

Circular walk in Turner's Footsteps from the Thames Path to Sandycombe Lodge and back.

1.9 miles (3.08kms) outlined in dark blue on map.

J.M.W. Turner's paintings of the River Thames and its surrounding idyllic landscapes are renowned.

The artist loved the river from his boyhood in Brentford where he learned to row and fish, and the Thames featured throughout his life and work.

While his public reputation grew and fame brought him new commissions, he returned again and again to live near the river and recreate the sense of peace and enjoyment he remembered.



Turner was looking for a place where he and his father could retreat from the busy gallery in Marylebone and enjoy time together.

In 1807, having lived for short periods in Sion Ferry House, Isleworth and in Hammersmith, Turner bought a 2-acre site in the country, a couple of meadows sloping down towards the river from a sandy lane in Twickenham.

The perfect place to build a home for himself and his father, William.

Today, Turner's House, Sandycombe Lodge in St Margaret's, Twickenham, is humming with the appreciative voices of visitors keen to experience a little of Turner's life here from 1812 to 1826. This is the only house that Turner designed and built, and the only house where he lived that is open to the public.

We owe a huge debt to Professor Harold Livermore who bought the house in 1947, and to art historian Catherine Parry-Wingfield. They met by chance in a queue at the local Post Office and set up a Trust to rescue the dilapidated house.

Thanks to generous donations, fundraising events and a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Sandycombe Lodge was restored with great care and attention to detail.

Turner House Trust manages Sandycombe Lodge and stages small exhibitions of Turner's work. In Spring 2020 there are five small oil sketches of the River Thames (on loan from the Tate) hanging in the guest bedroom. There are another 13 of these small oil paintings on mahogany panels, so future exhibitions are anticipated!

Sandycombe Lodge became a home where Turner could relax and invite friends for dinner. He would walk to the river, which he could see from his bedroom, to reach the boat that he designed for his picnics and fishing trips with friends, and for *en plein air* painting.



Circular walk starting from the Thames Path at Orleans Gardens to Sandycombe Lodge

Turner would surely have walked here, visited Louis Philippe, Duc d'Orleans at Orleans House, and strolled through the informal landscapes of Marble Hill and Cambridge Park.

Start: From the Thames Path at Orleans Gardens, the point where Orleans Road meets the Thames Path, walk north past the wall of Orleans House Gallery on the left and the open landscaped grounds of Marble Hill Park on the right.

Turn right into Chapel Road and then left into Montpelier Row, a fine row of Georgian townhouses. Turner would have walked past these on his way home from the river, perhaps with fish that he had just caught and would release into a pond at Sandycombe Lodge to be eaten later.

At the end of Montpelier Row turn right onto Richmond Road and after a few yards cross to Sandycombe Road (note the two 'o's).

Walk up this road, imagining for a while that the Victorian and Edwardian houses do not exist, and the sandy lane is shaded with trees.

The lane passed orchards and hedgerows around fields where cattle grazed. This rural vista is recreated in Turner's house through clever digital imagery in one of the reception rooms.

Sandycombe Lodge is marked out by a picket fence at the front, very different from brick walls and ornamental shrubbery of the nearby houses.



The house is open Wednesdays to Sundays from 12 noon to 3pm. Details of monthly talks, education activities and connoisseur tours are on the website <https://turnershouse.org/>

Inside Turner's bedroom there is a telescope through which you can view the landscape that he would have seen towards Cambridge Park and the river, with Richmond Hill rising high beyond.

Richmond Hill was one of Turner's favourite locations to paint his famous views of the river with its neo-classical houses and temples. The view from Richmond Hill is now protected by an Act of Parliament: The Richmond, Ham and Petersham Open Spaces Act of 1902.

Return to the Thames Path at Orleans Gardens via Cambridge Park.

Turn left from Sandycombe Lodge and left into St Stephen's Gardens. At the end of this road turn right and cross the Richmond Road to walk past St Stephen's church, then turn left into Cambridge Park.



Several of the roads here are named Cambridge Park, walk on the south side of the street and head eastwards.

Cambridge Park is now groups of suburban developments from the 1930s to the 21st century.

In Turner's day was it was parkland surrounding a Jacobean mansion originally called Twickenham Meadows. Notice the magnificent oak tree a relic of the old parkland. Walk past this tree to Warren Path, also known as Cambridge Park Footpath, which goes straight to the river and the Thames Path.

At the river you can turn left for Richmond Bridge, or to continue the circular walk turn right and follow the Thames Path past Marble Hill Park. Explore this English Heritage site and admire its majestic trees.

This line of trees continues into Orleans Gardens, and may have originally continued along the river to the original Pope's Villa, a Palladian-style house built by the poet Alexander Pope at Cross Deep. This was demolished (to Turner's despair) by the new owner in 1807.

Arriving at Orleans Gardens completes the circular walk of 1.9 miles (3.08kms).



Take Hammertons Ferry (open between March and October) to Ham House, or continue along the Thames Path to Twickenham, the way that Turner would have taken to visit Pope's Grotto.

Further reading:

Rescuing Sandycombe Lodge <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/feb/28/turners-villa-turns-to-crowdfunding-to-bolster-restoration-project>

Montpelier Row has its own literary history <https://literarylandscapes.net/2016/05/15/montpelier-row-twickenham/>

Orleans House Gallery <https://www.orleanshousegallery.org/>

The Stables Café <https://www.orleanshousecafe.co.uk/>

Marble Hill Revived <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/marble-hill-house/marble-hill-revived/>

