

## UPPER MALL TO HAMMERSMITH TERRACE



**T**he riverfront at Hammersmith was originally a quiet country spot with a few inns and cottages, inhabited mainly by ferrymen, fishermen and boat builders. However from the seventeenth century onwards houses were built by the Thames for wealthy residents, such as Sussex House, Kelmscott House (home of William Morris) and Hammersmith Terrace, which all survive as reminders of a more elegant age.

The river has been used for sporting activities for centuries. The Boat Race, which is rowed from Barnes to Mortlake, first took place in 1829. There is a starting box for river racing outside Linden House, the joint home of the London Corinthian Sailing Club and the Sons of the Thames' rowing club. The Stork training ship, on which naval training was given to boys from poor homes, was moored nearby.

There was also industry on the riverfront. Lead mills, malt houses and boatbuilders were located around Hammersmith Creek, which was the outflow of the Stamford Brook until 1936, when it was filled in. The Creek extended as far as King Street and was crossed by the High Bridge. The surrounding area, partly industrial and partly run down housing, was known as Little Wapping. Further west, Oil Mill Lane is named after the Albert Oil Mills, which used to be notorious for polluting the area. In the 1930s the firm of Vitamins had their factory there, making a wheatgerm product called Bemax. The West Middlesex Water Company was located next to the Old Ship Inn.

The twentieth century brought significant changes to the area. After a flying bomb devastated the last remnants of Little Wapping in 1944, Furnivall Gardens was created on the site in 1951. The Great West Road was built a few years later between the riverfront and King Street, cutting in half roads such as Weltje Road and Rivercourt Road. The riverfront is no longer industrial but is instead a place where people can walk and enjoy the river views.