check. Then during the introductory talk, there are chairs to sit on.

Much of the visit is to the rooms on the 1st floor, via +23 steps, with a lift (D70 W100 L160) to bypass these on request. During the tour there are two other rooms with seats which can be used. The Egyptian Hall is very grand (and interesting). Wheelchair toilet (D90 ST80) on the GF, to the right of the guests cloakroom, and the corridor leading to the mens and womens toilets.

Monument
Monument Street EC3 8AH  Tel: 020 7626-2717  website: www.themonument.info
A giant Doric column commemorating the Great Fire of London. It is 62m high and lies the same distance from the supposed site of the outbreak of the fire in Pudding Lane. There are +311 spiralled steps, so it can hardly be described as accessible!

The recent development plan included arrangements for live views to be relayed from the gallery to visitors on the ground, especially useful to those for whom 311 steps is a problem.

Museum of London  see chapter on Museums & galleries.

Old Bailey (Central Criminal Court)
Old Bailey Road, EC4M 7EH  Tel: 020 7248-3277  website: www.cityoflondon.gov.uk (reached via City of London → Services → Advice and benefits → Legal advice → Central Criminal Court)
On the corner with Newgate Street, this is the central court complex where many famous criminal cases have been tried. It was located next to Newgate Prison.
It is, of course, an old building which was opened in 1907, and whose design does not lend itself to modifications which would improve access. All the courts have a public gallery, but these have fixed seating and small gangways.
Although virtually all of the public part of the building is not accessible, we were told that, on the ‘other side’ of the facility, for the court officials, lawyers, witnesses and those charged, changes are being made to make some of the courts accessible.
Courts 1-4 are entered from Newgate Street, with +60 or so steps. Court 18 is a further +17. From the entrance in Warwick Passage, Courts 13-16 are +30; Courts 5-8 +30+40, and Courts 9-12 are +30+40+40.

One courtroom where a visit might be possible for a chair user or disabled walker, is court 17. A specific visit would be an entirely chancy business, as the lists of which cases go where are only prepared the day before. If you are very keen to see/hear a case, we suggest that you turn up on the day at the main entrance, ask for Customer Services - and just see what is possible.

**Old Spitalfields Market**

16 Horner Square, Spitalfields, E1 6AA  Tel: 020 7247-8556  
websites: www.oldspitalfieldsmarket.com and www.visitspitalfields.com  
e-mail: info@oldspitalfieldsmarket.com  

A modern market development on the site of Spitalfields, some 500m east of Liverpool Street station. It is in an area known for its spirit and strong sense of community at the heart of the East End. It has been a place of almost constant change, and over the years has been a magnet to numerous waves of immigrants. The market lies between Brushfield Street and Lamb Street, and stretches for some 120m by 50m with a big office block in the centre. Much of it is covered. The surfaces are smooth, and it is mainly step-free, apart from ±2 steps which run along much of Brushfield Street. Some of the shops in the old buildings have a step or threshold at the entrance.

There’s a **wheelchair toilet (D75 ST80 NKS)** in a corner near Lamb Street, by the Wollstonecraft Gate.

The **Royal Exchange** is on the corner of Threadneedle Street and Cornhill, opposite the Bank of England. It was opened in 1844 to replace an earlier trading centre. In 2002 the central courtyard was reopened and contains a restaurant and bar, surrounded by some high class shops. There are +8 to10 steps at entrances on three sides, but there’s step-free access from the back, opposite the statue of Reuter. The ramps bypassing the small steps are slightly rough. The facades in and around the courtyard are magnificent, even if you can’t afford to go shopping! There’s a lift (D80 W100 L110) in the far right corner (from the step-free entrance). This goes to a further and much enlarged bar and restaurant gallery on the 1st floor, and there’s a **wheelchair toilet (D70+ ST70+)** in the basement, to the left from the lift.

**St Katharine Docks**

50 St Katharine’s Way, E1W 1LA  Tel: 020 7264 5318  
website: www.skdocks.co.uk  

A busy and attractive area by Tower Bridge, forming one of the earlier stages of the Docklands Development. The dock consists of three separate basins protected from the river tides by a lock. Various bridges can be opened to let the yachts in and out.
It is located alongside Tower Bridge between St Katharine’s Way, East Smithfield and Thomas More Street. It can be accessed by several different step-free routes, including the riverside walk by the Tower of London. The area is generally flat but there are some cobbled and bumpy sections. There are expensive boats (to view!), shops, restaurants, cafés, bars and offices. The website includes a good map showing what is where.

There are 4 BB spaces in Mews Street, behind the Dickens Inn which are protected by a security barrier with an intercom button. You can approach the spaces from St Katharine’s Way. If you come from Thomas More Street they are on your right when you get to the No Entry sign into St Katharine’s Way. We were told that any BB holders could park there, and did so ourselves. It is potentially a very useful location, from which people could visit the Bridge or Tower and come back for a drink or a meal afterwards at the Inn (which has a wheelchair toilet, accessed by a lift, see Recommended itineraries on the website, where other restaurants are also listed).

St Bartholomew the Great see chapter on Places of worship.
St Paul’s Cathedral see chapter on Places of worship.

Tower Bridge (Walkway & Exhibition)
SE1 2UP   Tel: 020 7403-3761
website: www.towerbridge.org.uk   e-mail: enquiries@towerbridge.org.uk
One of London’s major landmarks, completed in 1894. It houses a museum with an imaginative presentation of the history of the bridge, and there are potentially superb views from the walkways joining the towers. Unfortunately, some ramped platforms on the walkways to enable both chair users and young children to see properly, have been removed. These were put in more than ten years ago at our suggestion, and were enormously helpful to many. We understand that they have been removed so as to facilitate the use of the space for corporate events - to which we say Hmmmm....... So far we have failed to get them put back. Admission charge.

Entrance in the north-west tower, nearest the Tower of London. To avoid steps from the riverside, approach it along the main (elevated) Tower Bridge Road. Step-free access throughout the five floors via lifts (D120 W350 L150) at each end. These bypass some 200 steps. Visiting the engine room which houses the mechanism for raising the roadway to allow big ships to pass, is now much easier. There is a glass lift from the side of the bridge to get to the lower towpath level. Thus the distance involved is more like 100m, compared with the previous step-free route southwards of around 400m. It involved going along the bridge to its end, and doubling back along Horselydown Lane (which is what you would need to do if the lift isn’t working).

Adapted toilet (D90 ST65) on the 2nd floor of the SE tower, by the lift, and a wheelchair toilet (D90 ST75) in the engine room (see above).
PLACES OF INTEREST

Tower of London

Recommended Route
Step free but sometimes bumpy
Slope
Wheelchair toilet

Tower of London
Jewel House
White Tower
Tower Green
Execution Block

RIVER THAMES

Steps
Steps +22
Riverside Walk (part cobbled)

Visitor Centre

TICKETS

Petticoats

Lwr Thames St

Tower Place

Chair

All Hallows Church

CP

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**Tower of London**

Tower Hill EC3N 4AB  
*Tel:* 0844 482-7777 (the HRP switchboard)  
*DisEnq:* 020 3166-6266  
*Textphone:* 18001 0844 482-7777  
*website:* www.hrp.org.uk/toweroflondon  
*e-mail:* visitorservices.TOL@hrp.org.uk

One of London’s prime tourist attractions. The Tower is both a fortress and a royal palace, and its history goes back some 900 years. Significant admission charge.

There’s a CP at the end of Lower Thames Street with BB spaces a height restriction of 1.98m, and lift access (D80 W130 L130) to get in and out. Tower Gateway DLR station has step-free access.

There is smooth sloped access down Tower Hill from Byward Street and from Tower Place. A new *Ticket Office and Welcome Centre* are alongside Tower Hill on the right. There are also some new toilets off Petty Wales, including a *wheelchair toilet (D80 ST80)*. There’s a charge for the general toilets, but the accessible one uses the NKS and is free.

There may be long queues to get in on popular days such as bank holidays and summer weekends. **Chair users and other disabled visitors should make their presence known at the Welcome Centre (on the right, coming down the hill called Petty Wales).** There is an excellent *Access Guide* which you can download from the website. This is found under *Tower →Plan your visit→Visitor access*. They would post you a copy if you don’t have an internet connection. There’s also a good diagram (as a pdf file) on the Visit Planner page of the website, at the bottom, simply labeled Tower of London.

You need to allow at least 2 to 3 hours for a relaxed visit. There are accessible (ramped) catering facilities in the New Armouries Café. Audio-guides and conducted tours are available.

The Tower consists of a group of buildings with two surrounding walls. The inner area is roughly 250m square and many of the paths and courtyards are cobbled and sloping. Since the buildings are several hundred years old, access to many of them is a major challenge!

A complete visit to the various towers involves well over 200 steps, some of them irregular, spiraled and steep. **However, it’s possible to see a lot from outside and chair users can get in to see the Crown Jewels, and go down to the basement of the White Tower by lift.**

The flat/sloped route shown on the diagram, takes you through the Middle and Byward Towers and along Water Lane parallel to the river. On the left is the Gallery shop with step-free access. Turning left further on, go through the arch and up the hill past the White Tower, turn left again at the top, and the entrance to the Crown Jewels is on your right while that to the White Tower lift is on your left. Ahead is Tower Green where executions used to take place, and you’ll probably see some of the famous ravens. You have to go back by the same route,
and the whole distance is about 700/800m, partly cobbled. The **Jewel House**, where you can see the **Crown Jewels**, now has step-free access. Visitors pass through three halls, walking past large video presentations. You see the Jewels from a horizontal moving walkway. There are +3 steps to the viewing platform if you want to take a more leisurely look. The **White Tower** has 11+12+13+5 steps from the entrance towards the river. There is a lift (D75 W75 L130) which goes to the basement exhibition, accessed from the upper level opposite the Jewel House (via what is normally the White Tower exit). You need to ask one of the Yeoman Warders to be able to use it. The basement is −15 from the north (upper) exit.

The wheelchair toilet outside the Tower off Petty Wales has been described above. Inside the Tower there are only two **wheelchair toilets** for general use:

- one is behind the Jewel House (as shown on the diagram) where the attendant in either the womens or mens should have the key;
- the other is off the New Armouries Café, where there are also BCF, although to use it you’ll need to ask one of the staff.

We were told that there are additional accessible toilets in the educational facilities for school groups.

The **Ceremony of the Keys** is the ritual of locking up the Tower, which takes place every evening between 21.30 and 22.05, and has done so in much the same way for some 700 years. Apparently, it was a little late one night in 1941 when a bomb blew the escort off their feet. Admission by ticket only from the Keys Clerk at the Tower. Although there are no steps, for getting into the Tower, disabled visitors should mention their disability when applying.

From the entry gate the total distance involved is <250m, and note that there’s nowhere to sit down en route. The conventional exit is through a small door (for pedestrians) which is part of the main gate which has just been ceremonially locked. The bottom of this door is about 60cm high, and it’s quite narrow. Wheelchair users, and anyone else who might find this exit to be difficult will be escorted out using an alternative step-free route.

The advice on the website is that bookings must be at least two months in advance through the winter, and three months in the summer.

**Wesley’s House & Chapel**

49 City Road, EC1Y 1AU  *Tel:* 020 7253-2262

*website:* www.wesleyschapel.org.uk

*e-mail:* administration@wesleyschapel.org.uk

About 150m from Old Street tube station. A space in the small CP outside the chapel can be reserved. Via the back entrance to the House, there are −15 steps to
the basement, then +1−1, and +15 to the GF, +21 to the 1st floor and +21 to the 2nd. The front door gives flat access to the GF, which has two rooms. Audio guide available, describing the rest of the house.

Access to the Chapel is step-free, with lift (D80 W105 L140) access to the basement. This contains a Museum of Methodism, with uneven but step-free access, and a wheelchair toilet (D85 ST75).

**The South Bank & Southwark**

The south bank of the river opposite Westminster and the City, has developed rapidly in recent years. There is a pleasant riverside walk along much of it, going from near Westminster Bridge by the old County Hall, right the way along to Tower Bridge. There is a longer description of the route in the chapter entitled *Recommended itineraries*. There are several accessible tube stations relatively near this part of the riverside, and the RV1 bus route from Covent Garden to Tower Gateway as well. There are accessible toilets in the Festival Hall, British Film Institute, National Theatre, OXO Tower, Tate Modern, Shakespeare’s Globe, Southwark Cathedral, Hays Galleria (though you need to get a key from security staff for this one) and City Hall. There are also accessible toilets in several pubs en route, notably the *Founders Arms* and the *Anchor*.

Parking at the Festival Hall and National Theatre end is relatively good, in that there are three CPs along Belvedere Road, but fewer choices at the Tower Bridge end. There’s a Q-Park at Butler’s Wharf in Gainsford Street, although this doesn’t appear to have any BB spaces, nor a lift.

Some of the sights are grouped around the Jubilee gardens, notably the London Eye, London Aquarium, London Dungeon, and the Festival Hall complex. Others are grouped near Tate Modern, with the Millennium Bridge linking across to St Paul’s Cathedral. There’s another group between Southwark and London Bridges, and then there’s HMS Belfast and Tower Bridge.

Note the viewing gallery in the Shard by London Bridge station.

**Anchor pub** (Bankside), 34 Park Street, Bank End, SE1 9EF *Tel: 020 7407-1577*

On the riverside by Cannon Street railway bridge, at the junction with Bank End. Attached to the Premier Inn. The pub dates from the late 17thC, after the Southwark fire of 1676 and is full of split levels. There is, however, a step-free entrance on the corner as you come from the west and the Millennium Bridge. This leads to a GF bar where 30% is step-free. **Wheelchair toilet (D80 ST70 but somewhat congested)** with BCF on the GF, through the door marked ‘toilets’.

Just to the right is a platform lift (D100 L130) going to the 1st floor where there’s another bar/eating area. There is a ±1 [10cm] threshold to get to the outside seating at this level.

The riverside terrace across the road has step-free access from Bankside and moveable chairs and tables. A very pleasant spot in the summer.
Bankside Gallery see chapter on Museums & galleries.
Belfast see HMS Belfast below.

Borough Market
website: www.boroughmarket.org.uk
Under railway arches this market is located between High Street and Southwark cathedral. There’s an early morning fruit and vegetable market which closes around 09.00. There’s a range of bars and eating places that would be quite lively on weekends and lunchtimes. The wheelchair toilet off Jubilee market towards the cathedral end was locked when we visited.

Britain at War Experience
64 Tooley Street, SE1 2TF Tel: 020 7403-3171
website: www.britainatwar.co.uk
This small exhibition attempts to recreate the fury of the London blitz and to articulate people’s other experiences during WW2. You can sit in an Anderson shelter and hear the raids overhead.
Ramped entrance. There is a route without steps, but you need staff help. There’s a door to bypass the +1−1 steps into the simulated lift (to the underground). The room where the film is shown about the history of the war has movable seats. The Anderson shelter is step-free with two side benches, and space in the middle for a wheelchair user. You can hear the sounds of war with both the air raid warning siren, and the all clear. The sinister wail of the air raid warning is the abiding memory of all who lived through the war.
The Rainbow Club room has +3, but you can see in. The Blitz Experience area is normally reached +3+9 −11, but can be accessed step-free if you ask a staff member. There is an adapted toilet (D70 ST40).

Bubblecafé
Blossom Square, Potters Field Park, More London SE1 2AA Tel: 020 7407-9760
Located right by Tower Bridge but on the riverside level. A small café with both inside and outside eating and sitting areas. Wheelchair toilet (D80 ST70).

City Hall
Queen’s Walk, SE1 2AA Tel: 020 7983-4100 Textphone: 020 7983-4458
website: www.london.gov.uk/city-hall
City Hall is located on the south bank of the Thames, halfway between Tower Bridge and HMS Belfast, near one end of the Riverside Walk.
The newly constructed offices of the Mayor of the Greater London Authority is often described as a glass onion. Its design makes great use of glass, and the Council Chamber is surrounded by glass so that it’s easy to look in and see what is happening. The architect has made extensive use of curved ramps in the building. There is public access to galleries in the Council Chamber.
The main entrance is through two revolving doors from the riverside, but there’s
an alternative entrance for chair users some 15m away through a conventional
door. There is the usual bag search procedure as you come in. The building has
ten floors, but the public only has access to the GF, LGF, and to floor 2 to see the
council chamber, and attend meetings when the council is sitting.
The GF is a reception area. At the back of the GF are two public lifts (D100
W120 L180).
A curved ramp in the centre of the building leads down to the LGF which is
entirely step-free. It houses ten public meeting rooms and a universal prayer
room. There is also a café and an impressive scale model of central London, best
viewed from the ramp.
Floors 1 and 2 house the Assembly Chamber where council meetings take place.
You can get a good view, even when the council is not sitting. Next to the lift
on floor 2, there are spaces for wheelchair users at the back of the large public
gallery. There are also some spaces at the front, but access to these must be
arranged in advance. You will be escorted to the 1st floor via separate lifts, which
are identical and immediately next to the public lifts, but are behind a security
barrier.
All the meeting rooms have an induction loop.
There are wheelchair toilets:
• on the GF opposite the entrance and near the lifts. This is a Changing places
  facility, with BCF. It is spacious, and with a hoist to facilitate transfer to a
temporary chair which fits over the toilet (if needed);
• on the LGF between meeting rooms 5 and 6, where the wheelchair toilet
  (D90 ST100) also has BCF.

Clink Prison
1 Clink Street, SE1 9DG  Tel: 020 7403-0900  website: www.clink.co.uk
Located under the railway arches leading to Cannon Street with a cobbled stretch
outside. Admission charge. There are −10 steps down to the ticket office where
there is a turnstile W50 to gain access. The prison is small and there are −2 and
then +10 to get out via a separate exit (bypassing the turnstile).

Design Museum see chapter on Museums & galleries.

Gabriel’s Wharf
website: www.coinstreet.org/developments/gabrielswharf
A small, flat pedestrianised area located on the South Bank between the National
Theatre and the OXO tower, off Upper Ground. It has eateries and bars together
with a number of shops which have step-free access. There’s a slope down from
the riverside walk. There are two adapted toilets (D85 ST85 inward opening
door NKS) next to the Studio 6 bar/restaurant. Outdoor seating in the summer.

Garden Museum see chapter on Museums and galleries.
**Hays Galleria**
Tooley Street, SE1 2HD  
*website:* www.haysgalleria.co.uk

Situated just opposite Weston Street, this is an attractive development on the riverside on the site of an old tea wharf. The centrepiece is a covered courtyard with a remarkable working sculpture of a fantasy ship in the middle. There are good views of *HMS Belfast* and Tower Bridge from the river frontage, and several restaurants and shops, together with a pub. Most of the shops have flat access and there are some stalls. What is disappointing, is that the new *Horniman* pub and *Côte Brasserie* restaurant have split levels. The planning permission regulations don’t seem to work somewhere along the line.

On the approach to the Galleria from Tooley Street, there are some cobbled roads, presumably left to retain some of the areas original character. Around the Galleria there are ramped bypasses to all the steps, though they’re not always obvious. There are several eating places with flat access, including a large *Café Rouge*. During the summer most of them have outside tables which are easily accessible. The upper, rather cramped parts of the *Horniman* pub, are step-free. There are −5 steps to the bar, or −2 through a side entrance.

The situation over toilets would be laughable if it wasn’t so infuriating. There are three wheelchair toilets on site, one inside, off the reception area of Counting House (near Tooley Street), one off the reception of Shackleton House (to the right of the four curved steps in the centre) and one ostensibly public one, with a green door, to the left of the four curved steps.

This is kept locked, and has a notice on it saying “*Accessible toilet. To gain access please contact security on 020 7403-3583.*”

There is a key held at Shackleton House on the opposite side to the Galleria, or you can ask any of the staff at the various restaurants to call security for you. It is a [wheelchair toilet](D75+ ST75+). In our view, this isn’t a very satisfactory arrangement, and we suggested that it should be fitted with a RADAR NKS lock.

**HMS Belfast**
Morgans Lane, Tooley Street SE1 2JH  
*Tel:* 020 7940-6300  
*website:* www.iwm.org.uk/belfast

This cruiser saw service during WW2, and supported the Normandy landings. She was active until 1965 and served in Korea. She is now permanently moored on the riverside just upstream of Tower Bridge and run by the Imperial War Museum. Significant admission charge.

In the description below, we have used numbers from the *Audio points* on the Visitor Map/plan you will be given with your ticket.

To get on board from the riverside Queen’s Walk, the distance, going via the ticket office/shop and along the gangway is nearly 150m. The shop area is quite congested. If you take the right-hand side of the gangway you can use the platform lift (D80 L130) at the end to bypass the −4 steps to the deck.

They have gone to considerable lengths to make parts of the ship accessible,
and chair users can get to most of the Quarter Deck (where you arrive) and of the Upper Deck.

Going up to see the bridge and wireless room, and down to the engine room, involves steep ladders and well over 100 steps, and is only possible for the relatively agile. In spite of this, there’s enough to see in the accessible parts of the ship to make it a really interesting visit. While there are certainly some slightly uneven surfaces on the two accessible decks, and some ridges to get over, generally they have done a good job in easing/improving access for chair users. There’s a platform lift (D80 L130) near the torpedo and between 4 and 6 on the plan, to get to the upper deck (and to avoid having to use the steep ramp). On the upper deck it’s by 30. It is shown on the plan, but you have to look very closely to see exactly where it is.

There’s a wheelchair toilet (D90 ST100+) on the Quarterdeck level, which is about 40-50m along the left side of the ship from your arrival point via the lift. It is very spacious, and as a result was also being used as a storeroom for two spare chairs. For some reason it is not shown on the plan.

On the website we found an interesting Virtual Tour of the ship with some additions to the information generally available, including the following:

- “School classes and youth groups, from aged 8, can now sleepover in unique, stimulating and affordable accommodation on board. HMS Belfast’s sleepover provides the opportunity to experience what it is like to live and sleep in 1950s renovated messdecks. Children sleep in original bunks, with authentic lockers. Modern shower facilities are available and separate cabins with en-suite for adults.”

What one can do in 2012! It was never like that on warships when I grew up .......

London Aquarium (SeaLife)
County Hall, Riverside Building, Westminster Bridge Road, SE1 7PB
Tel: 0871 663-1678 (tickets)
websites: www.londonaquarium.co.uk and www.visitsealife.com/london/
e-mail: sllondon@merlinentertainments.biz

The aquarium is in the basement of the former Greater London Council headquarters, where three huge tanks have been installed together with several smaller tanks, all containing fish and sea creatures from different parts of the world.

Substantial admission charge (and note that this is another Merlin Entertainments site).

A wheelchair can be borrowed if you leave a deposit of £200 (Hmmmmm......). This is completely out of line with what happens in other places.

The entrance is from the riverside close to the London Eye. From Westminster Bridge there are 40+ steps, but there is step-free access via Belvedere Road and Chicheley Street through the Jubilee Gardens. The route is some 600m from the top of the steps from the bridge.

Step-free entrance, and the aquarium is accessible throughout without steps using the lifts. The distance involved is roughly 750m. There are almost no seats
en route. Some passages have a low level of lighting. The two lifts (D90 W140 L200) take you to level −2 and then the route leads upwards. It takes you through different regional zones where you can see the large Indian Ocean, Pacific Ocean and Atlantic Ocean tanks, along with freshwater fish. In between the big tanks, there is a series of small tanks with different groups of species which you can also view from the side. Most of these tanks can be viewed by young children and chair users, though in a few the window is quite high up and therefore more difficult to see from a low eyeline. The rays tank is accessed via a slight ramp and seeing them is not a problem. Most displays are easily seen by a chair user. The tanks are well lit, but the corridors are often quite dark. There’s a single lift at the other end, alongside an escalator to get up to level −1, where there are more exhibits including another view of the big tanks. From here you can take a lift (D130 W150 L200) to the shark walk where you look down through a glass floor, bypassing a set of stairs. Then you take the same lift back to level −1. From here you can exit using another lift or there’s an escalator further down the marked route. Before leaving there is a shop. There are wheelchair toilets all of which included BCF:
• on the GF to the right of the lifts that take you down to level −2 (D80 ST80);
• on level −2 near the entrance to the Thames Walk (D90 ST80); and,
• on level −1 between the rivers/ponds section and the Pacific tank (D90 ST110).

London Bridge Experience & London Tombs
2 Tooley Street, London Bridge, SE1 2PF  Tel: 0800 0434-666
website: www.thelondonbridgeexperience.com
Located directly under the Bridge, and on the Thameside Path, it can be approached either from London Bridge station along Tooley Street or from the Borough Street market past the Southwark Cathedral refectory. There is a significant admission charge, but The Experience offers a unique interactive attraction with actors playing various roles. You can reduce the cost quite a lot by booking online. You go through a succession of dark and dingy rooms with impressive displays and special effects, covering the entire history of the bridge. Then you descend into the Tombs where there are a whole range of scares and surprises. It is all very dark, and there are strobe lights, loud noises, and (the only bit a chair user would have to bypass) the Big Squeeze where the walls come in and try to squeeze the life out of you. It is NOT an attraction for the faint hearted, but our survey team were impressed. You go around in groups of about 12-15. The site is quite compact, and most of the floor surfaces are reasonably smooth. There’s only one slightly unexpected short slope and a small +1−1 over a short bridge in the Tombs. It IS dark, almost throughout. There’s a platform lift (D90 W90 L120) to bypass the ±19 steps between the two levels. A chair user (with
strong nerves! can see and do almost everything, and there’ll be a staff member on hand to guide you through any bypass when necessary (particularly for the Big Squeeze).
A visit takes about an hour, and you’ll be able to sit down three times en route for various presentations and confrontations.
Café, shop and toilets at the end of the visit. The adapted toilet (D70 ST30) had a washbasin blocking the ST space and we suggested moving it to another wall when we visited.

**London Dungeon**
Riverside Building, County Hall, Westminster Bridge Road, SE1 7PB
*Tel: 0871 423-2240  website: www.thedungeons.com/london/en  e-mail: londondungeon@merlinentertainments.biz*
Situated between the Eye and the Aquarium, the Dungeon consists of a series of dark vaults with gruesome actor-led tableaux. The stories represent some of the darker and grimmer aspects of British history. You will find ghosts, the Plague and the Great Fire of London.
It moved to this site from Tooley Street, where it had been for many years.
There’s a surprisingly good description about Accessibility on the website.
Substantial admission charge and you may be asked for ‘proof of disability’ to justify free entry by a carer/companion. Entry is based on time slots and queues outside.
There are +6 steps at the entrance, but they have a Stairclimber to facilitate (manual) wheelchair users to get in. Electric chair users need to contact the Dungeon in advance, and will need to come in via the London Eye booking hall (see the London Eye write-up). This is the normal exit route from the Dungeon.
The number of chair users in the venue is limited to 1 per tour group, and a total of 3 in the building at any one time.
The floor surfaces are quite rough in places and it’s dark inside, with eerie sound effects and some strobe lighting. The tour is spread over two levels, so there are some steps. Staff members will show you step-free routes if you ask, and there’s a platform lift. There are two places where the floor ‘shakes’ briefly from side to side, and disabled walkers need to be aware of this. The first is during the initial ‘Descent’ and the other is in the Guy Fawkes section.
The site is quite small, and a visit takes about 90 minutes. You go around with a group of about 25 into a series of quite small caverns. In order to see, those with a low eyeline need to position themselves towards the front. Hopefully the ‘cast’ will facilitate this, but don’t rely on them as this didn’t happen when we visited. There are few opportunities for sitting down.
Care is needed because of low lighting levels and uneven floor surfaces. You can expect to be startled by loud noises, and members of the cast may jump out at you in the dark.
You’ll need to take your own view about participating in the two rides. The first
is a boat trip where you will get wet and the other (at the end) is a sudden drop to replicate the drop when people have been executed by hanging. Both involve transferring to a seat at a different height from a wheelchair, and will need you to have some body strength in being able to sit vertically. The warnings from the owners are written (as is quite common these days) more to protect themselves from litigation than to provide practical advice. With appropriate help, people may be able to cope, though both rides can be bypassed, and if you need to do this, just ask.

There’s a wheelchair toilet (D80 ST85) just past the entrance foyer (marked Knights). The mens and womens toilets are adjacent (labelled Kings and Queens). There are other wheelchair accessible toilets at the end of the tour in the London Eye reception area.

The exit is through the shop which leads into the 4D Experience and London Eye reception area which is ramped at the end of the building.

**London Eye**

Riverside Building, County Hall, Westminster Bridge Road, SE17PB

*Tel:* bookings 0871 781-3000  *DisEnq/bookings:* 0871 222-0188

*Textphone:* use the prefix 18001  *Customer services:* 0870 990-8883

*website:* www.londoneye.com  
*e-mail:* accessiblebooking@londoneye.com

The London Eye is a huge observation wheel on the riverside near Westminster Bridge and by a corner of Jubilee Gardens. Erected to mark the Millennium, it is some 135m high and dominates the London skyline. The pods (or capsules) are mounted on the outside of the rim of the wheel, and electric motors independently rotate each pod to keep it upright.

The area around, and alongside the river is flat.

Significant admission charge. It is part of the Merlin Entertainments group.

The Eye closes for part of January for essential maintenance.

There are BB spaces some 300 to 600m away on Belvedere Road, under the Hayward Gallery and under the National Theatre. The accessible JLE tube stations at Waterloo and Westminster are both about 800m away. From Westminster, go over Westminster bridge.

The London Eye ticket office is in the corner of County Hall, with a rather badly signed ramp on the side of the building past the *Zen café/kiosk* to bypass the +6 steps at the principal entrance opposite the Eye. You have to go back towards Chicheley Street. At busy times, most people pre-book a timed slot for their ‘flight’. This can be done either by phone or on-line. It is also possible to just turn up and go, though at busy times you may have to wait a while. The ‘flight’ lasts for about half an hour.

Wheelchairs are available on loan from the customer service desk inside the ticket office foyer, but a deposit of £350 is required, using a credit card (!).
did query this (as it seems to be a quite extraordinary requirement), but were told
that this is correct. It’s now included on the website, but is totally out of line with
practice elsewhere at London’s attractions.
There’s an information page for disabled guests on the website. Only two chair
users are allowed in each capsule, with a maximum of eight using the wheel at
any one time.
From the riverside walk, the approach to the Eye itself is up a ramp about 40m
long. For chair users the staff will stop the wheel and slot in a little cover plate
to make getting in and out easier. Each capsule or pod takes up to thirty people.
There’s a central seat, but most people stand up and move around during the flight
to see the views on different sides. There’s adequate room for a chair user.
There are two wheelchair toilets (D80 ST90) both with BCF, off the ticket
office foyer. You have to go 100m from the start of the outside ramp all the way
through the foyer (turning first right, and then left) to reach the loos. The foyer is
commonly congested and busy, as it’s where people buy or collect tickets.

London Fire Brigade Museum
94a Southwark Bridge Road, SE1 0EG  Tel: 020 8555-1200 ext: 39894
website: www.london-fire.gov.uk
For prearranged group tours only, just over 120m from the junction with
Marshalsea road. Admission charge. The museum holds exhibits depicting the
history of firefighting in the capital from the Great Fire of London in 1666, up
to and including the present day. The half of the museum with the larger exhibit
is accessible step-free. The other half containing smaller artifacts can only be
reached by flights of curved stairs but specific items can be brought out to the
main room on request. The wheelchair toilet (D80 ST90+) with BCF is on the
far side of the exhibition hall on the GF.

Old St Thomas’s Operating Theatre
9A St Thomas’ Street, SE1 9RY  Tel: 020 7188-2679
website: www.thegarret.org.uk  e-mail: curator@thegarret.org.uk
West of Guy’s hospital and about 60m from Borough High Street. The museum
is in the barn-like roof space in a church tower, and used in the 19thC as an
operating theatre before the days of anaesthetics. Admission charge.
Access is difficult even for the fit and able. It involves +1+2 steps, and then +34
up a narrow spiral staircase with only a vertical rope handrail to hang on to. This
leads to the ticket desk. Then there are +17, through a walkway W53cm, then
−2. Access to the operating theatre where doctors demonstrated their techniques
to colleagues and students, is via +1−2, or +1+10−6 via the balcony where the
audience sat. The staff are willing to organise an educational tour/event in nearby
premises for groups who would find the physical access to the museum to be too
challenging, describing the development of medical techniques over the centuries.
**Oxo Tower**
Oxo Tower Wharf, Barge House Street, South Bank, SE1 9PH  
Tel: 020 7803-3888  
website: www.harveynichols.com/oxo-tower-london  
e-mail: oxo.reservations@harveynichols.com  
The tower was built in 1928 to advertise a meat extract. It now houses some shops and restaurants at riverside level, and a bar and restaurant on the eighth floor together with the public viewing gallery from which you can get superb views. The Riverside Walk entrance is flat and there are two large lifts at the back. On the riverside level there are two eateries and there’s a **wheelchair toilet (D90 ST90+)** on the same level in the U-shaped loop that goes past the lifts. The loo is on the Gabriel’s Wharf side.  
On the 8th floor is the Oxo Tower bar, brasserie and restaurant which is step-free with good views. **Part of the balcony/viewing area is in fact a ‘public’ area, reached via a public right of way**, so even though it looks as though it’s part of a privately owned bar, you don’t have to buy an expensive drink! **Adapted cubicle (D70 ST65)** with BCF in the mens toilets on the 8th floor, and we assume that the womens is the same.

**Shakespeare’s Globe Museum** see chapter on Museums & galleries.  
**Southwark Cathedral** see chapter on Places of worship.  
**St George’s RC Cathedral** see chapter on Places of worship.  
**Tate Modern** see chapter on Museums & galleries

**The Shard**  
Joiner Street, SE1 9SP  
Tel: 0844 499-7111 (for bookings) website: www.the-shard.com  
see: http://www.theviewfromtheshard.com/#plan-your-visit/visitor-information  
e-mail: enquiries@theviewfromtheshard.com  
The Shard is a dramatic addition to the London skyline. At 310m (1,016ft), it is the tallest building in Western Europe housing hotels and offices, as well as two viewing platforms which have step-free access.  
**The view over all the Thames-side sights is superb, and you look down on the diminutive Tower of London. Seeing the extent of the railway network, with its toy-size trains moving from station to station is remarkable. You may also see maintenance teams going past outside in well secured cradles, keeping the windows clean!**  

It is located between London Bridge station and Guy’s Hospital. The station is built on a massive viaduct, above ground, and is currently being redeveloped. **The View** is approached from ground level on Joiner Street.  
If you come to London Bridge on the Jubilee line and use the lift, you go through the ticket barriers, and turn right, using the only step-free exit which leads into Joiner Street. You turn right again into an underground passageway underneath
the NR station. After about 100m, you come out into the open air, and just before that is the entrance to The View on your left. If you approach it from St Thomas Street, go to the junction between Joiner Street and Great Maze Pond, where Guy’s Hospital is. The entrance to The View is about 50m up Joiner Street on the right, just past the escalators. It is surprisingly unobtrusive, with just a couple of staff members standing outside a small door. Signage in the area to help you find it is poor. A lift from the Joiner Street entrance bypasses the steps up to the 1st floor booking hall.

**Very significant admission charge**, with discounts for disabled visitors and their carers/companions. Entrance is in a series of half-hour time slots, though you are then free to spend as long as you like on the two viewing platforms. If you’re not familiar with London’s buildings, buying the Guidebook before going up is potentially a good investment. Because of the cost, and the possible effect (on the view) of low cloud and rain, there’s a fine balance between saving money by booking on-line in advance, and waiting until you’re sure of good visibility.

**The only toilets are in the 1st floor booking hall area**, and when we visited the provision was seriously inadequate, as there are just six unisex cubicles off a narrow corridor, where people were queueing. One cubicle is a wheelchair cubicle (D90 ST150) with BCF. The management said that there are plans to provide more toilets, but this may mean that the provisions aren’t unisex any more. Note that there’s a unisex wheelchair toilet at GF level off Joiner Street as part of London Bridge station. The 1st floor hall with its queues, ticket desk, shop and security check, is quite congested. As with the viewing platforms, there is nowhere to sit down, although the management say that there are now some seats in the booking hall, and that some ‘seating on request’ can be provided on the viewing platforms. Talk to the staff. Disabled visitors are taken by a staff member, bypassing the queue, to the security check - which is operated airport style. A lift then takes you to floor 33, and another one goes to floor 68. The View is on floors 69 and 72, and you can either take the stairs, or use an ‘internal’ lift which links the three levels 68, 69 and 72. Floor 69 is an enclosed viewing area, with glass windows right down to floor level, so the view is superb. Floor 72 is a similar area, but is open in the corners, and so can get quite blowy. It is 240m (800ft) high, and can be, literally, up in the clouds. Floor 69 has some interactive telescopes which will help identify some of the nearby buildings. These are around 1 to 1.1m high, and although the mount will swivel around, they won’t suit everybody. We noted that on Floor 72 there are some horizontal handrails by the windows, useful to some disabled walkers, but there are no handrails on Floor 69.
On Floor 72 you get to the lift by going through a door marked ‘No exit’.

**Vinopolis**

1 Bank End, SE1 9BU  
Tel: 020 7940-8322  
website: www.vinopolis.co.uk  
e-mail: events@vinopolis.co.uk

Situated at the junction with Clink Street, right by the Anchor pub and under the railway arches. Vinopolis offers wine tastings and a self-guided interactive tour covering ‘the world of wine’.

Very significant charges for various tastings. A full tour will take you some 400m, and might last a couple of hours if you linger over your wine tasting. The venue is sometimes hired out for events.

**The step-free entrance is through the Cantina and Bar Blue on the corner**, though when we visited, two signs on the door pointed to the ‘main’ entrance some 20m along Bank End where there are +3 steps. If it’s easier, go in through the bar!

It is step-free throughout, though a few of the surfaces are slightly rough.

**Adapted toilet (D75 ST60 - the side wall is angled)** with BCF, near the main entrance/exit, and some 15m to the left past the ticket desk. On the way round you will go past the Wine Wharf restaurant where a platform lift (W80 L110) bypasses +3 steps, and there’s a **wheelchair toilet (D70 ST70)**.

**Docklands**

An extensive area to the east of London where there has been massive redevelopment, mainly of business and commercial premises. It is served by the only fully step-free access transport system in London, the DLR. This runs mostly at a high level from the Bank or Tower Gateway to Lewisham, Beckton and/or Stratford. It goes to Greenwich, and a trip is recommended in itself, as it provides good views of the redeveloped area. The main part of docklands is north of the river and stretches for nearly 10km eastwards. The area starts at Tower Bridge.

St Katharine Dock is described in the City section. A leaflet called Discover London’s real history is available on the DLR website (www.dlr/london.co.uk/history.aspx). It provides a well written and interesting account of what you can see in the area.

The dominating landmark is the Canary Wharf office development which was the tallest building in Britain until the Shard was built near London Bridge station. There’s the O2 Arena on the south side of the river, the Museum in Docklands and an interesting little farm on the Isle of Dogs. together with the City Airport further east. There are an increasing number of budget priced hotels with accessible rooms. Near the airport is the ExCel exhibition centre. During quiet times when there are no big exhibitions or major meetings, some of these hotels can be quite cheap to stay in, and near DLR (accessible) stations.
Canary Wharf shops
Under the Canary Wharf office block is a substantial underground centre with both shops and restaurants, see www.mycanarywharf.com. There are a number of interlinked malls at/under Cabot Place, Jubilee Place, Churchill Place and Canada Place. Maps/plans are available showing all the malls, but these are not always easy to follow. Signage showing the links is not particularly good, but there are usually security staff around who can tell you how to get from one mall to the next step-free. All have accessible toilets.

ExCel London
One Western Gateway, Royal Victoria Dock, E16 1XL Tel: 020 7069-5000 website: www.excel-london.co.uk e-mail: info@excel-london.co.uk
ExCeL is a massive international exhibition and convention centre. It hosts a huge variety of events in a cavernous but rather soulless building measuring nearly 500m by 200m. It is located some 10km east of central London, and is almost level with the Thames Flood Barrier. There are numerous BB spaces in a CP for more than 3500 cars. Custom House DLR station is some 200m from the west end while Prince Regent station is just over 300m from the east end. Access is step-free throughout using various lifts. There are numerous bars and catering outlets, and adequate (though not generous) provision of accessible toilets. From some meeting rooms you may have to go to a different floor to find one. Changing places facility at the east end on the GF.

Mudchute Park and Farm
Pier Street, Isle of Dogs, E14 3HP Tel: 020 7515-5901 website: www.mudchute.org e-mail: info@mudchute.org
The mudchute was formed from silt out of the Millwall docks together with waste clinker from local industries. The area is now wonderfully quiet, and there’s a delightful (and totally unexpected) urban farm with sheep, cattle, pigs, goats, chickens, rabbits and riding stables. There’s even a llama. Local groups organise riding for disabled people. The farm occupies an area of something over 150x150m. The DLR stations at Crossharbour and Mudchute are both some 400-500m from the main farm buildings - which are on the other side of the farm. There’s a small CP just inside the gate at the end of Pier Street about 100m from the main buildings. You might alternatively use the adjacent ASDA CP which has 30+ BB spaces and there’s an entrance in the far right corner. BB holders may also be able to park just outside the entrance to the courtyard. Ring first to reserve a space. The yard is in the middle of a building measuring about 50m by 20m with a step-free shop, café and wheelchair toilet (D85 ST80). There are BCF in the womens toilets. You can feed and touch many of the animals in the pens behind the building. There are rough slightly hilly paths around parts of the farm and there’s a largely paved perimeter path W65-70 in places which is about 700m long. When it’s been raining, some paths and routes can become quite muddy.
**Museum in Docklands** see chapter on *Museums and galleries*.

**O2 Arena**
Peninsula Square, SE10 0DX  
Tel: 020 8463 2000  DisEnq: 020 8463 3359 (for both bookings and BB parking)  
Textphone: 18001 020 8463 3359  website: www.theo2.co.uk  
e-mail: customerservices@theo2.co.uk  access@theo2.co.uk

Under the iconic Dome roof, there is the huge Arena, a live music club (indigO2), an 11 screen multiplex cinema, an exhibition centre (the O2 bubble), and an entire street of bars, restaurants and leisure attractions (Entertainment Avenue). The Arena has a capacity of around 20,000, and has adequate provision for wheelchair spaces, seats with step-free access, and of accessible toilets. The lower, generally more expensive seats have the easiest access. The upper levels are considerably steeper, although there are handrails which make climbing the steps both easier and safer.

There are more than 2000 parking places with three different areas of BB spaces all about 400m from the venue. For big events booking is strongly advised. The accessible North Greenwich station is on the JLE, and is only about 200m away. Thames Clippers have an ‘accessible’ pier if you are coming by boat.

There’s a good Sitemap on the website.

There are a number of exhibition spaces, one of which was occupied by **Britain’s Museum of Popular Music** see www.britishmusicexperience.com. This is on the 1st floor, and can be accessed by lift.

Around Entertainment Avenue, all the main bars and restaurants have an **accessible toilet**, and we checked eight of them. Some of the toilets were located upstairs, but are accessed by an internal platform lift. Check before you order if you’re likely to want to use it.

Basically, as a modern venue, everywhere is wheelchair accessible (either at ground level, or by lift), but quite significant distances may be involved, especially if you don’t know your way around.

North Greenwich tube station has an **adapted toilet**. There’s a **wheelchair toilet** part way along Entertainment Avenue. Others are near wheelchair spaces. There’s a **Changing places** facility on Level 1, Block 106.

**Holborn, Bloomsbury and the Strand**
This comprises four areas in the Eyewitness guide, with important sites and sights like the British Library, British Museum and the Royal Opera House. It includes Bloomsbury, Covent Garden and Trafalgar Square and extends as far north as the Euston Road.

**British Library** see chapter on *Museums & galleries*. 
British Museum see chapter on Museums & galleries.

Building Centre
Store Street, WC1E 7BT Tel: 020 7692-4000
website: www.buildingcentre.co.uk e-mail: reception@buildingcentre.co.uk
Houses interesting architectural and design exhibitions, and is an independent forum providing information to all sectors involved in building.
Located on a corner of South Crescent, almost opposite Alfred Place.
The entrance is step-free with a revolving door, but there is a conventional door W80 to bypass this. There are three floors, linked by a lift (D80 W160 L105).
Most of the centre is step-free, and the +4 steps on the GF can be bypassed using a platform stairlift. The +2 in the basement can be bypassed using a ramped route.
Some seating, and small GF café.
There are wheelchair toilets:
• in the basement (D90 ST90 NKS) but with a button flush that is virtually unusable
• on the GF just 10m before the +4 steps, to the right down a little corridor, and then it’s on your left (D80 ST90) with a much easier flush mechanism.
Note that for specialist information about architecture and accessibility the Centre for Accessible Environments (www.cae.org.uk) is the relevant agency complementing the work of the Building Centre.

Brunswick Square, by the Foundling Museum (WC1N 1AZ), provides a quiet leafy spot ideal for a rest or a picnic.

Chinatown is centred around Gerrard Street just north of Leicester Square. It has brightly coloured Chinese gates at each end, and is pedestrianised with smooth surfaces throughout. Most restaurants have at least one step at the entrance, but a few are step-free or have only a tiny lip. A really good place to go for the Chinese New Year celebrations.

Corams Fields
93 Guilford Street, WC1N 1DN Tel: 020 7837-6138
website: www.coramsfields.org e-mail: info@coramsfields.org.uk
An open playground now occupies the site of the original Foundling Hospital established in 1739. It was opened under its new name “Coram’s Fields” in 1936.
To visit, any adult has to be accompanied by a child!
It has a wide variety of facilities including lawns for free play (suitable for family picnics), artificial turf sports pitches, a paddling pool, sandpits, slides, a pets corner (with sheep, goats, ducks, and hens), a vegetarian café, a nursery and drop-ins for under 5’s as well lots of organised activities.
The organisers aim to make all of the play areas are suitable for use by children with disabilities, including a new sensory play area. There are children’s toilets
including some accessible to disabled children. The main unisex accessible toilet/ 
changing area has a hoist and showering facilities that would be large enough for 
an adult to use (D105 ST105).

Covent Garden is the area around the Royal Opera House and just north of 
the Strand. It is a development on the site of the old Covent Garden fruit and 
vegetable market. 
It’s a lively place and is often crowded, especially in the evening. There are 
plenty of small shops and stalls and there is frequently open-air entertainment 
from buskers, small music groups and Punch & Judy shows. 
Note that parts of the Opera House are open during the day. 
Parking can be quite a challenge, but there’s an NCP at Parker Street, Parker 
Mews WC2B 5NT with 2 BB spaces. In the evenings the single yellow lines rule 
for BB holders is valid after 18.00. 
Access by underground from the Piccadilly line involves less hassle than at most 
stations. Getting off the train there are +19 steps, and then a lift. The nearest 
‘accessible’ station is Westminster. 
Little thought has been given to the needs of disabled visitors except in the 
provision of toilets, and even these aren’t brilliant. Surfaces are commonly a bit 
bumpy, and consist mainly of cobbles or rough paving. There’s an unavoidable 
step at the far end of the Apple Market. 
The shops are mostly small, and with +1 or +2 steps. However, there are a good 
number of market stalls, restaurants and cafés with step-free access. It’s therefore 
easy just to stop for a coffee or a glass of wine. Much of the area is under cover, 
so it’s a good place if the weather is uncertain. There’s an open-air crafts market 
(that is, open at the ends but roofed over) on the south side. 
Wheelchair cubicles (D85 ST85 NKS) with BCF in both the mens and womens 
public toilets on Tavistock Court. They were described by our surveyor as being 
‘somewhat congested’ and are located on the south side, between the Jubilee Hall 
Sports Centre and the London Transport Museum. 
The Punch & Judy is the main central pub, and must rate as (probably) having 
the most inaccessible bars in London, involving either +30 or −30 steps. This 
didn’t deter one of our more intrepid survey teams, who made it up to the balcony 
overlooking the entertainments area so that our chair user could get a good view ! 
Nearby restaurants which have step-free access and a wheelchair toilet (and 
BCF) include: 
Masala Zone (Indian), 48 Floral Street, WC2E 9DA, Tel: 020 7379-0101, and 
Pizza Express, 9 Bow Street, WC2E 7AH, Tel: 020 7240-3443 (there’s a step-free 
way in to bypass the +2 at the entrance. Just ring the bell). 
Both are near the main Opera House entrance from Bow Street. 
There’s an extended list of accessible pubs and restaurants in the area which we 
include on the website under Recommended itineraries.
Dickens House see chapter on *Museums and galleries*.

**Fitzroy Tavern**

16 Charlotte Street W1P 1HJ  *Tel: 020 7580-3714*

On the junction with Windmill Street. A traditional pub which was a meeting place for artists and writers between the wars, who gave the area the name *Fitzrovia*. Two entrances have flat access.

**Freemasons Hall**

60 Great Queen Street, WC2B 5AZ  *Tel: 020 7831-9811*

*website: www.ugle.org.uk/freemasons-hall*

Located just off Kingsway, towards Covent Garden.

Freemasons’ Hall is the headquarters of the United Grand Lodge of England, and the principal meeting place for Masonic Lodges in London. The present building was built as a memorial to the Freemasons who died in the First World War. Free tours are available several times a day.

There are +2 steps at the entrance for which a ramp can be put in place.

Visitors go via a security check and get a temporary pass. Photographic ID such as passport or driving licence may be required.

The tour takes place on the 1st floor, and there are 20+ steps to get up there, bypassed (on request) by using the lift (D70 W90 L100). It starts in the Library/Museum, and includes the Grand Temple and ceremonial areas.

The tour lasts about 35-40 minutes and there are a couple of opportunities to sit down en route. It covers about 200m. There’s an accessible toilet (not seen) on the 1st floor.

Gift shop on the GF on the opposite side of the building from the entrance.

**Hunterian Museum** see chapter on *Museums and galleries*.

**Leicester Square** is now in quite a big pedestrianised area. The square is well paved, with a good number of seats around. Buskers and portrait sketchers can often be found in the NW corner. When we visited, the central Shakespeare statue and its associated fountain, were being restored. The square is surrounded by several major cinemas, and the new Warner West End a short distance away has flat/lift access throughout. There’s a wheelchair toilet (D90 ST80) in the Moon under Water pub (entrance +2 steps, but a portable ramp is available).

There’s also one in *McDonalds* (D80 ST120) at the junction of Swiss Court and Whitcomb Street. Those in the National Gallery are not far away.

**London Silver Vaults**

53-64 Chancery Lane, WC2A 1QS (by the corner of Southampton Buildings)  
*Tel: 020 7242-3844  website: www.thesilvervaults.com*

The Vaults, in the heart of London’s legal district, are home to the world’s largest retail collection of fine antique silver. They are located about 100m from High
Holborn. The entrance is from Southampton Buildings, and is ramped. There is a lift (D80 W105 L110) by the security desk which goes down to floor −2. There are more than fifty strong rooms to explore, where the sellers will welcome you, particularly if you have a fat wallet with you.

**London Transport Museum** see chapter on *Museums & galleries*

**Royal Courts of Justice (RCJ)**

Strand, WC2A 2LL  
Tel: 020 7947-6000 *(switchboard)*  
website: www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk/infoabout/rcj/rcj.htm

The Royal Courts cover the most serious civil trials, and include the Court of Appeal, the High Court and the Administrative Court. Criminal cases go to the Old Bailey. They are housed in an imposing Victorian Gothic building opened in 1882 and are said to contain a thousand rooms and about 5km of corridors. The RCJ are situated at the junction between the Strand and Aldwych, just outside the City.

Helpful and knowledgeable staff will provide information. Photography is forbidden throughout the buildings, and you can be imprisoned for up to two years for breaking the rules!

It is a difficult group of buildings to get around, but there’s a seven page booklet detailing the *Accessible routes* (almost exactly as we published them in our 1996 edition, but the new version is in colour, and is updated). The booklet is available online from the website above using the menu on the right side, where it is listed as *RCJ Accessible routes*, when you look at ‘Information about’ and you get the FAQs. There is also useful information in the ten page document entitled *Facilities and Services for Disabled Visitors*. If you cannot download these you can ask for them to be sent by post.

If you find stairs difficult or impossible, but want/need to get into a particular court, we are told that this is possible, and you will have to negotiate through the Personal Support Unit *(Tel: 020 7947-7701/3)*. This is staffed by volunteers and exists primarily to help those involved directly in court proceedings.

Very limited parking facilities are available on site for BB holders with court business. Contact the Superintendent’s Office on 020 7947-6506 at least 24 hours in advance to request a space.

There is a Courts Service Disability Helpline on 0121 681-3475 (a freephone number available from 09.00-17.00).

The principal entrance to the Main building from The Strand has +3+4 steps. This leads straight through via a security check, to the Great Hall which is the main place of interest to the casual visitor. Security personnel can be alerted by pressing the intercom button, located to the left of the main gates. An alternative route provides step-free access to the Main building, and to Thomas More, Queen’s and West Green. It starts 50m west of the principal (stepped) way in at
the West Green entrance with an alternative security check. *We are using this in the write-up as a point of reference.*

The large complex of courts is spread over five buildings. These are the Main, West Green, Queen’s, East Wing and Thomas More buildings. The accessible entrances to the RCJ are from West Green (as already described) and from Bell Yard (north) into the East building.

**For people who want to see the Main Hall, the accessible route is as follows:** taking the West Green checkpoint as your start, enter the main building via a steepish ramp, which bypasses −6 steps. There are two platform stairlifts (bypassing −5 and +16 respectively) giving access to the Main Hall, which is large and impressive.

There are organised tours twice a month booked via Tel: 020 7947-7684 (only a voicemail number) or by e-mail from the website. It is possible to arrange a wheelchair accessible route if you negotiate well in advance. The ‘normal’ route involves ±31, together with steps into the court visited, and a few other steps while wandering around.

For people coming on court business or those listening to a case, the following description outlines access to all the courts. We describe the situation in 2011, but there will be ongoing changes, and the accommodation office will be able to advise.

From the security checkpoint, courts 52-62 and 77-79 in the Thomas More building can be reached via the route shown on the diagram. There is a ramp bypassing the steps at the entrance and from here two sets of lifts (D90 W135+ L110+) give access to all floors. Court 51 can only be reached up a flight of steps from the GF. **Two wheelchair toilets (D85 ST70)** with a choice of low or high pedestals are located by the second set of lifts around the corner from the entrance.

The Queen’s building, which houses courts 39-50, can be approached step-free from the Thomas More building. Three lifts inside give step-free access to all the courts. Two are by the main entrance (D100 W200 L110) and one by a side entrance (D85 W120 L150).

Access to the West Green building from the security checkpoint is shown on the diagram. Going up the ramp into the Main Building gives access to courts 37 (GF) and 33-35 via the lift (D75 W125 L100) to the left of the entrance. The West Green building also houses the interim and preliminary application sections. The 2nd floor of the West Green building links to the first floor of the Main building. This is important as it is the only step-free link to the courts in the main building. Courts 1-19 are on the first floor of the Main building. There are **wheelchair toilets (D70+ ST70+)** on the right side of the corridor towards the end.
Courts 63-76 in the East Block (north) are reached from the other site of the site on Bell Yard. A lift (D90 W155 L140) give access to the courts. There are two wheelchair toilets (D70+ ST70+) on the 3rd floor. East Block (south) is reached from a separate entrance off the Strand into the Main building, shown on the diagram. Just inside is a lift (D85 W125 L110) which takes you to the first floor from which there is a step-free route into the other building. Two wheelchair toilets (D70+ ST70+) are at the southern end of the East Block; access depends on the use of platform stairlifts, which were not operational when we visited.

The Royal Opera House is described under Entertainment on our website. From 10.00 to 15.00 you can access the Paul Hamlyn (glass roofed) Hall and the Amphitheatre bars, unless there’s a matinee performance. From the box office area, the Paul Hamlyn Hall is reached using the first set of lifts. The Amphitheatre bar with the glass panel overlooking the glass roofed hall, and the outside terrace, are accessed step-free using the second set of lifts at the far end of the foyer (and just past the main entrance from Bow Street). From the Covent Garden piazza, the distance to the terrace is about 300m. There are two wheelchair toilets (D70+ ST70+) with BCF off the Amphitheatre bar at the very far end, to the left (you pass them when coming along the corridor from the lifts).

St Paul’s Church, Covent Garden see chapter on Places of worship.
Sir John Soane’s Museum see chapter on Museums and galleries.

Somerset House
Strand, WC2R 1LA Tel: 020 7845-4600 (use option 9 to speak to a person)
website: www.somersethouse.org.uk e-mail: info@somersethouse.org.uk
Somerset House is a spectacular 18thC neo-classical building in the heart of London, sitting between the Strand and the river. Until quite recently, the main occupants were government departments, including that keeping records of Births, Marriages and Deaths. The grand building alongside Waterloo Bridge now houses varied exhibition spaces, including the Courtauld Gallery. The central courtyard has a magnificent fountain in the centre which becomes a playground for children when the weather is warm. In the winter there’s an ice rink. It has a lovely terrace overlooking the river.
Somerset House hosts open-air concerts and films, contemporary art and design exhibitions, family workshops, and there are free guided tours of spaces usually hidden to visitors. There is an isometric diagram of the layout on the website, under Plan your visit, although this does not show certain access aspects very clearly. The bi-monthly What’s On leaflet currently only includes a very crude plan showing the four wings at the upper level.
The site is huge and measures about 130m by 160m. There are several accessible refreshment facilities including Tom’s Kitchen, Tom’s Café and the Courtauld Gallery Café. The Terrace Café is only open during the summer months (and best accessed from Waterloo Bridge).

The major access glitch on the site is the ±8 steps between the Seamen’s Hall in the Riverside building, and the Riverside Terrace.

They can offer some BB parking, bookable in advance via the phone number above. You get in through the main archway on Aldwych, which is a one way east-west road at that point.

There are three pedestrian entrances, from different levels:

- **from the Strand**, you come immediately to the Courtauld Galleries in and over the archway. To avoid +2 steps, you have to come in via the central arch, where there are cobbles at the end. Access into the Courtauld Galleries is described below. Going about 100m directly across the courtyard, which is slightly rough in places, there are two ramped entrances to the upper level of the main **riverside building**;

- **off the Embankment**, under the big arch, about 80m from Waterloo Bridge. There are −2 steps, bypassed by a ramp to the left. This is the riverside building, and leads into the lower riverside level. To get into the building (at the level of the Embankment Galleries) there are +2, bypassed by a platform lift (D90 L130). This has slightly temperamental controls, and you may need to summon staff help to get it to work. Just what that mini-lift is doing there is difficult to imagine, as a ramp would have been simpler, cheaper and better;

- **from Waterloo Bridge** there’s a ramp down on to the Riverside Terrace which is a nice spot in the summer, but there’s no step-free access into the building. To get into the building from here you have to go about 400m (turning left under the second arch, and then left and left again) to bypass the +8 steps up to the Seamen’s Hall in the centre of the building. Alternatively you can go via Lancaster Place (at the end of the bridge) and turn right into the Strand.

Our description generally assumes that you enter from the Strand.

**There are effectively seven different parts of the buildings, namely:**

- the archway building/s off the Strand (where the Courtauld Gallery is);
- the open courtyard with, at different times, its fountains, its ice rink and other structures, and with tables and chairs in the summer near the catering facilities;
- the East wing, with a café and shop;
- the West wing with exhibition space;
- the riverside building at Strand/courtyard level;
- the riverside terrace, which is separated from the riverside buildings by ±8 steps; and,
• the (lower) Embankment level facilities in the riverside building.

The numbers used in the text below (in brackets) are those used in the website floor plan.

Note that Tours take place on Thursdays and Saturdays, lasting a little over an hour. They can take you up to about 400m, and involve going over some roughish surfaces. The exact route is somewhat weather dependent, but during the tour you’ll be told about various links with London’s history. There is nowhere to sit down en route.

The Courtauld Gallery (1)
Tel: 020 7848-2526 (24-hour information line)
website: www.courtauld.ac.uk/gallery  e-mail: galleryinfo@courtauld.ac.uk

Housed in the rooms over the main entrance archway off the Strand. The paintings include some by famous Impressionist and Post-Impressionist artists.

Access from the Strand is via +2 steps on the right side of the arch, or along the partly cobbled roadway. There is a rather steep ramped kerb on to the pavement.

At the main entrance (on your right) there are +2 to the ticket office, then +5 to the lift. There’s an intercom to the right of the door to attract attention and facilitate the use of an alternative entrance. There’s a steepish ramp en route, on which most chair users would require assistance. This gives step-free access to the lift (D150 W250 L150) which goes to all three floors.

The lift has quite an awkward ridge by the door when getting out, and the chairs available to be borrowed have small wheels. We saw an inexperienced user having quite a lot of trouble getting over it as the front wheels got stuck and the occupants’ ankles were jabbed by the footplates. Using the lift bypasses +59+34 spiralled steps to the upper galleries, or −24+2 to the basement. On the top floor, room 12 has +1, but a temporary ramp is available.

The café and the wheelchair toilet (D80 ST80+, but with a high pedestal) are in the basement. BCF are incorporated. The shop (3) is on the other side of the arch has +2 at the entrance, but again, a portable ramp is available.

Off the courtyard, there is the East wing to the left, with a ramped entrance into the corner of the first building, closest to the arch. The ramp leads to a slightly congested café and then to a shop. There is a wheelchair toilet with BCF off the corridor outside, and this is a quieter area than the one near the restaurant in the Riverside building.

To the right is the West wing, with more gallery space. Step-free access for chair users is via the ramped entrance on the right side, then you go right (you are near Tom’s Deli) and go through the doors next to the Nelson Stair.

Going across the courtyard past the fountains, there are ramps leading into the Riverside building from both corners of the courtyard, each bypassing +4 at the central entrance. In the middle of the building, with an information desk and an open area with seats, is the Seamen’s Hall.

The ramp on the right side of the building leads into Tom’s Deli (6) and Tom’s
Kitchen (8), and to a wheelchair toilet (D80 ST80) with BCF. Although it came within our ‘definition’ of a wheelchair toilet, when we visited, the BC table was down and with the large bins in the ST space would be quite a hassle for a chair user to sort out. The restaurant Tom’s Kitchen is a more wheelchair-friendly place as the Deli has a high counter and the seating is a bit cramped and inflexible. The restaurant is also significantly more expensive!

The ramped entrance into the Terrace Rooms (13) is towards the left-hand corner under the sign saying Stamp Office (10). Inside the Terrace Rooms exhibition area there’s an adapted toilet (D80 ST60).

Inside the Riverside building, a lift (D80 W100 L130) links the courtyard level G with the Embankment level L2/LG, and the alternative entrance/exit. There is a wheelchair toilet (D80 ST75), and although the door opens in, the cubicle is deep enough for most chair users. There is a separate BCF. To find the toilet from the Embankment entrance, come into the lobby and turn left.

Admission to the Embankment Galleries is from this level (L2). They are step-free throughout, using a second lift (D80 W100 L130). Using the Embankment Galleries lift, you can go down to L1 which is the King’s Barge House under the shop.

There is a confusion in/between the labelling of the floor levels in the two lifts. They were probably installed at different times and floor labels were changed in the meantime.

The Riverside Terrace has seats overlooking the river and during the summer there’s a café with tables and chairs, and a ramp at one end of the wooden plinth. The easiest access to this is via the ramp from Waterloo Bridge. Near the ramps and under the first arch by the war memorial, there’s a wheelchair toilet (D80 ST80). The outer door is split, and when we visited, both the (heavy) doors were propped open, as they need to be.

**Trocadero**

7-14 Coventry Street, W1D 7DH  Tel: 020 7439-1719  
website: www.londontrocadero.com  e-mail: info@londontrocadero.com

A cavernous shopping and entertainment complex undergoing seemingly constant refurbishment, encompassing buildings between Piccadilly Circus, Shaftesbury Avenue and Rupert Street. The main entrance gives flat access from Coventry Street to some step-free shops. The entrance from Shaftesbury Avenue is at a different, slightly higher, level.

The main way of getting from floor to floor is using the numerous escalators. Alternatively, there are now a number of platform lifts bypassing steps and split levels, but they’re not always working, and the layout is quite complicated. A chair user is advised to ask a staff member if he/she wants to go to other floors and there are two staff-operated lifts which link all the floors. In the basement (LGF) there’s a wheelchair toilet (D95 ST100).
A platform lift (D75 W100 L130) to the right of main escalators bypasses +9 steps to the upper GF where there are more shops and access to the staff lift (D80 W100 L140) operated by security guards. This goes to all other floors, including the basement. Various mezzanines can be reached by three user-operated platform lifts. The most accessible entrance (by lift) to the UGC cinema is from Great Windmill Street.

**Westminster and St James’s**

This is covered in two sections of the *Eyewitness* guide. The area includes some of London’s most important sights, in particular the Houses of Parliament (with Big Ben), Westminster Abbey and Buckingham Palace. Behind the Whitehall government offices is St James’s Park, a quiet and attractive area with a lake, fountains and a bandstand.

Parking is generally difficult, but note that close to Parliament Square is the: **Abingdon Street (Q-Park), SW1P 3RX**  *Tel: 020 7222-8621*  
183 spaces, UG, 230cm clearance, Mon-Sun 6:00-24:00. Off Great College Street by the junction with Abingdon Street. Parking is on levels −1 and −2, with 4 BB spaces to the right of ticket barrier on level −1. Past the office there is a wheelchair toilet (D90 ST90 NKS) with BCF. People get in and out of the CP using pavement alongside the car ramp.

**Banqueting House**

Whitehall, SW1A 2ER  *Tel: 020 7930-4179*  
[website: www.hrp.org.uk/banquetinghouse](http://www.hrp.org.uk/banquetinghouse)

The house is the only remaining publicly accessible part of the Palace of Whitehall. Charles I was beheaded just outside in 1649. It contains the Banqueting Hall on the 1st floor, with magnificent Rubens paintings on the ceiling.

It is located opposite Horseguards Parade with quite an inconspicuous door, by the corner with Horsguards Avenue. Admission charge.

There is +1 step at the entrance, leading to the ticket desk and small shop. An area called the undercroft is −3 from the entrance, but there is a ramped bypass behind the door to the left of the steps. Visitors are shown a video there about the building and its history. **Wheelchair toilet (D80 ST80+)** at the bottom of the ramp, which could be accessed even if you are not visiting the Hall upstairs. From the ticket desk there are then +17+6 to get up to the Hall. There are seats around the walls and mirrors for looking at the ceiling.

**A route to bypass the steps through an adjacent office building (the Royal United Services Institute) can be made available for chair users and disabled walkers. The lift is small, with (D75 W100 L85). Only a small chair can get in, and you may need to take the footplates off.** The lift is normally available **Mon-Fri if requested 24 hours in advance.** Check on *Tel: 020 3166-6155/6152* - especially if you plan to visit on a Saturday or are attending a private function.
Buckingham Palace
Buckingham Palace Road, SW1A 1AA
website (for visits): www.royalcollection.org.uk/visit/buckinghampalace

The Palace is an imposing building at the end of the Mall. It is the Queen’s London home and lived in by members of the royal family, and their staff. When the Queen is in residence, the Royal Standard is flown. The website for the British Monarchy is: www.royal.gov.uk

The State Rooms in the Palace are currently open to the public for about two months each summer. During the visit to the State Rooms, Terrace and Gardens you can learn about the workings of the monarchy, see where state banquets and investitures are held, and see the magnificent interiors decorated by many impressive works of art. You are ‘escorted’ by an audio-guide, and although we had a few problems with the sequencing of the descriptions, nearby staff were always able to sort it out. There’s a special audio-guide setting that follows the access-friendly route.

Significant admission charge, and a typical visit takes between 2 and 2.5 hours. To book tickets: Tel: 020 7766-7300 or book online at www.royalcollection.org.uk e-mail: bookinginfo@royalcollection.org.uk

Wheelchair users and disabled walkers are asked to phone 020 7766-7324.

BB holders may be able to arrange for parking inside the palace grounds, which can be an enormous advantage compared with coming by public transport. Chair users are only admitted by prior arrangement, and need to fit into a pre-booked time slot. People with limited mobility should look at our description of the tour to assess whether they would be wise to request the use of a wheelchair to make their visit easier and/or to use the access-friendly route. Note that visitors are welcome to bring and use walking sticks or folding stools with seat attachments, provided they have rubber stoppers.

While some 4500 people visit every day, only about 25 chair users are allowed, because of perceived problems of evacuation.

In view of the transport challenges and parking difficulties in central London, you might like to consider visiting all the sights around the Palace in one day. These include the State Rooms already mentioned, together with the Queen’s Gallery and the Royal Mews. The ‘Royal Day Out’ ticket/visit including all these would take something like four, possibly even five or six, hours to complete, including a break in the Garden Café.

Tickets for ‘general’ entry are picked up or purchased from the Ticket Office at the Visitor Entrance on Buckingham Palace Road if they haven’t been sent to you in the post, but if you’re using the ‘access-friendly’ route you’ll almost certainly have booked this well in advance.

There are two routes for the Palace tour:
• an ‘access-friendly’ route which is step-free. You may have the opportunity of parking in the forecourt inside the gates. All vehicles are thoroughly security checked. If you’re coming by taxi, then you need
to be dropped off at the North Centre Gate in front of the Palace. Both disabled walkers and wheelchair users can use the access-friendly route. It involves a minimum distance of about 350-400m, and going around slowly takes about an hour and a half to two hours. Nearly all the internal floors are covered in thick carpet. If you go out into the gardens, the distance you go can increase to anything between 500 and 700m, and the path there is quite rough;

• the main ‘line of route’ involves around 120 steps, and a distance of more than 1km. It takes you out through the gardens and up to Grosvenor Place. There may also be a longish queue to get in, going to where you have your bags checked.

Seating en route is very limited. You can find a seat in the Ballroom, and there are benches in the garden outside.

If you are using the pre-booked ‘access-friendly’ route, you can park in the forecourt, and be taken by a ‘wheelchair accessible’ golf buggy into the inner Quadrangle. The surfaces in the CP area and in the Quadrangle are of quite difficult gravel. There are friendly staff members around to help throughout your visit, and we were particularly impressed by the ease with which assistance was given.

We visited in 2010, and from the Quadrangle, there was a slightly temperamental platform lift (D80+ L150+) to take chair users up and down to/from the main GF level bypassing +14 steps. This is installed/used only during the period of opening of the State Rooms to the public. There’s an alternative step-free route if needed, involving +1+2 steps which are well ramped, followed by a platform stairlift (D80 L110).

There is a lift (D80 W95 L160) to the main rooms on the 1st floor (bypassing about ±50). Because of your starting point, you follow a slightly different line of route to everyone else, as you have to go to and from the lift.

Note that the only inside wheelchair toilet (D115 ST115) is off the corridor on the GF near the lift.

At the end of the tour inside, you can go out on the Terrace via a slightly bumpy ramp, where there’s the Garden Café with movable chairs and tables and a hard (though gravelled) surface. To get down to the Gardens there are −10 steps, but wheelchair users can go back through the palace GF to the Quadrangle where the wheelchair accessible golf buggy will take you round to the garden, in front of the Terrace. The path here consists of quite difficult gravel which provides access to the gift shop in a large marquee.

If you simply leave the palace at the end of the tour, or after taking refreshments in the café, there’s a shop for buying souvenirs on the GF as you leave. If necessary, the golf buggy will take you back to near your car.

On special occasions and for distinguished foreign visitors, there are processions going to the palace. The Changing of the Guard both at Buckingham Palace and
at Horse Guards Parade, Whitehall, is a regular attraction for visitors. Mounted Life Guards pass the palace regularly at 10.50 and return at about 11.35, except on Sunday when they’re an hour earlier. Check the details in a conventional guidebook, or contact the HRP enquiry line.

If you want to go and see **Trooping the Colour** for the Queen’s birthday, or other major parades that take place on Horse Guards Parade, the tickets are allocated by ballot in Jan/Feb each year. There are some wheelchair spaces for spectators, otherwise most of the seats are up steps in the temporary stands which are erected for each event.

*Apply to:* The Brigade Major, Headquarters Household Division, Horse Guards, Whitehall, SW1A 2AX

**Churchill War Rooms** see chapter on **Museums and galleries.**

**Clarence House**
St James’s Palace, SW1 1BA  *Tel: 020 7766-7300* (for tickets)
*website:* www.royalcollection.org.uk
*e-mail:* bookinginfo@royalcollection.org.uk
The official residence of the Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall is normally open for a month each summer. Visitors are taken on a 45-minute guided tour of the five GF rooms.

Accessibility is well described on the website, and we are taking the unusual step of including the description, even though at the time of writing we haven’t made a visit.

Some nearby BB spaces can be pre-booked.

Visitors entrance from the Mall. Entrance +3 steps, bypassed by a platform stairlift. There are benches at the entrance, but no seating inside. There are no toilets inside, but the public loos opposite the House in St James’s Park have an accessible toilet.

**Houses of Parliament & Westminster Hall**
St Margaret Street, SW1A 0AA  *Tel: 020 7219-3000  *Textphone: 0800 959-598*  *House of Commons information Tel: 020 7219-4272* (for Textphone dial 18001 first)  *e-mail:* hcinfo@parliament.uk

**House of Lords information**  *Tel: 020 7219-3107  *e-mail:* hlinfo@parliament.uk

If you need to borrow a wheelchair  *Tel: 020 7219-3003.*

*website:* www.parliament.uk
The Palace of Westminster has been the home to the two Houses of Parliament since the 16thC. The present mock Gothic building was built in Victorian times, although Westminster Hall dates back to the 11thC. For obvious reasons, there is tight security, with airport-style searches on anyone entering the buildings. When the Commons is sitting, you can get into the public gallery via a step-free route. For the Lords you will have to view proceedings from alongside the chamber and it is necessary to book first via Black Rods office. Most of the various committee rooms are accessible, and you will be escorted from the information desk in Westminster Hall using a step-free route.

Tours are possible at the invitation of a Member of Parliament. Alternatively, a tour can be booked on a Saturday or during the summer recess, through Ticketmaster. Except for one stop (of 15), the tour is wheelchair accessible. There are only limited opportunities for sitting down during the tour which lasts about 75 minutes.

Tickets can be booked in advance via Tel: 0844 847-1672 or at:
http://www.ticketmaster.co.uk/Houses-of-Parliament-tickets/artist/107973
The on-site ticket office address is: 6/7 Old Palace Yard, Abingdon Street, SW1P 3JY (by the Jewel Tower, and with step-free access).
There is a significant admission charge.
If you are tempted to try to join a tour up the clock tower to see Big Ben, be warned that there are 334 spiralled steps to go up (and down).

The normal entry route for members of the public is to go down the 40m slope in Cromwell Green, to the left of St Stephen’s entrance. At the bottom there’s a small building where they carry out an airport style security search. When you come out you turn right and go up the slope to the entrance to Westminster Hall. Just inside there’s an information desk, and if you would find the 30+ steps up to the level of the Central Lobby to be a problem you can ask to be escorted via an alternative route using the lifts. The same applies if you are going to the Visitors Gallery or to a Committee Room.
There are alternative routes shown on the plan, and for more information, Tel: 020 7219-3070 for visiting the Commons or 020 7219-3100 for the House of Lords.
Parking for disabled visitors or dropping off in New Palace Yard can be arranged if you give sufficient notice, and there are a small number of BB spaces. The police or staff on duty will escort you everywhere because of security. There are two wheelchair spaces below the Bar in the House of Lords (so you are actually sitting in the chamber, rather than in the inaccessible Strangers Gallery - but we should make clear that the Bar in this instance, has nothing to do with the serving of drinks!).
In the Commons there are 4 chair spaces at the back of Strangers Gallery which can be reached step-free via lifts and ramps. The view from the Strangers Gallery is somewhat restricted, and our surveyor could only see about half of the chamber, but you can’t see much more from the main seats. If you go on a tour of the Commons and Lords, you will find that there is flat access throughout the main floor, and through the Commons lobbies (where they vote). The main “line of route” for members of the public visiting the building when the Houses are not sitting is shown on the plan, together with the location of the principal lifts. There are some fifteen lifts in different parts of the building, but only the two of relevance to visitors doing a tour, are shown on the plan. There are wheelchair toilets (D70+ ST70+) off the Peers’ Lobby and off the Lower Waiting Hall, both on the main floor level of the lobbies. Towards the end of the tour, able-bodied visitors walk down the 5 steps to St Stephen’s Hall and then the −36 into Westminster Hall. Those unable to do this can ask to get down to New Palace Yard via the lift, and from there, Westminster Hall is reached via several shallow ramps.

Off Westminster Hall, is the Jubilee café which is for visitors, and accessed by a lift bypassing ~4 steps. There’s a nearby wheelchair toilet (D70+ ST70+).

The Education Unit run a special visits programme for schools and would be pleased to discuss arrangements for disabled students (Tel: 020 7219-4750). A Changing places toilet, including a changing bench and a hoist, can be found in Lower Waiting Hall, located just off Central Lobby.

There are two accessible toilets on the 1st floor of Portcullis House.

Jewel Tower
Abingdon Street, Westminster, SW1P 3JX  Tel: 020 7222-2219

There is about a 10cm threshold at the entrance to the GF vault with ornate ceiling carvings. To climb the tower there are +26 to the 1st floor and a further +20 to the 2nd. The spiral staircase is 90cm wide.

Parliament Square and Westminster Bridge
The square features statues of famous statesmen such as Disraeli and Churchill. It was Britain’s first official roundabout (an oddity, given that it’s square !), and has been the site where many demonstrations have taken place.

Wheelchair toilet (D80 ST80 NKS), just outside the QE II Conference Centre, and there are accessible toilets in the Supreme Court.

From the Bridge you can get fine views up and down the Thames. Westminster
Pier is a starting point for river trips to the Tower and Greenwich. The entrance is cobbled at the junction of Broad Sanctuary and Storey’s Gate and down to the toilet door (at the top of some steps leading to some public toilets). There’s another wheelchair toilet by the pier for river trips. To reach the pier from the bridge and bypass the steps, you need to go nearly 100m east along the Embankment, and then come back towards the bridge. Alternatively you can get there from the ticket hall of Westminster tube station (which can be accessed by lift).

The Parliamentary Bookshop is on the corner of Parliament Street and Bridge Street. Step-free access into the small shop which has some interesting publications and reports produced by Parliament and its committees. Some business is carried out in Portcullis House, just across the road from Big Ben. This is a new building for various aspects of Parliamentary business which has modern facilities including lifts and accessible toilets. Getting in involves similar security checks to those carried out for the main Parliament building.

**Royal Mews**
Buckingham Palace Road, SW1A 1AA  Tel: 020 7766-7302
website: www.royalcollection.org.uk
The entrance is between Palace Street and Bressenden Place on the other side of the road. The stables and coach houses were designed by Nash in 1825. You can see all the royal coaches used on different occasions. Admission charge.
The ticket office, security check and the mews are all basically flat and the route is step-free. You’ll find a few cobbles. The whole tour is about 400m. **Adapted toilet (D80 ST65)** in the corner of the courtyard, just past the state coach display, about 150m from the entrance. BCF in womens toilets in the same location.

**Queen’s Gallery** see chapter on Museums and galleries.
**Photographers Gallery** see chapter on Museums and galleries.

**St James’s Park and Green Park**
Park Office, The Store Yard, Horse Guards Approach, St James’s Park SW1A 2BJ  
Tel: 020 7930-1793  website: www.royalparks.gov.uk
The two parks are attractive, well shaded and centrally located around Buckingham Palace. They are flat or gently sloping and have tarmac paths throughout. Both have good maps at key entry points. There are refreshment facilities in St James’s Park towards Horseguards Parade at the end of the lake. There’s also a bandstand with occasional performances. From the nearby bridge over the lake in St James’s there’s a unique view of the Whitehall offices, and by taking a judiciously framed photograph, you can persuade your friends that you’ve been to Istanbul. **Wheelchair cubicles (D80 ST80 NKS)** inside both the mens and womens toilets, on the north side of the St James’s Park at the junction with Marlborough Road.
**Spencer House**  
27 St James’s Place, SW1A 1NR  
Tel: 020 7514-1964  
RecM: 020 7499-8620  
website: www.spencerhouse.co.uk

The 18thC townhouse of the Spencer family, restored and refurbished at great expense by Lord Rothschild. It contains a fine collection of paintings and furniture.

Admission charge. It is only open on Sundays, and tickets cannot be prebooked. The house is situated just to the east of Green Park, in a cul de sac off St James’s Street. It is at the end on the left opposite no15 with no sign outside indicating its presence. Parking is difficult, with three metered spaces, but no BB spaces by the house.

Portable ramps can bypass the +2+1 steps at the entrance. From here the GF is step-free, including the ticket office, cloakroom and **wheelchair toilet (D80 ST90+)**. You may have to ask the cloakroom attendant to move his table to let you past. The tour starts with a video, and then last an hour, with very limited seating en route.

A lift (D75 W115 L85) bypasses +36 to take you to the 1st floor, which is step-free. The garden is open on specific days during the summer, via +2 from the GF, bypassed by a portable ramp.

**Supreme Court**  
Parliament Square, SW1P 3BD  
Tel: 020 7960-1500/1900  
website: www.supremecourt.gov.uk

Housed in the old Middlesex Guildhall which has been completely refurbished inside, the Supreme Court sat for the first time in 2009. There are three courts, and an exhibition space and café on the LGF.

Entrance +3 steps bypassed on either side by a platform lift (D80 L130). There’s a security/bag check. There is step-free access throughout the building using the lifts (D75 W100 L130) which go to all four floors and there’s a platform lift to bypass +4 into court 3.

There are **wheelchair toilets** on all floors, one of which is near the café on the LGF.

**Wellington Arch**  
Hyde Park Corner, W1J 7JZ  
Tel: 020 7930-2726  
website: www.english-heritage.org.uk

Situated in the centre of the Hyde Park Corner roundabout, the arch was built to commemorate various victories in the Napoleonic wars. There is a series of shows exploring various aspects of England’s history. Admission charge.

There are step-free road crossings from most sides of the roundabout. Car drop-off can be arranged, but there is no parking because of security considerations.

The entrance on the inside of the arch is flat to the ticket office and lift (D75 W110 L130). This goes to the other three floors, each with various exhibitions
and videos. All are step-free. From the 3rd floor, which is over the arch itself, there is an platform lift (D90 W100 L135) to two outside viewing galleries on opposite sides. There are +2 steps on one side, and a ramp on the other. There is a solid stone parapet of height 100cm in each case, but there are some fine views if you can see over the top.

There’s an accessible toilet in the basement, accessed by the lift with staff assistance, so you have to ask.

**Whitehall**

Whitehall is one of the most famous streets in London, lined with government buildings at the Westminster end, particularly the Treasury and the Defence Department. It leads from Parliament Square to Trafalgar Square.

In the centre of the road there is the national War Memorial, the Cenotaph, commemorating in particular, the dead from both the World Wars. A recent addition is the black memorial a little further up to the Women of WW2. On the sides of the road there are numerous statues, including ones of Monty, Allenbrook and of Field Marshall Slim. There are also the entrances to Downing Street (where the Prime Minister lives) and to Horse Guards Parade.

There are details of the accessible pubs in Whitehall in the *Recommended itineraries* section on the website. Starting from Parliament Square, they are *St Stephens Tavern*, the *Clarernce*, the *Silver Cross* and the *Old Shades*.

**Kensington and Chelsea**

**Chelsea Physic Garden**

66 Royal Hospital Road, Chelsea SW3 4HS  
Tel: 020 7352-5646  
website: www.chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk  
e-mail: enquiries@chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk

Located in the triangle formed by Royal Hospital Road, Chelsea Embankment and Swan Walk. It was established in 1673 by the Society of Apothecaries to study plants used for medicinal purposes.

The area has provision mainly for residents parking but with some coin operated meters (at £1 for 20 minutes). There’s a single BB space immediately outside the step-free entrance at 66 Royal Hospital Road (almost opposite Christchurch Road). Parking was not restricted on Sundays or on Saturdays after 13.30 when we made our survey. It would be possible to park in Battersea Park and come across the river using the Albert Bridge.

At the door at Number 66, there’s both a bell and an intercom to attract someone’s attention.

Admission charge. At the door at the main public entrance is in Swan Walk but this has −3 steps.

The garden is flat, with gravel paths throughout. There’s the occasional ridge or bump to overcome. Its shape is roughly triangular, with the longest side being about 150m. The facilities such as the shop, café and toilets are near the step-
free entrance. Guided tours start from the Swan Walk entrance, and audio tour headsets are available.
There are two quite spacious **wheelchair toilets**:
- one (D90 ST90) is by the shop, and has an adaptation to raise the seat height to SH53
- the other (D75 ST80) with SH48 and which includes BCF, is by the café.

**Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens W2 & W8**
Rangers Lodge, Hyde Park, W2 2UH
The Magazine Storeyard, Magazine Gate, Kensington Gardens, W2 2UH
Tel: 0300 061-2000  website: www.royalparks.gov.uk
e-mails: hyde@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk and kensington@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk
This vast stretch of parkland which covers over 240 ha (600 acres), was a hunting ground for Henry VIII. It measures some 2km by 0.75km and includes a large artificial lake. The whole area is fairly flat, and there are tarmac paths throughout. Where there are slopes they are fairly gentle, such as those going up to the bridges, towards South Carriage Drive, and at the east end of the lake from Rotten Row up to the Serpentine Road.
The West Carriage Drive, going broadly north-south, and including the Serpentine Bridge, separates the Park and Gardens. There are numerous entrances, and there’s a perimeter road running on both the north and south sides of the Park. Major landmarks include Hyde Park Corner in the SE, Marble Arch in the NE and Kensington Palace in the far west. The Serpentine and Long Water lakes are important features, and there are numerous memorials and special areas.  
*There are good downloadable maps on the website.*
There is BB parking:
- by the Serpentine Gallery (with 4 spaces);
- in the CP at the south end of the Serpentine Bridge (with 6 spaces);
- in the Triangle CP at the north end of the Bridge (with 6 spaces);
- by the Lower Dog Gate into Kensington Gardens (with 2 spaces);
- by Alexandra Lodge, on the South Carriage Drive (2 spaces); and,
- it is possible for BB holders to park in ‘public’ parking spaces in the Park, without charge
- in addition, there is a large UGCP with entrances off Park Lane and North Carriage Drive run by Q-Park, but note that there’s a longish walk of approaching 500m to get out. It is huge, and all on one floor, with space for nearly 1000 cars. Height restriction 2.08m. Finding where the 8 BB spaces (which are near the Marble Arch exit) is a challenge, as is finding the pay station when you want to get out. There is a ramped route out at both car entrances/exits, but these too are a challenge to find! Signage is non-existent.
Note that on sunny summer bank holidays and weekends there is enormous demand for parking spaces in and around the parks, and you may have to be both patient and persistent.
Liberty Drives www.royalparks.org.uk/parks/hyde_park/disabled_access.cfm, Tel: 07767 498-096, provide free five seater electric carts which take disabled people around the park. When we visited they were available five days a week during the summer. They are operated by volunteer drivers with pick up points at most of the main gates, and at the Triangle CP north of the Serpentine Bridge. You can arrange to be dropped off anywhere in the park, and be picked up later. The carts are primarily designed for disabled walkers, but they can now accommodate a wheelchair user. It’s a brilliant initiative, and seems to be well used.

These parks are a lovely place to come and sit outside on the grass in the summertime - where it’s easy to forget that you’re in the middle of a big city. You can take a long ‘green’ route through central London by going from somewhere like the Serpentine Gallery, through Hyde Park, Green Park and then St James’ Park - possibly ending in Trafalgar Square, or Parliament Square. You could even start at Kensington Palace.

Some of the Parks’ principal features, starting in the east from Hyde Park Corner, are:
• the 7/7 Memorial, near the Curzon Gate;
• Speaker’s Corner, near Marble Arch which has good access and you can listen to people talking about anything and everything- particularly on a Sunday afternoon;
• the substantial Rose Garden as you go towards the lake from Hyde Park Corner;
• the Holocaust Memorial, near the eastern end of the Serpentine;
• the Serpentine Bar and Kitchen at the east end of the lake;
• the boathouses for the hire of small boats in the summer, on the north side of the lake;
• the Lido swimming area on the south side, and the Lido Bar and Café;
• the Princess Diana Memorial Fountain which is built of Cornish granite and was designed to express Diana’s spirit and her love of children;
• the Serpentine Gallery, now in two parts;
• the Albert Memorial;
• the Round Pond for model boats, ducks and swimming dogs is towards Kensington on high ground, approached by a broad tarmac path;
• Kensington Palace;
• an open-air market mainly for paintings on Sundays just outside the park railings, right down the Bayswater Road as far as Queensway;
Serpentine Gallery
Kensington Gardens, W2 3XA Tel: 020 7402 6075
website: www.serpentinegallery.org e-mail: information@serpentinegallery.org

The Serpentine Gallery is a major facility, now having two separate spaces for exhibitions. It presents modern and contemporary art. The original gallery has a new cloud-like installation outside it, including a step-free route through the middle. In the grounds, there’s a work dedicated to Diana, Princess of Wales, comprising eight benches, a tree-plaque, and a carved stone circle at the Gallery’s entrance.

The gallery is step-free, and you go in past the bookshop on your left and into a small hallway. There’s a wheelchair toilet (D90 ST80) through a door on the left also leading to the womens toilets. There are separate BCF through a door on the right leading to the mens.

The gallery lies beyond the hallway.

A new space, the Serpentine Sackler Gallery opening in 2013 is housed a little over 300m away in The Magazine (which used to be used for storing munitions) with an adjoining extension used as a café/restaurant.

It will almost certainly have accessible toilets and BCF.

There are benches scattered around the parks, but in the summer it is possible to hire deck chairs from the north side of the Serpentine, or from the Round Pond in Kensington Gardens. There are tracks for both cycling and horse riding, and in some places you need to keep your eyes open, so that you can avoid the cyclists whizzing by.

Because the Parks are so big, we will restrict our description to specific areas near the main CPs; to the approach from Hyde Park Corner, and to the Princess Diana Memorial Playground, in Kensington Gardens.

From the CP on the south side of the Serpentine Bridge, the Serpentine Gallery is just on the other side of the road. Going east, and slightly downhill, there’s the Princess Diana Memorial Fountain, and the Lido Café and Lido swimming area.

The Memorial is an oval stream of cascading water about 50 by 80m made from Cornish granite, surrounded by a grassy field. The granite bed is quite shallow and is laid out on a gently sloping portion of the park, so that water pumped to the top of the oval flows down either side. One side descends fairly smoothly while the other side has a variety of steps, rills, and curves so the water flow is much more disturbed. It is intended to show two sides of Diana’s life: the happy times, and the turmoil.

A little further along is the Lido Bar and Café, with tables both inside and out.

The +2+1 steps in front can be bypassed using the ramp at the eastern end which is by the wheelchair toilet (D80 ST75) in an adjacent building.

Just past the café is The Lido Tel: 020 7706-3422 www.serpentinelido.com. This
includes changing rooms and access to a part of the Serpentine which is cordoned off for swimming (maxdepth 2m). There’s a **wheelchair toilet (D85 ST100)** and changing space behind the stairs on the GF. Step-free access to the pool is from the GF opposite the entrance, where a gate may need unlocking. There’s a ramp leading down into the water with handrails on both sides, but a slightly rough surface if you want to slide down on your bottom!

**The Lido** also has a lovely children’s playground and paddling pool, grass and deckchairs for sunbathing - all up on the roof. A platform lift (D75 W105 L130) goes up from the GF. On the top, there is a raised section with +2 steps where there are some pub benches. The playground is −3−4−3 steps but these can easily be bypassed by going down on the grass slope. The main route for swimmers is to go across the bridge over the public footpath and via −8−12.

**From the Triangle CP on the north side of the Serpentine Bridge**, there’s the new Serpentine Sackler Gallery just across the road. In the other direction, along the lakeside, are the boatouses. There’s a solar powered boat, which is said to be wheelchair accessible, and provides a half hour trip around the Serpentine. It is run by **Bluebird Boats**, The Boathouse, Serpentine Road, Hyde Park W2 2UH, Tel: 020 7262-1330.

Staff members will also help transfer people into rowing boats if necessary and practical.

**From Hyde Park Corner**, it’s amazing how as you get further into the park, the noise from the traffic almost disappears. Going west, you can go through the extensive Rose Garden, towards the Holocaust Memorial and/or the east end of the lake.

**The Princess Diana Memorial Playground** is near the NW corner of the Gardens. It has a huge wooden pirate ship as its centrepiece. The design has created an area where less able and able-bodied children can play together and seeks to provide for their physical, creative, social and educational development. Inspired by the stories of Peter Pan, the playground encourages children to explore and follow their imaginations, learning whilst they play. It is a fitting tribute for a Princess who loved the innocence of childhood. We are told that there are toilets, including an **accessible** one, and BCF.

**For food and drink**, see some of the descriptions above. The principal places are:

- in Kensington Palace;
- at the Serpentine Sackler Gallery;
- the *Lido Bar and Café*;
- the *Serpentine Bar and Kitchen*;
- several kiosks near Marble Arch and by the Black Lion Gate, Queensway.

There are **accessible toilets**, some needing a RADAR key, scattered around the park. We haven’t visited all of them, and you’ll see which ones we have by the measurements. There is a mixture of unisex and of cubicles in the mens
and women's areas. Several were installed quite a number of years ago, so the provisions are a bit variable. There are new ones in the Serpentine Gallery, Kensington Palace, the Serpentine Bar and the Lido Café.

We start in the east from Hyde Park Corner:

- opposite the Bandstand, near Nannies Lawn, where there are accessible cubicles NKS in the men's and women's toilets, which have been recently refurbished;
- at the Serpentine Bar and Kitchen café at the east end of the lake. The toilets are in a block attached to the café, reached from the lakeside corner by going around the outside seating area. **Wheelchair toilet (D80 ST70)** with BCF, but a slightly constrained space;
- by the Reservoir;
- at the Lido Café on the south side of the lake (see details above);
- in the new Serpentine Sackler Gallery (in the Magazine building), which was still under construction at the time of writing;
- by the Marlborough Gate, on the north side near Lancaster Gate tube station. The **wheelchair toilet (D90 ST100 NKS)** with BCF is right by the entrance to the women's toilets;
- in the Serpentine Gallery, where you go past the bookshop on your left and into a small hallway. There's a **wheelchair toilet (D90 ST80)** through a door on the left also leading to the women's toilets. There are separate BCF through a door on the right leading to the men's;
- just to the south of the Gallery, near the Mount Gate, there are adapted cubicles (D75 ST50 NKS). Their design is quite old;
- by the Palace Gate, on Kensington Road on the south side;
- in Kensington Palace. From the Round Pond, there's a gentle slope down to the Palace entrance. The café and shop which are open to all, are located to the right. The loos off the café area have a **wheelchair toilet (D80 ST100)** whose door opens in either direction (ie it can open either outwards or inwards) and there are separate BCF.

**Kensington Palace**

Kensington Palace Gardens, *Tel: 0844 482-7777* (24-hour information line)  
*website:* [www.hrp.org.uk/KensingtonPalace](http://www.hrp.org.uk/KensingtonPalace)

Built on the west side of Kensington Gardens the original house was Jacobean, which was upgraded and extended by Wren around 1700. It has been a royal palace ever since, and Victoria grew up there. The house has recently been extensively redeveloped, and its gardens relandscaped. It reopened in 2012 with greatly improved access, including the provision of a lift.

The Palace is about 300m from Kensington High Street (from the Royal Garden Hotel) and 500m from the Bayswater Road. There are 6 BB spaces by the Orangery, approached from the Orme Square Gate off the Bayswater Road (where there’s a coach park). Spaces need to be booked at least 24-hours in advance with
details of the car being used, since there’s a Security gate to be opened to let you past. From the BB spaces it’s about 100m to the Palace entrance down a sloping route.

Significant admission charge for the Palace.

From the Round Pond, there’s a gentle slope down to the Palace entrance.

**The café and shop which are open to all, are located to the right.** The loos off the café area have a **wheelchair toilet (D80 ST100)** whose door opens in either direction (ie it can open either outwards or inwards) and there are separate BCF. In the shop there are +2 steps, which can be bypassed, using a platform lift (D90 L130) which blends into the flooring.

As you enter the main doors to the Palace, there’s a ticket desk. Everything is step–free if you use the lift (D80 W150 L150) to the 1st and 2nd floors. There is a room on the GF with some dresses worn by Princess Diana, and on the upper floors, there are rooms associated with Queen Victoria and with other royal occupants. Although you will follow a slightly different route using the lift, you can see and visit everything.

One interesting feature of the exhibitions is that instead of providing an audio-guide, visitors are encouraged to interact with the staff and volunteers on duty, who will be only too pleased to explain the background to the various places and artefacts. There are some activities specifically for children.

There are a few places where lighting levels are quite low, and if needed, please don’t hesitate to request guidance through these areas.

There are a number of seats around, and some lightweight fold-up stools can be borrowed. A full visit inside the Palace would involve less than 250m, but could still take you 1 to 2 hours if you want to explore it properly.

**Wheelchair toilet (D80 ST70)** on the GF in the ticketed area where, again, the door opens in both directions.

**National Army Museum** see chapter on *Museums and galleries*.

**Royal Hospital Chelsea**
Royal Hospital Road, SW3 4SR  Tel: 020 7881-5200 (switchboard) or 020 7881-5516 (friends)
*website:* www.chelsea-pensioners.co.uk

A unique retirement home for soldiers; there are always Chelsea Pensioners around in their distinctive uniforms who are happy to chat. It is possible to visit the gardens and some of the Wren buildings, including the Great Hall and the Chapel. Three BB spaces by the Chelsea gate. From either gate the grounds are flat, and it’s about 150m to the main courtyard and hall. There are +10 steps to the chapel, and the same number to the Great Hall, with platform stairlifts to bypass the. The Museum entrance is ramped bypassing +2 steps. There’s an **adapted toilet (D90 ST100+ with inward opening door)** between London Gate and the entrance to the Great Hall and Chapel.
The Roof Gardens
99, Kensington High Street, W8 5SA  Tel: 020 7937-7994  
website: www.roofgardens.com
Overlooking Kensington from the back of the old Derry’s department store is one and a half acres of spectacular garden, with trees, ponds, tropical plants and even flamingoes! The gardens on the 6th floor are open to the public throughout the day. They are available as a setting for ‘corporate events’, so if you want to be sure they’re open, ring first to check. On the 7th floor is the Babylon restaurant,  
Tel: 020 7368-3993  e-mail: babylon@roofgardens.virgin.com.
Access to the gardens is from a totally unmarked entrance under the canopy some 60m down Derry Street on the right.
Inside the doors is a reception desk, and the +3 steps at the front can by bypassed by a platform lift (D85 L100). An outside button will open the door automatically. From the foyer, the lifts (D110 W160 L180) on the right go to floors six and seven, but only the left-hand lift goes to the 7th floor restaurant.

On floor six, turn left to get out into the gardens, and once outside, go right. There is then a step-free though slightly bumpy path which goes round about 80% of the gardens which cover about 100m by 40m.
The Babylon restaurant has an adapted toilet (D85 ST60) with BCF, and it is step-free both to the balcony where there are tables and you can enjoy a drink, and to most of the tables inside.

Regent’s Park area
Described in one section of the Eyewitness guide as Regent’s Park and Marylebone. The area includes the north end of Baker Street, the Marylebone Road, the Regent’s Canal, Little Venice and Camden. Pay and display parking is possible round the Inner Circle, and on Chester Road. There are a substantial number of BB spaces on the Inner Circle (not marked in the Blue Badge User Guide with map of Central London). There is also pay and display parking around long stretches of the outer circle.
Note the wheelchair toilets in Regent’s Park and the one opposite Madame Tussauds.

Camden is just north-west of Regent’s Park, and the canal passes through. With its locks and canalside developments it has its own unique character. There are hundreds of small shops and stalls (many as part of open markets). They stretch for more than a km along Camden High Street and Chalk Farm Road, with particular market areas near Camden Town station, at Inverness Street, and at Camden Lock. Further up the Chalk Farm Road is the Stables Market.
Camden Road, on the Overground is less than a km away, and is ‘accessible’. The nearest ‘accessible’ tube station is Kings Cross/St Pancras some 2.5km away. Parking is difficult, although one possibility would be to use the Zoo CP off the
Outer Circle, about 1km away.
Buses include the 168 from Waterloo; the 24 and C2 from Victoria (the C2 also passes Green Park); and the 214 from Kings Cross/St Pancras.

Our description starts from (the inaccessible) Camden Town tube station. Camden Market is opposite Inverness Street and is flat. Much of it is covered. It can be congested, with narrow gaps between stalls. Camden Lock Market, across the canal, has three courts: east, middle and west. There are two levels, but both have (steep) ramped access from Chalk Farm Road. A lift from Camden Lock Place goes to the upper level. The surfaces are rough in places, and it’s often crowded. There is an adapted toilet (D85 ST60) on the 1st floor of West Court, accessed via the road or the lift. The key is available from the nearest shop. Weatherspoons pub is located across the canal from Camden Lock Market, on the towpath (there is a step-free bridge over the canal, although it is cobbled and very steep), which has a wheelchair toilet (D80 ST85 NKS).

Little Venice
The Regent’s Canal was opened in 1820, joining the Grand Union Canal and the busy port at Paddington Basin to the river Thames at Limehouse. A hundred years ago it was busy with horse-drawn barges. Now it is a quiet waterway taking people on a scenic route through parts of London not otherwise seen.
It lies just west of the centre, north of the Westway and of the rail lines coming into Paddington. There’s a triangular basin or lake which breaks the line of the canals at either end.
Little Venice itself provides a quiet retreat from the general ‘rush’ in London. Near the junction of Blomfield Road and Warwick Avenue are the Rembrandt Gardens with ramped access to a rose garden and wheelchair toilet (D80 ST75 NKS) with BCF.

Jason’s Canal Trip goes from opposite 42 Blomfield Road, W9 2PD website: www.jasons.co.uk
The company no longer has a phone contact, but trips are bookable on-line. Not a trend that we like.
When we went, getting on and off the boat involved going through a gap 60cm wide and ±3 steps. Staff there are used to helping disabled walkers getting on and off.

There are two restaurants nearby with accessible toilets:
• The Summerhouse opposite 60 Bloomfield Road near the junction with Clifton Villas and nearly 200m from the Westbourne Terrace bridge. There’s a wheelchair toilet (D80 ST80) with BCF, but note that there’s a high kerb outside;
• Bridge House pub and café, on Westbourne Terrace Road right by the bridge. Step-free with adapted toilet (D65 ST70) which was being renovated when we visited.
Additionally there is the Café Laville nearly 700m along Regent’s canal past Warwick Avenue. It is on a bridge over the canal and while this has +2 steps at the entrance that provides a brilliant view.

**London Canal Museum** see chapter on *Museums and galleries.*

**London Central Mosque** see chapter on *Places of worship.*

**London Zoo**
Outer Circle, Regent’s Park, NW1 4RY  *Tel:* 020 7722-3333  
*Enquiries:* 0844 225-1826  
*Booking motorised scooters and electric wheelchairs:* 020 7449-6576  
*website:* www.zsl.org  
*e-mail:* info@zsl.org

The Zoological Gardens was the first institution in the world dedicated to the study and display of animals. It has recently evolved and diversified, and a principal focus now, is in the field of conservation.

The zoo is in the northern part of Regent’s Park, and the Regent’s Canal passes alongside. It is triangular in shape with sides approximately 500m/500m/800m.

The main entrance is, oddly, inside the triangle, because the road (the Outer Circle) passes through the zoo, and the various houses and terraces on the far side are reached via one or other of two ramped tunnels.

A full visit could well involve more than 2km, although it is possible to see a lot and only walk/wheel less than 1km from the entrance. There are a number of slopes, as the site is slightly hilly. The two tunnels to get to and from the enclosures on the other side of the Outer Circle road, have a steepish 30m long slope at each end.

Most surfaces are tarmac or paving.

There’s quite a good plan/map on the website, and you can get a bigger version in the Visitors Guide when you go in.

Parking facilities for disabled visitors are not brilliant, considering the size and importance of the zoo. For BB holders there is a single space on the road outside, plus five BB spaces in the CP opposite the main entrance (with no time limit). BB holders can park free for up to 4 hours on the road, but if you want to stay longer, someone will have to go out and put some money in the meter! The main zoo CP with more free BB spaces is nearly 400m away. If you get there early, you’re more likely to be able to get a BB space opposite the entrance.

There are usually taxis available outside when you leave.

There is a significant admission charge, though as is now relatively normal, there is no charge for a carer. Both power and manual chairs are available to be borrowed, but if you need one of these, book it in advance.

**Guide dogs are not allowed on site**, but your dog can be looked after while you visit, and (given notice) the zoo can provide an escort to enable you to get around.
Visitors are now required to enter through a queueing system off the Outer Circle, and to leave through the Gate into the park, past the *Oasis Café* and Zoo shop.

**A considerable amount has been done to improve the facilities for disabled visitors, although some minor problems and challenges remain.**

As already mentioned, there are some slopes - and the ramped route in the big cats area isn’t very obvious or well signed, especially if you want to go up. There are a few enclosures where hedges or walls may obstruct your view if you use a chair, but you generally only have to move around a bit in order to be able to see. If the animals or birds happen to be on the ground when you are going past, they may be difficult to see from a chair-user’s eyeline. Fortunately, of course, many of them will be in branches or high up in their cages.

There are a good number of seats for when you want to take a break. There’s a great variety of things to do with demonstrations and feeding times to go to. Some things happen in the Amphitheatre near the *Oasis Café* where there is fixed bench seating (backless), and space enough for a chair or two at ground level behind these.

As you come in through the main entrance, which can be quite congested on busy days, there’s an Information Kiosk immediately to your right. If distance is an issue, then you need to plan a manageable route. This might take you along the central path past the gorillas, to the big cats and/or to Animal Adventure. Coming back via Meet the Monkeys, Bugs, Butterfly Paradise and Penguin Beach, you could finish at the Oasis Café. There are many variations on this.

**Some major enclosures are on the other side of the Outer Circle road,** including many African animals, the Snowdon Aviary and Rainforest Life.

**Several of the houses allow the animals to mix with the visitors.** This does mean that there are several sets of doors and/or plastic strips or linked chains that must be pushed through. The places where you can do this include:

- Butterfly Paradise;
- Meet the Monkeys (outside); and,
- Rainforest Life.

There is also interaction of a different kind, with a number of animals in the children’s area now called Animal Adventure.

There’s a ramped entrance to the Aquarium to bypass the +5 steps at the entrance.

Below the Rainforest life is the nightlife area. There is a lift to bypass the −17 steps.

In both the nightlife area and the aquarium there is subdued lighting. Penguin Beach is a much improved facility compared with the old Penguin Pool which cannot be changed in any way as it is an iconic listed building.
During school holidays, and at weekends and bank holidays, the zoo can be very busy, with a lot of families with young children.

The provision of accessible toilets is limited, and they tend to be used a lot by parents with young children. They are located:

- near the entrance, at the bottom of a slope, there’s a wheelchair toilet (D80 ST100) and although there are BCF in the adjacent mens and womens loos, it is heavily used by parents with children. The BCF in the mens is on a shelf at the end of the cubicles, and is not very obvious;
- near the Aquarium there is a wheelchair cubicle in the mens toilets;
- near the Animal Adventure, and through the shop. Wheelchair toilet with BCF. There are additional BCF in the mens and womens toilets;
- by Bugs, wheelchair toilet (D80 ST100, and although the door opens inwards, the cubicle is large). There are BCF in both the mens and womens loos;
- at the Oasis Café to the left of the main entrance. Adapted toilet, as the door opens inwards, with BCF. Very busy toilet, mainly used by mums with buggies. The mens and womens toilets also have BCF.

Note the +2 steps in front of the Oasis Café are bypassed by a ramp to the right.

Madame Tussaud’s
Marylebone Road, NW1 5LR Tel: 0871 894-3000
website: www.madame-tussauds.com
e-mail: guest.experience@madame-tussauds.com
Madame Tussaud’s is one of London’s most popular attractions, with waxworks including sports stars, entertainers, royalty and politicians, both past and current. Admission charge.

It is situated some 50m left from main exit from Baker Street tube, and by the junction with Allsop Place. The tube station is ‘inaccessible’, and the nearest ‘accessible’ one is Kings Cross/St Pancras.

There’s a taxi/car/coach drop-off zone outside the main entrance. Parking can be quite problematic, although there are meters around and a few BB spaces (see the Pie parking guide). There are no nearby multi-storey CPs. There are, however, a good number (20+) of BB spaces in the Inner Circle in Regent’s Park, about 500-700m away. The slight doubts about parking can be a hassle in terms of fitting in with the timed ticket entry system.

The displays offer many opportunities for the visitor to be photographed with their favourite public figures, and you can have your picture taken with the Queen if you wish.

Madame Tussaud’s was built long before ‘access’ was considered, and while the management have made considerable efforts to provide for wheelchair access, it is still quite challenging.

Disabled walkers need to look at our description of the conventional route for getting around and decide whether or not they might be wise to use a chair during
the visit. 
There are very few places where you can sit down, and also few toilets.

The venue gets extremely busy, and is strict about only allowing three chair users to visit at any one time. It is therefore necessary to telephone and book in advance to ensure entry, which will be on a ‘timed ticket’ basis. You can borrow a wheelchair for use in the venue, but, again, pre-booking is essential. Children’s buggies are not allowed, and you need to leave your buggy near the entrance and collect it at the end.

There is a Disabled Guide on the website, but it’s quite difficult to relate its brief description to what actually happens during a visit.

**A chair users experience.**

There is step-free access for wheelchair users using a service lift (D80 W110 L185) behind reception, which goes to all floors. The tour begins on the 3rd floor and continues down the floors to the GF. The Chamber of Horrors and Scream interactive experience is in the basement.

Chair users and disabled walkers can use the lift, in order to get to the next level, although this means taking a slightly different route from everyone else, and sometimes you are going against the general flow of people. There is step-free access throughout except for +3 steps to a mezzanine including an information desk on the 2nd floor (in the Grand Hall). On the GF, the Spirit of London ride is +9, although there’s a slightly easier route going up only +4 through an unmarked door on the right, just before the +9. The ride has to be boarded while it is moving, and that might be a problem for some. It also takes you down some steepish slopes, and the mini-cab seats you’re in are quite slippery. It is regarded by the management as ‘inaccessible’, although if someone can be lifted on and off easily the staff are quite accommodating (and we saw this happen when visiting).

The Chamber of Horrors and Scream interactive exhibits are in the basement in an area that is very poorly lit (to heighten the element of scariness), and has rough flooring in places.

From the area where people collect their photographs, and where there are some toilets, most of the time guests using a wheelchair are taken round outside the building to visit the shop and the Entertainment Venue.

Alternatively there’s a platform stair lift to bring a chair user up to the shop (bypassing +15) and there are two platform stairlifts (bypassing −4 and −5 steps en route in the shop) which is quite congested. There is a single (well marked) step at the entrance/exit from the shop to the pavement, and a ramp is available if needed.

To get to the Entertainment Venue (in what used to be the Planetarium), chair users go a short distance outside the building and come back inside at entrance 5, where there’s a lift up to the Showdome.

The building tends to be very crowded and the layout somewhat confusing; as a
result, the staff may have a few problems coordinating their guidance in getting you from floor to floor.

Wheelchair toilets (D85 ST85) are located:

• on the GF at street level as you come in, and another in the main queueing (admissions) area which has BCF;
• on the 2nd floor (Grand Hall/World Stage) with BCF;
• on the GF just past the end of the Spirit of London ride in the Game Zone, also with BCF; and,
• on the 1st floor by the exit from the Entertainment Venue (Showdome).

The ‘conventional’ walkers route around

Taking the standard route from the entrance hall there are +16 steps to the three lifts (D110 W125 L180) which take visitors to the 3rd floor from where they continue steadily downwards through the various exhibition halls, on the designated route using the stairs. In total, there are more than 250 steps (including going down into the Chamber of Horrors, up again to the Showdome and then back to street level). There are steps between each floor.

The whole visit takes about an hour and a half to two hours, depending on how many photo-stops you make. If you find the steps are a problem you can ask the staff to use the designated lift linking the various floors. There are at least half a dozen level changes.

Primrose Hill rises gently up from Prince Albert Road, and you can get fine views over London on a good day. Two adapted toilets (D85 ST60 NKS) by the entrance to the womens toilets by the Children’s Playground at the bottom of the hill, about 100m from the park entrance. See the write-up on Hampstead Heath later on.

The Regent’s Park

Manager’s Office, The Storeyard, Inner Circle, Regent’s Park NW1 4NR
Tel: 0300 061-2300 website: www.royalparks.gov.uk (and then select the park)
e-mail: regents@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk

A large and attractive area of parkland just north of Marylebone.

The park was enclosed in 1812, and Nash developed a grand design consisting of a garden suburb including a palace for the Prince Regent. Only eight villas were ever built. There is now a mixture of formal gardens and of open parkland.

The area is fairly flat, until you get to Primose Hill to the north. Most of the paths are tarmac. It measures about 1.5km N/S and about the same E/W. There’s a largish lake with facilities for boating, and in the NE corner is London Zoo. The ring road round the outside is nearly 8km long.

There are BB spaces along Chester Road, and a good number around the Inner Circle. Off the Inner Circle, there’s a small open-air theatre with step-free access - an attractive spot during warm summer evenings. Queen Mary’s Garden has an attractive rose garden where there are +2 steps to get to the fountain, but these can
be bypassed by taking any other path.

We found four places selling refreshments: a cafeteria on the Broadwalk (near Chester Road); a restaurant on the Inner Circle in Queen Mary’s Garden, near the theatre; another cafeteria by the tennis courts towards York Gate; and another restaurant by Hanover Gate. All have step-free access, and both outdoor and indoor seating. There are also several refreshment stands scattered around the park during the summer.

*The Hub* is a two storey multisports facility which offers a wide range of sporting activities, exercise classes and children’s classes for the local community. It includes a café on the 2nd floor that offers a 360 degree view of the park, accessible by ramps to the left of the main entrance or a lift (D85 W95 L140) in the centre of the building.

There are several **accessible toilets**:
- just off Chester Road where it is crossed by Broad Walk, and behind the *Cow and Coffee Bean* café. **Wheelchair cubicles (D80 ST80 NKS)** in both mens and womens toilets;
- in the *Garden Café* on the Inner Circle to the left of the food counter and you can bypass +5 steps from the road by taking the path to the main entrance. **Wheelchair toilet (D75 ST100)** with BCF;
- by the boating lake just north of Hanover Bridges, **wheelchair cubicles (D80 ST120 NKS)** in both mens and womens areas;
- at the Hub, the entrance to the lower floor is along the paved path. The toilets are directly inside with **wheelchair cubicles (D100 ST80)** and BCF, in both the mens and womens toilets.

There are **adapted toilets/cubicles**:
- in Queen Mary’s Garden near the end of Chester Road, **cubicles (D80 ST45 NKS)** in both mens and womens;
- by Gloucester Gate with an accessible toilet inside the children’s play area, to the left of the main children’s toilets. This was not seen this time because adults are only able to go in when accompanied by a child. When previously visited, it was measured as **(D75 ST60 NKS)**;
- in the Pavilion Café near the Jubilee Gates, and to the right of the food and tennis desks. **Unisex (D85 ST45 because when visited the ST was blocked by a storage locker)**. There are BCF in both the mens and womens toilets.

**Outer London**

*Barnes and Chiswick*

*Chiswick House and Gardens*
Burlington Lane, Chiswick, W4 2RP
*Tel:* 020 8995-0508  *website:* www.chgt.org.uk

The house is a magnificent Palladian villa built around a central octagonal
room with several interesting 18thC portraits. There are also extensive grounds measuring some 500m by 500m.

To get there by car, take the A4 some 500m past the Hogarth roundabout. It is on the left as you are going towards Heathrow. Well signed. However, disabled visitors should use the main gate which is about 30m BEFORE the well signed entrance for the CP. It's very easy to overshoot the main entrance gates, and a long way round to get back to them - so approach with some care. When you go through the main gates, you can follow the drive all the way round to the forecourt of the house where BB holders can park. You would do best to ring first and get ‘authorised’.

From the official CP there’s a 600m walk over a roughish path, and including a step.

Pedestrians can enter through any of the gates: from Great Chertsey Road, Burlington Lane, or Staveley Road.

To enter the house from the forecourt there is +1 step, then +1, bypassed by a portable ramp. The rest of GF is step-free but has a narrow passage of 70cm connecting the main building to some statue exhibits and the toilet; both of which can be reached through a side door opened by staff. There is a cellar on the lower floor reached by −12.

The 1st floor holds the main interest. There are +16 spiral stairs or you might use the grand staircase outside (+7+6+6) if you ask staff to remove the ‘No Entry’ sign. If you ring in advance they can charge up a stairclimber to bypass these steps, but it cannot be used in wet weather. Using the stairclimber involves transferring into its seat from your chair. Adapted toilet (D85 ST65) with BCF off to the right of the modern annexe, opened on request. Alternatively there is a wheelchair toilet (D80 ST130) on left side of a step-free café 50m from house.

Some paths around the house and through the gardens are gravelled.

**Wetland Centre**

Queen Elizabeth Walk, Barnes, SW13 9WT  Tel: 020 8409-4400  
Website: www.wwt.org.uk  E-mail: info.london@wwt.org.uk

A unique reserve for wild birds created on decommissioned reservoirs. As well as facilities that allow keen birdwatchers to look out for periodic visitors, there are a number of rare and endangered species kept there for breeding. The entrance is about 200m down Queen Elizabeth Walk from the junction with Castelnau by the Red Lion pub. The 283 bus, runs to the Centre from Hammersmith bus station, where the stations are ‘accessible’.

The CP is about 100m from the entrance, just beyond the bus stop, and has 12 BB spaces. From the CP the route leads over a small wooden hump-backed bridge. Step-free to the ticket office. This leads into a courtyard. To the left of the door you have come through is the entrance to the shop, which is step-free. To the right of the door from the ticket office is the entrance to the Discovery Centre. This includes the *Secrets of the Wetlands* exhibit and entrance to the GF section.
of this is step-free. The *Wetlab* section of the exhibition with interactive displays, is +19 steps, but there’s a lift (D80 W100 L140) to bypass these. A further door from the courtyard leads to the Observatory, a large glass-fronted room with views over the Wetlands. Step-free entrance, with a ramp bypassing −4 to the front of the room. Gallery level +20. Between the Observatory and the Discovery Centre is the Tower, where the lift provides step-free access to the *Wetlab* and via high-level open-air walkways, to the gallery in the Observatory and the binocular shop *In Focus* (which is above the souvenir shop). The second floor of the tower, also accessible by the lift, contains a children’s area. **Wheelchair toilets (D75 ST75)** with BCF on both the GF and 1st floor, ahead and to the right when coming out of the lift.

The theatre is opposite the main building and has step-free access. It shows a short film about wetlands. Chair users can either sit in front of the front row of seats (which possibly restricts their view of the edge of the screen), or transfer to the front row, which is step-free from the entrance.

The café can be entered from the GF of the Tower or from outside, towards the *Waterlife* walk, and has step-free access with movable tables and chairs.

The *Waterlife* walk is reached from beyond the café, and consists of a number of areas with examples of wetland life and flora, as well as a number of hides (for bird watching) with views over the main lagoons. It is approximately 500m to the far end of the walk, by the most direct route, but rather longer if you wish to divert off the main path to the hides or exhibits. The main paths are tarmac, but a few outlying paths have loose compacted surfaces. These, however, are generally flat and should not pose problems to most chair users. All the hides and the *Wetland Living* hut have step-free access and low level viewing holes at 100 to 115cm from the ground. The Wader Scrape hide has +3, bypassed by a ramp, to the viewing area. The Peacock Tower, at the far end of the route contains a lift (D80 W110 L140) to the viewing levels. **Wheelchair toilet (D85 ST75)** with BCF, in a block about two-thirds of the way around the route, by the entrance to the Explore Adventure Area.

The *World Wetlands* and *Wildside* walk is reached from behind the theatre, and consists of a series of gated areas which try to create different international habitats, in which several endangered species of birds are being bred in captivity. Distances and the state of the paths are similar to the Waterlife walk, and a large (though not particularly heavy) gate separates the Wetlands and the Wildside areas. The Wildside Hide at the far end of the walk has +16 steps to the upper viewing level and no lift. There are no low-level viewing windows on that level (although there are on the GF level, which has step-free access). The Headley hide has step-free access and low-level viewing holes. 

Signage is reasonably good throughout the centre. The map provided is useful for getting around and clarifies where you can go. Our (non-twitcher) surveyors
enjoyed their visit there, and would recommend the centre to birdwatchers and interested non-birdwatchers alike. There is another accessible toilet by the CP but it was locked when we visited.

The National Archives (previously called the Public Record Office), Ruskin Avenue, Kew, although strictly just inside the South Circular road, are included on the website in the write-ups titled Kew (and under Sights outside the N/S Circular) as otherwise they are isolated from other sites.

***Greenwich***

Greenwich is on the south bank of the river, and about 8km downstream from Tower Bridge.

It was the birthplace of Henry VIII, and of his two daughters, Mary and Elizabeth. Many of the buildings were designed by Sir Christopher Wren, including the Naval College and the Observatory, (hence the several domes). The Queen’s House was designed by Inigo Jones.

Charles II supported scientific research in Greenwich; commissioned the Observatory; and appointed the first Astronomer Royal, John Flamsteed. Britain’s ships all over the world needed accurate time and astronomical measurements to facilitate safe navigation. In 1884, Greenwich Mean Time became the global basis of time measurement.

Maritime Greenwich has been declared a World Heritage Site (WHS) see [www.greenwichwhs.org.uk](http://www.greenwichwhs.org.uk) and it became a Royal Borough in 2012.

It has a unique collection of sights and places of interest in quite a small area, and we therefore describe them together in this section.

The WHS comprises the town centre and Park, together with buildings associated with:

• the Naval College and the Cutty Sark, AND the foot tunnel under the Thames;
• the Maritime Museum and the Queen’s House; and,
• the Old Observatory and the Astronomy Centre.

It has some spectacular classical buildings, together with the famous Meridian Line. Its history is tied up with the Tudors, with things naval, and in particular with the study of navigation.

Note that there’s a steep hill between the Maritime Museum and the Observatory.

Greenwich can either be just a place to visit, or it could be somewhere to stay, from which you can get to other parts of central London. A number of local hotels are listed in the *Accommodation* chapter.

It has good transport links, with ‘accessible’ riverboats to and from central
London. Greenwich NR station is ‘accessible’ and trains go to London Bridge, and Cannon Street. There is also the DLR which links to Tower Gateway and Bank, with an interchange at Canary Wharf for the JLE.
This means that someone staying in Greenwich can reach a large number of central London sights in less than an hour, using ‘accessible’ transport. Note, of course, that there is a sizeable step up into the trains, but portable ramps are available. Greenwich station is currently staffed from about 06.00 to 21.30. For a chair user the river can provide a relatively easy way to get to the Tower, to the Embankment, and/or the South Bank, or to Westminster.

Parking is free for BB holders in the Council CPs, but note that the one in the Park is run by the Parks Authority. There are CPs:
• off Welland Street, by the Cutty Sark. A small CP with no marked BB spaces and a height limit of 2m. The only step-free way in and out is via the slope the cars use. It is very centrally located
• off Burney Street behind the Ibis hotel with 3 BB spaces. Height restriction 2m.
• by the junction between Romney Road and Park Row with 2 BB spaces, and no height restriction; together with
• a weekend overflow CP at the other end of Park Row right by the Maritime Museum, which BB holders can use (with prior permission) during the week if visiting the Museum or Queens House, again with no height restriction
• in Greenwich Park itself, in Blackheath Avenue, near the Royal Observatory and by the Pavilion Tea House. There are 5 BB spaces by the Observatory and no height restriction. BB holders should be able to park without charge, but there’s a 4 hour time limit.

For more information, see: www.en.parkopedia.co.uk/parking/greenwich (but this does not show the parking in Blackheath Avenue).
If you’re using a vehicle then one good way of organising a visit is to use the Park Row facilities for visiting the riverside sites, and then driving up the hill and parking in Blackheath Avenue to visit the Observatory.

Greenwich Tourist Information Centre
Pepys House, 2 Cutty Sark Gardens, SE10 9LW  Tel: 0870 608-2000
website: www.visitgreenwich.org.uk/tourist-information-centre
e-mail: tic@greenwich.gov.uk
Located near the Cutty Sark and by the pier, in a pedestrianised area.
The Centre provides an excellent Visitors Map which you might do well to get hold of before visiting. It can be downloaded from the website.
There is a Discover Greenwich exhibition; a café; shop, and an accessible toilet with BCF. Although the door opens inwards, it is quite a big cubicle. It is all step-free.

On our map, we have used the same numbering system as that on the Visitors Map.
From the riverside, there’s the Old Royal Naval College (ORNC) which includes some remarkable sights. The College buildings are another Wren masterpiece. Tel: 020 8269-4799
website: www.ornc.org  e-mail: info@ornc.org
The website highlights the top ten must-see details in the College. For parts of the College, access is a bit of a challenge, but there’s a lift to the Painted Hall, and a Stairmate to facilitate getting up to the Chapel. The Information Centre is in part of the ORNC.

The Royal Museums Greenwich include the Cutty Sark, Maritime Museum, Queen’s House, and the Old Observatory. They have just one telephone enquiry number and website.
Tel: 020 8858-4422 (from which you are directed to the appropriate site).
website: www.rmg.co.uk
There are admission charges to the Cutty Sark, Meridian Courtyard and Flamsteed House, and to the Planetarium. Some are significant. You can get tickets for various combined visits at reduced overall cost. Entrance to the Maritime Museum, Queen’s House, and to the Astronomy Centre at the Observatory is free.

Much of the ORNC is taken up by the University of Greenwich, but some parts are open to the public, including:
The Painted Hall in College Way
This has a platform lift (D100 W200 L150) in the corner of the building, which goes to floors 1 (for the Hall) and −1 for the restaurant. To call and to use/operate the lift, you have to hold the button down continuously. It is then ALL automatic (so trying to open the door manually may cause a malfunction).
The Painted Hall has a magnificent ceiling, but the mirrors for looking at them are 96cm high which is slightly too high for many chair users. There are +6 steps to an upper level.
In the basement (level −1) there’s a nice quiet restaurant and bar, in the King William Undercroft. There are toilets just across the corridor. Follow the sign for ladies and disabled toilets. There are two wheelchair toilets (D70+ ST70+), one of which has BCF.

To get to the Chapel from the Painted Hall, there are −15. Then you can go across the gap to the next building, where there are −1+1 (very small) and then +3+13 up to the Chapel.
For a chair user, or walker who has a problem with steps, there is a way to get to the Chapel from the Painted Hall. At the far end, they have a vehicle with small tank tracks which can go down and up steps called a Stairmate. This can be used, to carry wheelchair users from the Hall to the Chapel. The maximum weight the Stairmate can take is 200 kg. The maximum chair width is 69.5cm (27”). Most
electric chairs will, of course, exceed this weight. If you are able to transfer, a manual wheelchair can be provided to make the Chapel visit possible. It is worth ringing the Information Centre in advance to make sure that there’s someone on duty who is qualified to operate the Stairmate, and that it is charged up.

The **town centre** is compact, and therefore quite crowded and congested through the summer and at weekends. The pavements can be quite bumpy, and are a bit narrow in places. The *Visitors Map* shows the layout of the ORNC, close to the river, and we describe the access into buildings 4 and 5. We also describe access to buildings 1, 2, and 3, as well as to 14 (the Greenwich Market).

There’s a wide range of pubs and restaurants, and several places of entertainment including the Greenwich Theatre, and the Picturehouse. There’s also the Fan Museum, and St Alfege’s church.

The area around the Pier and the Cutty Sark has been pedestrianised, though watch out for some long angled steps which are quite difficult to spot when it’s overcast because of a lack of colour contrast. There is wheelchair access almost everywhere. Near the pier there are three new restaurants which will almost certainly have accessible toilets.

**Greenwich Market** is covered, and is quite small, so that it can be congested at busy times. Some of the surfaces inside are rough and quite bumpy.

**Cutty Sark**
King William Walk, SE10 9HT (by Greenwich Pier)
*Tel:* 020 8858 4422  *website:* www.rmg.co.uk/cuttysark

A famous tea clipper that sailed both the Atlantic and the Pacific in the 19thC. Its principal cargoes were tea and then wool. After a disastrous fire in 2007, the ship was raised about 3m, and is now suspended on struts. A glass skirt has been put around the ship and dock, making it an all-weather attraction.

Significant admission charge. Closed some Mondays. The number of wheelchair users who can visit is limited to three per hour.

A new and separate glass tower contains two lifts giving access to and from the Main Weather Deck and the Sammy Ofer Gallery around the ship’s keel.

The standard visitor route takes you from street level through a gap in the glass surround into a rather congested shop and ticket area. This is on the Lower Hold level where there is a video presentation and a computer game trying to get the ship to use the fastest winds from Australia to England. The route through this deck is via narrow walkways and you can see the cramped crew quarters. A chair user or disabled walker has to double back against the flow, in order to take the internal platform lift (D90 L150) up to the ‘Tween Deck, and then to the Main Deck. Be careful when exiting the lift, because the ‘Tween Deck is sloping. From the Main Deck the view is very limited, as the sides are about 1.5m high. There are raised areas with ladder steps and rope handrails at both the bow and stern ends.
From here you take one of the lifts in the tower alongside down to the keel level, where there’s a café and gallery. From here, there’s a platform lift at the prow end to take you up to a viewing gallery, described by one of our visitors as ‘strangely dull’. To get back to ground level, there’s another platform lift (D90 L150) from the Sammy Ofer Gallery to the shop, near the ships stern. There are wheelchair toilets at both the top (Main Deck level) and bottom (Keel level), of the tower containing the lifts. The Keel level one includes BCF.

The Greenwich Foot Tunnel
This pedestrian route under the Thames was built more than a hundred years ago, and is nearly 400m long. There are large lifts at each end, and the tunnel is an unusual example of Victorian/Edwardian engineering. The dome over the lift shaft is fairly obvious from the Cutty Sark.

National Maritime Museum and Queen’s House
Romney Road, Greenwich, SE10 9NF
Tel: 020 8858-4422 (bookings 020 8312-6608) RecM: 020 8312-6565
website: www.nmm.ac.uk e-mail: bookings@nmm.ac.uk
An extensive museum whose exhibits illustrate the key role that seafaring has played in British history. Built in the 19thC as a school for sailors’ children, it was completely renovated in 1998 when some of the outside walkways were enclosed under a large glass canopy. It combines several buildings. Three of them surround the covered courtyard behind the entrance portico, and there’s a largely new central building in what was the (open) courtyard.
There is limited parking for BB holders on the east side of the site, approached from the end of Park Row (off the A206 Romney Road). Spaces are bookable 24 hours in advance. The CP gates say “Parking on weekends and bank holidays only” but if you have pre-booked a space, you will be allowed in. It’s some 200m from the CP to the main museum entrance, where you can drop off a passenger if that’s necessary.
The immediate area around the museum is flat, but there’s a steep hill in Greenwich Park up to the Observatory, which is at least 700m away. There are two step-free entrances, on opposite sides of the museum. One is from the Romney Road side, towards the river, and you go in through an old and rather grand portico. The other is from the Park side, and is a very modern glass construction, entering what is called the Sammy Ofer Wing.
A diagrammatic Floor Plan is in the Visitor maps, available at the information desk just inside both entrances. As a first time visitor, we found this quite difficult to follow, and in particular to sort out which lift was which. Signage is quite poor, and there aren’t many seats around. However, you can borrow a folding stool.
The whole building is about 100m deep and a little over 150m wide in places. The exhibitions are on several floors. The newest parts are the large covered atrium, designed in a similar way to the one in the British Museum, and the Sammy Ofer
Wing, which has a basement gallery for special exhibitions. A two-level central area is linked by walkways to older wings which contain most of the exhibits and form a horseshoe around the atrium. Nearly all the exhibits can be reached step-free.

There are five lifts in the areas which were open when we visited. All were >D75 W100 L100, and most are much bigger than that:

- one is found from the Romney Road entrance by going left and left again, and then you can see the glass shaft, but have to go down a narrow corridor to your left to get to the lift doors. This goes from the GF to floors 1 and 2. It is close to room 4;
- two other lifts go from different corners of the building, by room 8 and to the right of room 9 (the shop). Both go to floors 1 and 2, while the one by room 9 also stops at a mezzanine where there are toilets;
- in the Sammy Ofer Wing, there’s a glass lift from the GF to the basement. There’s another one past the toilets, which isn’t signed, and is out of sight (it’s to your right at the end of the corridor), which goes up to the Brasserie on floor 2.

The staff are friendly and well-informed.

There are six accessible toilets:

- one is on the GF near the Romney Road entrance is an adapted toilet (D85 ST60) with BCF, and the ST is restricted because of the BC table;
- one is past room 21, on a mezzanine level (accessed by lift), and is a wheelchair toilet (D80 ST80) with BCF;
- one is shown on floor 1 in room 23 (the Caird Library) but we didn’t see this;
- one is on the GF of the Sammy Ofer Wing, a wheelchair toilet (D80 ST80) with separate BCF;
- one is in the basement of the Sammy Ofer Wing, a wheelchair toilet (D80 ST80) with separate BCF;
- and there is one by the Brasserie restaurant.

Adjacent to the Maritime Museum back towards the CP is the Queen’s House. This was designed by Inigo Jones for Anne of Denmark who was James I’s queen. The other buildings towards the river were carefully sited so that the queen had an unobstructed view of the river. It has been restored and houses a series of exhibits which reflect its history, and that of Greenwich, and of things maritime. Step-free entrance from the Romney Road side, and through a door under the stairways. This leads to the ticket office. To the right is a lift (D100 W205 L100) that goes up to floors 1 and 2. On the GF −3−1 steps from the Great Hall will take you into a roadway and then +1+3 take you to the Orangery, with a lovely view of Greenwich Park. Ramps are available if you make arrangements in advance, but they’re quite steep. Wheelchair toilet (D85 ST70) with BCF on the GF, to the left of the entrance.
The Fan Museum, 12 Crooms Hill, SE10 8ER, Tel: 020 8305-1441, is said to have lift access and an accessible toilet, but we haven’t visited. When we phoned we were told that most of the steps could be bypassed using either a ramp or internal lift. It is closed on Mondays. St Alfege’s Church, where General Wolfe is buried (he is famous because he led the forces who captured Quebec from the French in 1760), is said to have a steepish ramp to facilitate access via the south entrance. Probably a portable, temporary ramp. The church is in Greenwich Church Street, SE10 9BJ, Tel: 020 8853-0687 website: www.st-alfege.org.

Greenwich Park (a Royal Park, Tel: 0300 061-2380)
The park extends some 1km north/south and 600m east/west with a substantial hill between the Maritime Museum and the Observatory. It covers around 180 acres (74ha) stretching up the hill from Greenwich and linking with Blackheath. The park was originally the grounds of the royal palace, while Blackheath was common land, and was often a meeting point for groups entering London from the east. These included Wat Tyler’s group of rebels at the time of the Peasants’ Revolt.

In parts of the park the squirrels are so tame that they will eat out of your hand, but be careful, some may bite! There is a bandstand, with occasional performances and several other features, including a Deer Park. There’s car access from Blackheath along Blackheath Avenue.

There’s a magnificent view over London from the General Wolfe statue at the end of Blackheath Avenue. The general is buried in St Alfege’s church.

The park includes the Old Royal Observatory and a new Astronomy Centre at the top of the hill (see the inset in the Greenwich map). Rangers House is in the SE corner.

The shortest route to the top from the Maritime Museum, involves a very steep path with 10 single steps. There is a gentler, step-free route using the gate at the end of King William Walk, following The Avenue up to the CP at the top. In total this is >750m long, but from March to October an ‘accessible’ shuttle bus runs up and down every half-hour.

Just past the park entrance from Blackheath there are mens and womens toilets with adapted cubicles (D80 ST75 but inward opening doors). They’re about 50m from the entrance and just to the left. There are parking spaces on the left of the road.

The Astronomy Centre is located in the Royal Observatory South building, and its galleries are free.

In its courtyard there’s a big dark grey construction that looks a bit like a ship’s funnel and is the dome of the Planetarium.

The main building has three levels with lift access. The GF has three galleries. The 1st floor is an education centre while the lower level has a Café, shop and toilets including a wheelchair toilet. The Café has an open balcony for eating out
during the summer. The **Planetarium**, for which there is an admission charge, is also approached from the lower level and has 3 wheelchair spaces. There is one other small gallery in a separate building at ground level which is step-free from one entrance but +2 from the other.

**The Old Royal Observatory, Meridian Building, and Flamsteed House**
This group of buildings is approached from just past the statue, and visiting this area involves an admission charge.

The observatory is administered from the National Maritime Museum at the bottom of the hill, and the number for enquiries is **Tel: 020 8858-4422**

**website:** www.rmg.co.uk

The Meridian Building and Telescope Gallery are both step-free on the GF, and most of the exhibits can be seen. The route around leads to the Astronomers Garden, which is partially cobbled.

There’s a **wheelchair toilet (D70 ST80)** which is between two buildings and is signed from the courtyard. It is down a small dead-end passage off the garden.

Also in the garden there’s an external platform lift to bypass most of the stairs in **Flamsteed House**. You may have to use the bell to attract attention. The lift goes to both the upper and lower levels. The conventional route involves +4, and then +17 to the 1st floor. Then stairs −3−7−7, followed by −20+16 (via the basement) to the gardens.

Finally, you can go and cross (or straddle) the famous Meridian Line in the Meridian Courtyard. This is also partially cobbled. The exit route takes you through the shop.

**Pavilion Tea House**
The Tea House has a ramped entrance and is step-free throughout. In the summer there’s a lovely outside eating area. **Wheelchair toilet (D90 ST110)** with BCF, located to the right of the service desk.

**Ranger’s House**
Chesterfield Walk, Blackheath, SE10 8QX

**Tel: 020 8294-2548  website: www.english-heritage.org.uk**

This is located in the SE corner of the Park. It is administered by English Heritage. The website describes access as follows. No parking. There are +9 steps both at the front and back of the house. At the back, a platform lift bypasses the steps to the GF. Inside there are four flights of stairs, with nearly 70 steps in total. These have a chair stairlift (with a chair into which you can transfer).

**The Greenwich good loo guide**
The disabled persons’ toilets in Greenwich are of slightly variable design (and therefore accessibility). A few have an inward opening door. Several pubs and restaurants have an ‘accessible’ toilet, but these too vary in ease of use.
There are accessible toilets:

- near the Cutty Sark (a Tardis loo, 24h NKS) located by the entrance to the Welland Street CP, and opposite the Gipsy Moth pub
- in the Tourist Information Centre (at the junction of King William Walk and College Way)
- in the basement of the Painted Hall building, accessed by lift
- in the Maritime Museum (several - see description above)
- in the Ibis hotel, Stockwell Street off the foyer to the left
- in the Royal Observatory complex (see description above)
- in the Astronomy Centre on level -1.

In addition, there are accessible toilets in the following eating places and bars:

- The Gipsy Moth pub, 60 Greenwich Church Street, next to the Cutty Sark. Flat side entrance into the garden, leading to a ramped entrance to the inside. **Wheelchair toilet (D85 ST80 NKS)** with BCF, but it was not in a good condition when we visited;
- McDonalds, 2 Crescent Arcade, next to the Cutty Sark DLR station. Flat entrance and an **adapted toilet (D85 ST55 NKS)** with BCF just left of the service desk;
- Gate Clock Bar, 210 Creek Road, near the Cutty Sark DLR station. Flat entrance, and lift (D85 W100 L130) to 1st floor where there is a **wheelchair toilet (D80 ST90 NKS)**;
- Gourmet Burger Kitchen, 45 Greenwich Church Street. Flat entrance, and **wheelchair toilet (D90 ST85)**;
- Pizza Express, 4 Church Street. Flat entrance and **wheelchair toilet (D90 ST75)**.

There will, of course, be more, but we were only looking for enough to make some adequate suggestions. The new eating places by the pier will almost certainly have accessible toilets.

**Woolwich**

The Royal Arsenal, in Woolwich is a famous location whose history dates back to the 1600s. The Ordnance Factories closed in 1967 and large parts of the site have become a massive (and slightly confusing) housing development.

The Arsenal gave rise to the name of a well known football team in the late 1800s, and it carried out large scale armaments manufacture and explosives research for the British Army for several centuries.

The Royal Arsenal Woolwich Historical Society website is: [http://www.qq22.net/raw](http://www.qq22.net/raw)

It is located off the A206 Plumstead Road, near the Woolwich Ferry.

The Woolwich Arsenal main line and DLR stations are about 250m away. The DLR station is accessible, and NR say that all the platforms on the main line station are also accessible step-free.
Two interesting centres for visitors are located near the ‘old’ main entrance down No1 Street. These are the Royal Artillery Museum and the Greenwich Heritage Centre, both described below.

The simplest place to park is in the Town Centre CP just past the main site entrance and reached through a width limit of 2.1m (7ft), but without any height restriction. The CP can be reached without a width limit (eg for a minibus) if you approach via the Duke of Wellington Avenue. It’s about 200m from the CP to the two centres, via some gentle slopes, and on No 1 Street there’s a smooth path for wheelchairs to bypass a really rough cobbled area which is probably part of the site ‘heritage’.

Both centres have BB parking, but these are VERY difficult to locate if you’re visiting for the first time. There’s quite a good map on the Greenwich Heritage Centre website showing the BB spaces. The route is entirely unmarked/unsigned, and what you need to do is to turn left off Plumstead Road (going east), through the width barrier, and past the entrance to the Town Centre CP. Go about 100m past the new flats to the Duke of Wellington Avenue, where you turn left. Go a further 150m where you turn right (at a crossroads which is some 50m short of where you can see a red and white barrier across the road). About 40m in front of you is another barrier, which when we visited was completely unsigned in relation to access to the BB spaces. There was a large 5 sign (indicating the speed limit) and a No Entry sign on a tall pole! There’s a short square post on your right some 10m before this barrier, with an intercom. You can press the button and request entry to the BB spaces which are less than 50m from each centre. Drive around Cartridge Place, and you’ll find them if you keep veering left. There are different BB spaces for Firepower and for Greenwich Heritage, but once you’ve parked for one, they’re so close together that it’s not worth re-parking.

Both buildings are quite compact, and are readily ‘accessible’.

**Firepower, The Royal Artillery Museum**

Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, SE18 6ST  Tel: 020 8855-7755

*website:* www.firepower.org.uk  *e-mail:* info@firepower.org.uk

This has a fascinating collection of military hardware and among other things tells the story of the development of the artillery.

Step-free entrance to the ticket desk and shop area, and there’s a ramp up to the exhibition area. Lift (D85 W120 L100) to the first floor. This bypasses ±25 steps between the floors. To get into the GF exhibition area a chair user would have to go through the doors marked No Entry. These open towards you, and a staff member would facilitate this if you ask.

There are toilets on both the GF and 1st floors, near the lift. On the GF it’s an **adapted toilet (D90 ST65)** with BCF, and two big bins in it. On the 1st floor it’s a **wheelchair toilet (D90 ST90)** again with BCF and bins, but there’s considerably more space.
Greenwich Heritage Centre
Artillery Square, Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, SE18 4DX (SE18 6ST for SatNav)
Tel: 020 8854-2452
website: www.greenwichheritage.org  e-mail: info@greenwichheritage.org
The Heritage Centre is a small modern building with a series of temporary
exhibitions relating to the history of Greenwich, particularly reflecting it maritime
associations. There is also a history of the Arsenal and of the Woolwich Dockyard
covering over 400 years. It has research facilities.
Access is step-free throughout, and on the GF there’s a particularly well designed
and spacious wheelchair toilet (D80 ST90) with BCF.

Hampstead
Hampstead Heath
Superintendent’s Office, Heathfield House, 432 Archway Road, N6 4JH (for
correspondence)
Tel: 020 7332-3322 for general enquiries, 020 7332-3773 for sports enquiries
websites: www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/hampsteadheath, is the official management
site and has an enormous amount of information, while www.hampsteadheath.
org.uk/info.htm has some good historical stuff.
The website leads to a section via Visitor information → Access for everyone
e-mail: hampstead.heath@cityoflondon.gov.uk

The Heath is a huge area of grassland, woodland and ponds, covering more than
320ha (nearly 800 acres), just 7 km from the centre of London and managed by
the City of London Corporation. It includes the Kenwood estate managed by
English Heritage.
It is very hilly in parts, and the approach through Hampstead village is up a steep
hill. From the top of the hill there are superb views over London on a clear day.

The Corporation of London, publish an excellent diary/guide (available at several
places in the park) which lists various events.
These include performances in the bandstands, children’s activities and fairs. In
the middle of the guide is a map showing the principal facilities.
You can also find it via the official website → News → Hampstead Heath diary

There are also ‘Enabled maps’ which include what they describe as graded and
easy to read maps, with step-free routes around Hampstead Heath. The ‘Maps’
are a series of photographs of the route, and seem to be presented in a format that
would appeal to (and possibly be useful to) someone using a smart phone. See:
http://enabledmaps.com/col/using_enabled_maps.html
We aren’t quite sure who these would be useful to, although finding routes
with distances well described is a good thing. They look slightly like an idea
that appeared to be good to able-bodied sponsors wanting to promote more
inclusiveness, but who were not able to assess their practical application.
There is an Education Centre, off Gordon House Road near Gospel Oak NR station. The entrance is 10m away to the right of the Lido. A ramp bypasses +2 steps. CP with three BB spaces shared with the Lido. An electric buggy is available which can be booked a week in advance, and they hope to have more soon, Tel: 020 7485-5757 to book. The centre can also provide a good map showing the paths over most of the Heath with an indication of the steepness of the slopes and the roughness of the terrain.

The Heath can be approached from many different directions including its lower reaches near Parliament Hill. There is a CP in East Heath Road at the South End Green end, from where it is possible to enjoy a pleasant wander without encountering severe slopes. Another recommended access point is at the end of Parliament Hill which is a Mecca for kite-flying enthusiasts. If you can climb up, you can get an excellent view over London; or, if you feel less athletic, you can take the path to the left and enjoy a less exacting amble towards Highgate Ponds.

Hampstead Heath has about 30 beautiful and much-loved lakes, referred to as ‘the ponds’. Although they look natural, most are formed by dams, some of which are nearly 300 years old.

**The open-air swimming facilities are internationally famous**, with the Ladies’ Pond, the Men’s Pond, the Mixed Pond and the Parliament Hill Lido. The Ladies’ and Men’s Ponds are unique in the United Kingdom in being the only life-guarded open-water swimming facilities open to the public every day of the year. The Lido is a 60x27m uncovered, unheated swimming pool at Parliament Hill. The Ladies’ Pond and Lido are described as being fully accessible, and there are hoists to facilitate transfer into the water. This is not the case at the Men’s and Mixed Ponds (although there are plans to provide hoists in the future). There are always staff on hand who will be willing to help. Some pond users with limited mobility are happy to make use of these informal arrangements.

For details of opening hours and prices telephone the Swimming on Hampstead Heath Information Service on 020 7485 3873. BUT it’s an entirely automated service, and you can’t speak to a person! Hmmm. To do so, you will have to try the general enquiries number.

**Fishing** is allowed in a number of the ponds, but anglers must have a current Environment Agency licence, and a Hampstead Heath fishing permit, Tel: 020 7332-3773 for details.

**There are two cafés:**
- Parliament Hill café Tel: 020 7485-6606, located off Highgate Road, Parliament Hill, between the tennis courts/bowling green and the bandstand; and,
- Golders Hill Park café Tel: 020 8455-8010, located close to the North End Way entrance to Golders Hill Park.
Seven accessible toilets are shown on the Corporation of London listing/map mentioned above, and we have visited most of them. They are:

- in the heath ‘extension’ to the north. It is in the red tile complex next to the sports pitches, some 400m from Wildwood Road and 600m from Hampstead Way (D80 ST130 NKS). The paths were rough and are muddy when wet;
- 100m from the entrance on North End Road (on the West Heath) (D85 ST90 NKS); there is nearby parking for BB holders;
- by the animal enclosures near West Heath Road there are two unisex toilets with BCF out of order at time of visit;
- on what is called East Heath, almost due south from Spaniards Inn. Gravelly paths, and in a hilly area. The toilet (D75 ST85 NKS) is in a mock Tudor complex hidden amongst some trees;
- about 200m from the Nassington Road entrance, to the south of the Heath. It is between the athletics track and the playground. About 800m from Gospel Oak station. (D90 ST150 NKS) with BCF;
- those shown next to Highgate Road on the east side by the tennis courts (D80 ST120 NKS);
- by Highgate Ponds by Millfield Lane. Down a steepish ramp (D75 ST115 NKS).

Highgate Cemetery
Swain’s Lane, N6 6PJ Tel: 020 8340-1834 website: www.highgate-cemetery.org
Full of graves and tombs that reflect high Victorian taste, and best known for being the burial place of Karl Marx. Admission charge. It is divided into two sections, west and east. The western part is only open to prearranged groups. Parking in the area is restricted from 10.00 to 12.00 (at the time of writing). There is a flat entrance to the east side and the main path is smooth. Long distances of over 500m may be involved, depending on what you want to see. The west section is on a steepish hill, and there are few paths. Most chair users would need assistance in the western part, but there’s plenty of interest. The cemetery is always closed during funerals, so call beforehand.

Kenwood House (The Iveagh Bequest)
Hampstead Lane, NW3 7JR Tel: 020 8348-1286
website: www.english-heritage.org.uk/daysout/properties/kenwood-house
Kenwood House is on the northernmost edge of the Heath. It is a handsome period house with a fine picture collection given to the nation in 1927, and currently run by English Heritage. Open-air concerts are held in the grounds, and it is hired out from time to time for weddings and corporate events. The house is closed for most of 2012/2013 for renovations, and our visit was made early in 2012.
Parking is provided in the West Lodge CP (pay and display). BB holders may park free in any space and there are seven designated BB spaces. There is a
mobility vehicle for those with difficulty walking from the CP. This is a minibus with 2 big steps get in, and an extendable ramp for a chair user. It can be requested by using the intercom (H85) just to the left of the two pillars by the CP entrance marking the main path to the house which is about 400m away. Disabled passengers may be dropped off in front of the main house, accessed via the East Lodge entrance where again, there’s an intercom for requesting entry. All vehicles have to be parked outside, either in the free parking on Hampstead Lane or in the West Lodge CP.

The house itself has step-free access to the GF, where there are some spectacular rooms including various paintings and antiques, as well as a shop. The first floor is reached via +3+18 steps.

The café/restaurant area is on the other side of the house at a lower level and can be reached step-free by going around the left side. Large parts of this are step-free, including the small Information Centre. There is a 3cm ledge getting into the restaurant and −1 going out to a step-free area on the patio.

There’s a wheelchair toilet (D80 ST80) and separate BCF in a large cubicle off the collonade by the chairs and tables out in the open.

The audience area for concerts is about 450m from the house reached by gently sloping gravel paths.

**Spaniards Inn**
Spaniards Road, Hampstead, NW3 7JJ
Tel: 020 8731-8406  website: www.thespaniardshampstead.co.uk
Where the road joins Hampstead Lane and with an awkward pinch point in the road outside. Famous 16thC pub that Dick Turpin is said to have frequented, and which numbers famous poets amongst its previous patrons. On-site CP, and then there’s a flat way in through the door on the corner by the road. 50% is step-free from this entrance. +13 steps to the Turpin bar. Outside there’s a large garden area with split levels although parts have step-free access from the CP. Unfortunately accessible toilets weren’t a design feature in the 16thC!

**Lee Valley**
A remarkable series of developments were started in 1967. These have resulted in the regeneration of largely derelict areas along the river Lee, into a huge Park. This provides a ‘green chain’ stretching from London’s East End, through Walthamstow and Tottenham right up past the M25 to Broxborne and Ware. Most recently the Olympic Park has been established at the southern end of the valley near Stratford.

We would like to acknowledge and to express our thanks for the help of Naomi Chant, and various members of the Park Information Service, in collecting and collating much of the data included in this section.
For information about the park, contact:

**Lee Valley Regional Park Information Service**  
Myddelton House, Bulls Cross, Enfield, EN2 9HG  
**Tel:** 0845 6770-600  
**e-mail:** info@leevalleypark.org.uk

There are complementary websites:

- one of which, [www.visitleevalley.org.uk](http://www.visitleevalley.org.uk) is the practical one about the activities available,
- while the other, [www.leevalleypark.org.uk](http://www.leevalleypark.org.uk), is about the Regional Park Authority who have the responsibility for planning. This website includes some excellent maps.

The extent of Lee Valley, and some of the key facilities, are shown on the map. There are nature reserves, sports and entertainment facilities, an excellent choice of places for fishing, a boating centre and camp sites.

The river along which the Park has been developed is variously called the Lea or Lee. For the sake of consistency, we refer to everything here as Lee. *Because many facilities have the prefix ‘Lee Valley’ it is not always clear, initially, which part of the valley they are in.* Some of them sound very similar, and yet are 15km apart, and we have tried to use descriptive names to clarify their location.

The sites of interest inside the North Circular Road are described here, in the *Places of interest* chapter. **In addition, there are many interesting facilities further out, which are described on our website.**

We start at the southern end of the Valley (nearest central London) and describe the various places going northwards. Our first entry is about the fisheries, which are located throughout the valley, and include a number of sites for disabled anglers.

**Lee Valley Fisheries**

There are opportunities for fishing throughout the Lee Valley Regional Park area. The fishery department have a special multi-site permit for anglers with disabilities and details of the venues, specific swims and accessibility is included on the fisheries section of the Lee Valley website. There are also details of concessionary reduced rates on full permit purchase at specific venues. The 36 page booklet *Get hooked* can either be downloaded, or you can get a printed copy from:

**Lee Valley Regional Park Authority (Fisheries)**  
Holyfield Hall Farm, Stubbins Hall Lane, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 2EG  
**Tel:** 01992 892-291  
**e-mail:** fisheries@leevalleypark.org.uk  
**website:** [www.visitleevalley.org.uk/go/fisheries](http://www.visitleevalley.org.uk/go/fisheries)

Lee Valley Regional Park currently operates 29 gravel pits and 17 stretches of river that facilitate coarse angling, comprising of 25 venues, 12 directly managed by the Fisheries team and 12 run by angling clubs, societies or consortia and one which is jointly managed.
The Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park area

PLACES OF INTEREST
The special permit which allows use of the specifically designed facilities for disabled anglers at eight of the fisheries must be obtained by post from the address given above. If you want further details, use the contacts given for Holyfield Hall.

*The south end of Lee Valley, around Stratford, Leyton and Hackney*

**The Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park**
In 2012 the Park area provided the central venues for the Olympic Games. The 200ha (500 acre) site will be progressively developed to provide a mix of facilities. These will be both for local people, and for visitors - and will provide an important part of the Olympic Legacy. The extent of the Park is shown on the map, although this was put together before some of the details had been finalised. There will be large areas which include waterways and wetlands, and even larger stretches of parkland. As it is all built around rivers and canals, the whole area is fairly flat, although there will be some slopes in places - mainly fairly gentle ones. Many of the paths will be tarmacked, although some will have a rougher surface.

The North Park will reopen in mid 2013, with a community hub building set amongst an extensive area of parkland and footpaths between the River Lee waterways. It will include the Copper Box indoor entertainment venue. In the north there will be the Velopark for cycling, and the centres for both tennis and hockey, all providing world class facilities.

The South Park is planned to reopen in 2014 including the ArcelorMittal Orbit 115m high ‘sculpture’ (see below), and the Aquatics Centre. The south area includes the Olympic Stadium itself, which is due to reopen for both football and athletics in 2016, although there are several planned events which will take place well before this. There will be up to 11,000 new homes provided in five distinct neighbourhood areas, with appropriate infrastructure.

To follow progress with the developments, see:
- [www.stratfordlondon.info](http://www.stratfordlondon.info)
- [www.londonlegacy.co.uk](http://www.londonlegacy.co.uk).

**The Orbit**

*website:* www.arcelormittalorbit.com  *e-mail:* orbit@bbworkplace.com
At the time of writing, visits are being organised via: [www.noordinarypark.co.uk/events](http://www.noordinarypark.co.uk/events)

Located close to the Olympic Stadium, this iconic steel ArcelorMittal ‘sculpture’ has two elevated viewing platforms 80m and 76m high. These provide brilliant views over the Olympic Park, down into the Stadium itself and (on a clear day) over much of London.
It is not going to be fully open until April 2014. Admission charge. Your visit starts under a huge black steel dome, giving an impression of darkness. There are two large lifts, to the upper platform. Varying special exhibitions, relating to the 2012 Olympics and to the development of the Park are being hosted. There are outside walkways, quite blowy when it’s windy, but with excellent views all around. The walkways include some ramped/elevated sections to help chair users see over the outside railing.

You can then go to the lower viewing platform either via −24 steps, or using one of the lifts, where there is further exhibition space. On this level there are two wheelchair toilets (D90 ST150+) each with BCF, located just outside the mens and womens toilet areas.

There are again some outside walkways. To get back to ground level you can go via −431 steps circling around outside, or use a lift.

When we visited, the area around was a building site, but as development proceeds, there will be pedestrian access from all around the Park.

**Ice Centre**
Lea Bridge Road, Leyton, E10 7QL  
Tel: 020 8533-3154  e-mail: icecentre@leevalleypark.org.uk  
Situated just east of the River Lee Navigation on the A104, almost next to the Riding Centre.

Large, on-site CP with four BB spaces. Step-free access throughout the Centre to the changing area and to the edge of the rink.

Access to the rink is via single step. Limited space for chair users at the corners of the rink with relatively poor view due to surrounding wall. Fixed tiered seating with steps.

Ramped access into the café area providing an elevated view of the rink. **Wheelchair toilet (D70 ST140)** by the café. Key available from reception.

**Riding Centre**
Lea Bridge Road, Leyton, E10 7QL  
Tel: 020 8556-2629  e-mail: ridingcentre@leevalleypark.org.uk  
Situated east of the River Lee Navigation on the A104 next to the Ice Centre.

CP with two BB spaces. Step-free access throughout the site, although it may get a bit muddy when wet!

The centre works in partnership with *Riding for the Disabled* providing lessons for both adults and children with disabilities. A ramp is available to assist riders with limited mobility to mount their horse.

Fixed tiered seating with steps overlooking indoor school. Ramped access to the café. **Wheelchair cubicles (D90 ST80)** in both the mens and womens toilets opposite reception.
**WaterWorks Nature Reserve**  
Lammas Road, off Lea Bridge Road, Leyton, E10 7NU  
Tel: 020 8988-7566  e-mail: thewaterworks@leevalleypark.org.uk  
Located opposite the Riding Centre on the A104. On-site CP with three BB spaces.  
The Nature Reserve is on the former site of the Essex Filter Beds. It hosts more than 500 species of plants and animals and has one of the largest bird hides in London, with low level viewing flaps. Surfaced pathways (some uneven and cobbled) and boardwalks provide access routes throughout the site. Interpretation panels provide natural and industrial history information.  
Step-free access throughout the visitor centre and café area.  
**Adapted toilet (D90 ST60)** located behind reception.