

Brunel heritage walks: north-west

The Greenway and Villier Street

BNW

Start	Eastern Gateway building
Finish	Eastern Gateway building
Distance	2.44km
Duration	30 minutes
Ascent	15.2m

1	From Eastern Gateway building entrance, cross to L of St John's, then follow out to Kingston Lane; L to main road, where L past Old School House to junction; ahead past chip shop to car park, then backtrack and R on Greenway to Whitehall Rd.	1010m
2	R on Whitehall Rd, L on Chiltern View Rd, L on Alexandra Rd, L on Greenway; R on Elthorne Rd, L on Villier St, R on Cleveland Rd to corner of campus; cross road and take N side of ring road across River Pinn and up to Eastern Gateway building.	1430m





*Former hedge line of
St John's Hospital*

What do we know about the area around our campus? This walk will give you an idea of what lies beyond the north-west of the campus: The Greenway and Cleveland Road.

1 The walk starts at the steps in front of the entrance to the Eastern Gateway building. Pass between the building and the Reception car park, and cross the gravel car park, making for the left-hand corner of St John's building. The hedge you see separating St John's from the car park is an ancient field-boundary, visible on old maps.

Make your way between this more modern section of St John's and its car park, towards the boundary fence of the campus. The laplink fence is about thirty years old: the old hedge was grubbed out to link St John's (then a cottage hospital) to the older hospital buildings on the site where Ivybridge Close now stands. Turn right towards the gates, but before you go through the gate, look to your right: the east wing of St John's is the original hospital building (the newer part was added in the 1960s).

Turn left down Kingston Lane: the wall on your left is part of the boundary of the isolation hospital. The hospital was used to treat patients with infectious diseases, though one complaint which was not treated here was smallpox: those patients were sent to Hayes.

*River Pinn emerges from
beneath Stratford Bridge*



The wall ends just before the entry into Ivybridge Close: look up — the house on the right-hand side of the road is on the site of a building which pre-dated the hospital. It was a police station, visible on the 1864 map, but gone by 1894. The present houses were built in 1991.

Carry on to reach the main road, and turn left. The Pinn flows beneath the road here, at Stratford Bridge. Stratford is derived from *Strætforda*, a ford on a main road. It is often assumed that the *stræt* refers to a Roman road (such as the Fosse Way), but this is not the case. The first mention of a bridge here (on the main road between London and Oxford) is found in 1410, and later documents make mention of a three-arched stone bridge. Today's structure is far less exciting, but at least the 607 bus does not need to splash through the river.

The Pinn Path, which links Hillingdon Road with the campus, is not a new creation. Old maps make it clear that, throughout the twentieth century, this was a recognised route

to reach the headquarters buildings of Lowe and Shawyer, who ran the nursery and market garden on the site now occupied by the campus.

Cross the end of Amberley Way and, at the bus stop, you will come to the Old School House. This was one of the National Schools, set up by the Church of England to educate the poor in a strictly Anglican way: the plan was to rival the schools (also to educate the poor) run by Joseph Lancaster's British and Foreign Schools' Society, where the Christian teaching was (for the Anglicans) disturbingly pan-denominational. Today, the building is occupied by (amongst others) the University's Archives and Records department, in which is held the archives of ... yes, Joseph Lancaster's British and Foreign Schools' Society.



Old School House

Cross the end of Turnpike Lane (which has not really been a route to anywhere — it was in fact a lane *to* the turnpike, which was situated where it joins Hillingdon Road — and advance to reach the traffic lights. Cross, continuing along Hillingdon Road past the chip shop to the great gap in the buildings which now provides car parking space for fish-and-chips consumers. It is curious to find such ample parking in a heavily built-up area. Until 1914, there were two pubs side by side here, the Green Man on the corner (it's now the chip shop) and the Royal Standard next door. The latter was demolished in 1914: did the building or the business collapse, or did the Green Man's owners buy up the pub next door and demolish the building and the competition in one go?

Return to the junction and turn right down The Greenway. On your left, notice the 1907 school building. This was the school which became Bishopshalt, when it moved up the hill in 1928 to take over Bishopshalt House in Royal Lane. The Cowley Road School (originally one of Joseph Lancaster's BFSS schools) moved in, and became the nucleus of what is now Uxbridge High School. You will notice the persistence of the outdated gender-stereotypical carvings above the doors: cookery for the girls and manual training for the boys. The remainder of the Uxbridge High School site (the section between this building and Cleveland Road) was, like the Brunel campus, a nursery and market garden.

The former Uxbridge County Grammar School



2

At the far end of the school site, you will see the road level rise and fall, just



Line of railway on Whitehall Road

before the junction with Cleveland Road. This was a bridge over the railway line which (from 1854 until 1964) linked the main line at West Drayton with Vine Street station in Uxbridge (on Cricketfield Road next to Randalls). If you look to your right just before the junction, you will see

that the railway cutting has been re-purposed as service access for the modern houses on Whitehall Road.

Turn right into Whitehall Road, then take the first road on the left, Chiltern View Road. The house on the corner still displays the sign of the pub which used to occupy the site, the Cowley Brick. Brickmaking was a mainstay of the local economy, and the Cowley example was rather specialised. Walk down the right-hand pavement until you reach the dark stone building now occupied by an orthodontist. See how the level of the land dips as you go back from the road: this is because the building was part of a clay mill, used for making bricks. Between the River Pinn and the River Colne, a small thin ridge of clay overlaid the London gravels, and the mill allowed for the scraped clay to be rolled into bricks. Behind the far end of the slightly sunken terrace of houses, the dip in the land was due to small-scale gravel extraction.

Turn left into Alexandra Road and walk its full length. The road recalls the wife of Edward VII, Queen Alexandra (Princess Alexandra of Denmark). At the far end, turn left onto The Greenway, then right into Elthorne Road. At the next junction, turn left into Villier Street. The building taking the corner on your right in Villier Street was, until recently, a pub called the Militia Canteen.

Cleveland Lodge



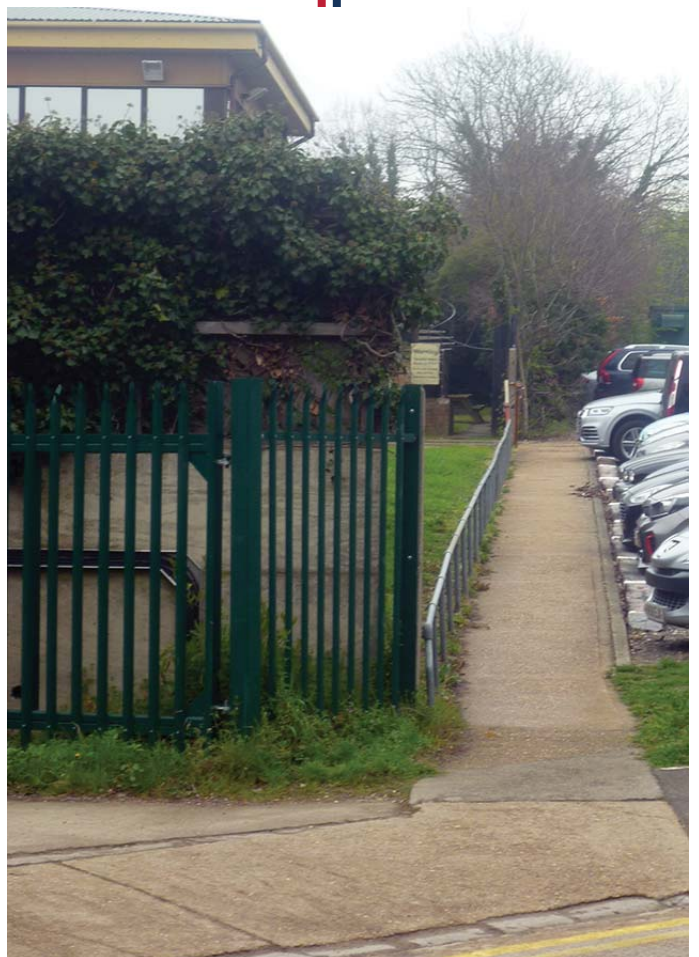
As you walk up Villier Street, you will see on your left some houses which are of much more modern construction than the rest. This was the site (1855-1879) of a militia barracks. After the militia moved to Hounslow, the barracks became, at different times, a mission hall, a museum, and sports clubs. The building was demolished in 1967 to make way for the present residences.

Next to the site of the militia barracks stands the Load of Hay pub: pass it and turn right onto Cleveland Road. The house on the corner is marked as Cleveland Cottage on the 1864 map. Continue across the end of Norton Road,

after which the house on the corner is marked as Cleveland Lodge on the 1864 map. Your route takes you across Cleveland Road to enter the campus, but take a glance at the field between the houses on Cleveland Road and the University residences at Topping Lane (the lane is named after a former vice-chancellor). This has been unimproved heathland since the departure of the market garden, and the local flora must be very diverse for the area.

As soon as you step onto the campus, you are at the junction of two old traffic routes. To your right, the line of trees parallel to Cleveland Road mark out the course of the railway. Ahead, alongside the boundary with Uxbridge High School lay an ancient path which ran between Kingston Lane and Cleveland Road. Follow this boundary to the Pinn Path — the site of the nursery headquarters building is occupied by Lancaster House — then cross the bridge. If you are really fortunate, you may be rewarded with an electric-blue glimpse of the campus kingfisher darting above the water.

Beyond the river, the boundary realigns onto its original east-west line and climbs to run between St John's building and the gravel car park. Your circuit is completed by walking up the pavement to reach the Eastern Gateway building.



Top: trees following the course of the railway alongside Cleveland Road

Right: old hedge line south of St John's Hospital site