

Uxbridge campus to Runnymede campus: linking the libraries in 1980

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Start	Uxbridge campus — UB8 3PH
Finish	Runnymede campus — TW20 0JY
Distance	21.30km
Duration	4 hours 27 minutes
Ascent	120.9m
Access	Buses at start of section. Buses at end of section.
Facilities	All facilities at start of section. All facilities near end of section. Pubs at Iver Lane, Thorney Mill Lane and Horton <i>en route</i> .

After completing the route, a memory kept circling in the author's head. There was a previous attempt to set up a pedestrian link between Uxbridge and Runnymede campuses. There was an article about it. After some assiduous work, the University's Archives staff tracked down the article, which had been published in the then staff newsletter, *Reporter*.

In 1980, Nick Childs (the then University Librarian) had set up a new internal Inter-Library Loan system which operated between the library at Uxbridge and that on Brunel's newly-acquired campus at Runnymede. Mindful of the need for business continuity and good customer service, he realised that, while the normal practice would be to use the inter-campus transport, he needed to have a Plan B, to move books and papers between the campuses in the absence of the porters' van. Bus services in those days were even more sketchy than today, so he decided to research a walking route.

Perhaps less astonishingly than it first seemed (given the paucity of routes and the serious barriers of railways, motorways and rivers), the Childs route turned out to be almost identical to the route described here: he used the main Grand Union Canal and its Slough Arm between Iver Lane and the aqueduct over the River Colne (in those days, it was a much more practicable route than the Colneside path, which has since been much improved by Groundwork and others), and he preferred a more westerly route between Horton and Wraysbury. Finally, he did not feel the need to detour to the boathouse, but took a more direct line from the Egham roundabout to the Runnymede library.

After all, people were waiting for their books and papers.