

# Chicken Run

## Crouch End to Hatch End (with shortcut via Edgware)

# CHKR

### Main route

Start	Crouch End Broadway — <b>N8 8DU</b>
Finish	Hatch End station — <b>HA5 4HU</b>
Distance	41.91km
Duration	9 hours 8 minutes
Ascent	453m

### Shortcut route — between points at 10.28km and 33.33km on main route

Start	Dollis Road — <b>NW7 1JX</b>
Finish	Stanmore Little Common — <b>HA7 4LQ</b>
Distance	10.81km
Duration	2 hours 27 minutes
Ascent	169m

**1** This section begins in Crouch End, near Hornsey Town Hall (now an arts centre). Appropriately for the start of the Chicken Run, if you arrive by bus from central London, your stop is next to the Coop (usually, though, adding a hyphen in the middle of the word).

Crouch End takes its name from Middle English elements for “cross” and “outlying area. It may refer to an area on an ecclesiastical boundary. The wooden cross which was erected close to the current clock tower probably arrived too late to influence the place-name.

There are many options for eating and drinking, or for gathering in provisions for the walk, in the vicinity of the start of the walk.

**2** Walk southwards along Broadway (on the right-hand pavement), passing the former town hall on your left. Do not fork left onto Crouch Hill at the end of Broadway, but continue up Crouch End Hill, passing the King’s Head pub on your right. Climb to the summit of the road, and cross to the left-hand side of the road using the pedestrian crossing. Just beyond a couple of shops, turn left down to the level of the Parkland Walk

At this point, the route is joined by section 12 of the Capital Ring, running anti-clockwise. The route follows the Capital Ring as far as the confluence of Mutton Brook and Dollis Brook, with the exception of a short stretch in Highgate: this deviation from the Capital Ring gives the walker more opportunity for refreshment in Highgate and at the café in Highgate Wood.

This path is the trackbed of an old railway. This branch line left the main line at Finsbury Park, and ran to a station right next to Alexandra Palace (not the current Alexandra Palace station to the east of the Palace).

Alexandra Palace (it was renamed from The Palace of the People in honour of Princess Alexandra of Denmark, who had married Prince Edward in 1863), was the North London counterpart to the Crystal Palace south of the river, re-using building stock from the Exhibition of 1862 which was held in South Kensington.

Alexandra Palace has served many purposes over the years, including a stint as an internment camp during the Great War and it was chosen to be the location of the first regular high-definition television broadcasts in 1936. In 1989, the Sinclair C5 vehicle was launched at the Palace. Many different types of entertainment have taken place both in the Palace and in its surrounding park.

During the 1930s, London Transport evolved a plan to link Moorgate with Bushey Heath: this route was intended to pass through existing stations at Finsbury Park, Highgate, Mill Hill East and Edgware, as a part of the Northern Line complex. The Second World War intervened before the plan could be realised, and the tide went out for this Northern Heights route. The original railway route between Finsbury Park and Alexandra Palace survives as the Parkland Walk

(with a slight discontinuity at Highgate, where the route through Highgate Wood taken by the Chicken Run may allow the two halves to be linked up).

The Walk is used on fine weekends by walkers, runners and whole families. During late summer, there are many opportunities for excursions to pick blackberries from the lineside bushes: these are eagerly taken up by foragers, either solo or in small teams organised for the task with military precision. It is also much used by walker, runners and cyclists: many of the 'runners' ascend at speeds barely greater than walking pace.

Follow the trackbed uphill (you will find progress easier than did the heavy but vastly under-powered steam locomotives), passing over and under bridges, and between the platforms of a ghost station, until at last you curl left to reach the exit onto Holmesdale Road. Turn right, and follow the right-hand pavement up the rather steeper hill to the busy Archway Road.

Here, there are all sorts of shops and refreshment opportunities for the weary, hungry and/or thirsty walker.

Turn right up Archway Road, and cross Shepherds Hill at the traffic lights.

Highgate station (Northern Line, High Barnet branch) lies at the foot of the slip road.

**3** Continue up Archway Road to the next set of traffic lights: use these to cross Muswell Hill Road, then turn right to follow its left-hand pavement. Pass a bus stop and a wooden park bench, then turn left to enter Highgate Wood by its Gypsy Gate.

Highgate Wood is managed by the Corporation of the City of London to provide recreation for Londoners.

Walk ahead (do not take the path branching to the right which parallels Muswell Hill Road). Cross over another path (which leads out on the left to Archway Road), and trend gradually to the right.

An open sports field is ahead: do not go onto the open land, but turn right to follow a path just inside the woodland, turning left at the far end of the open area to reach an information hut and then arrive at the park café.

The park café is a most welcome sight: in the springtime, the wisteria adds a further layer of rurality. As



*Parkland Walk trackbed at Stanhope Road slip*



*Highgate Wood*





you approach the café building, you will notice the entrance to the ladies' toilet: the gentlemen's equivalent is located on the far side of the café.

**4** Take the path which leads away from the back of the café, and continues in a generally north-north-easterly direction, over path junctions, until you reach a major junction by a drinking fountain.

The fountain (alas, no longer in working order) is a red granite obelisk with a plaque which states modestly that it was a gift from a few friends of the woodland.

Here, a broad arrow-straight path crosses, set on a north-west/south-east axis.

Set off half-left, to the north-west: this leads you over a bridge at (no surprises here) Bridge Gate.

The bridge spans the trackbed of the former line from Finsbury Park to Alexandra Palace, much of which is now the Parkland Walk. Just before you reach the bridge, you will see a footpath going off to the right: this path links with the detached northern end of the Parkland Walk, from Cranley Gardens to the Palace.

Across the bridge, the path leads down between houses, bending left to reach Lanchester Road. Turn right here, and advance to the little roundabout. Take the second exit (running clockwise) from the roundabout, and bend left into Fordington Road, crossing to its right-hand pavement at a suitable place.

Walk to the point where Fordington Road bends sharply to the left. Here, between houses numbered 45 and 47, two paths branch off to the right. The first (and broader) one is Indigo Walk, but it is the second, smaller path which you need to take. This path turns left immediately to pass down the side of number 45, and out onto Cherry Tree Wood Recreation Ground.

*From top —  
Highgate Woods café, drinking fountain,  
and Fordington Road*



There are toilets down to the left as you enter the recreation ground, though these have been found to be closed on some occasions.

Follow the path along the right-hand edge of the recreation ground to emerge onto High Road on the north side of the railway bridge. Turn to your right, then use the light-controlled pedestrian crossing to reach the entrance to East Finchley station (Northern Line).



*Cherry Tree Wood  
recreation ground*

East Finchley station was completely rebuilt in the 1930s with the expectation of incorporating the Northern Heights line (from Finsbury Park to Edgware) alongside the existing tracks. The Northern Heights project was never completed, but the new station was. It is a masterpiece of Art Deco modernism, and was designed by Charles Holden (1875-1960) in the long list of his commissions from London Underground. Most of his buildings may be seen in the 1930s extensions of the Piccadilly Line and the Northern Line.

Holden was born in Bolton, and his early work portfolios had commissions from William Hesketh Lever (later ennobled as Lord Leverhulme) for his company village of Port Sunlight on the Wirral. He has important works in Bristol, but his best-known work is in London. Apart from the stations, 55 Broadway was designed by Holden as a headquarters block (built on top of St James's Park station) for London Transport, and Senate House (sometimes known as the London Lubyanka) for the federal headquarters and library of the University of London in Bloomsbury. Much of Holden's Tube architecture is derived from the movement known as *de Stijl* which characterises much of the architecture of the early twentieth century in the Netherlands.

The statue of the kneeling archer on the exterior is by Eric Aumonier (1899-1974). Aumonier was born in Northwood of a family of Huguenot immigrants who fled the reversal of the Edict of Nantes, which had tolerated Protestants in France.

**5** The easiest route is by the passageway under the platforms within the station building: turn right at the far end to pick up a path. An alternative route (signed as the Capital Ring) passes under the railway bridge, past the Old White Lion Inn. The path starts immediately beyond the inn on the right, and zigzags back to the west entrance to the station. From here, the path carries on ahead.

The path is known as The Causeway: at its north-western end, it becomes a street of the same name. Only 70m beyond the station's west entrance, though, turn left: this will bring you out at a bend in Edmunds Walk. Bear left along this street, and turn left at the end,





*Hampstead Garden Suburb*

into Deansway. Take the first street on the right, Vivian Way. This street bends gently right then left to emerge onto the A1 near a light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

This area is Hampstead Garden Suburb, which was laid out (by a special Act of Parliament in 1906) to a low-density plan: it was based on the Garden City ideas of Ebenezer Howard and his followers, but unlike, say, Welwyn Garden City, there was no intention that the community could be self-sufficient: hence it was called a “garden

suburb”. Architectural standards were high (Edwin Lutyens was involved) and the force of the planners and enthusiasts kept up the appearances. For some, though, there were stylistic slippages when the suburb expanded to fill the gap between Falloden Way and the Northern Line: certainly, some of the properties display an over-egging of the “ye olde” pastiche, with fake-Georgian fire insurance plates and artfully distressed window frames to give the impression of several centuries’ subsidence: this part has been renamed Hampstead Disney Suburb by some.

Cross the busy A1 — here, the main link to and from the southern end of the M1 — and proceed along Norrice Lea almost opposite, crossing to its right-hand pavement. Pass a large synagogue on your right, and then pace out past the houses up to number 16. After this house, turn right along a path which leads into the Lyttelton playing fields.

The path turns to the right, then to the left, to pass some tennis courts on its right. It then turns left at the nursery school building, then turns to the right to pass a children’s playground on your right. Of course, if there are no sporting activities and the grass is kind under foot, you may set out westwards to pick up the path near the playground. The path then bends to the right, then to the left with a school on the left, to emerge onto Kingsley Way.

*Lyttelton playing fields*



**6** Turn right here, and cross Mutton Brook. Pick up the path (you are still following the Capital Ring) on the left to find the brook now on your left. Cross Northway, then aim half-left to return to the side of the brook. Continue between the brook and the house-backs to come out onto the A1, Falloden Way.



*Along Mutton Brook*

Turn left to follow the left-hand pavement of the busy road. Pass a bus stop to reach an isthmus of pavement between the A1 (on your right) and Addison Way (on your left): there is no vehicular access between the roads here. Keep to this pavement, and at the vehicle access point ahead, continue onto the right-hand pavement of Addison Way.

Go past a traffic squeeze, then pass the end of Erskine Hill over to your left. A few paces ahead, take a path on the right, between hedges. This path leads back towards the A1, but bends left to run between the house-backs and the brook.

*As well as following the Capital Ring, you are now also on the Dollis Valley Greenwalk, which you will follow all the way to Barnet playing fields.*

Follow the path, keeping the brook on your right, past an exit path on your left which runs out to Addison Way. You will cross the brook by a footbridge to come out onto Finchley Road at the Charter Green junction (formerly known as Henly's Corner).

*If you turn left here, and pass the petrol station, you will find a bus stop for services to Golders Green and central London. Outbound buses to Finchley run from the bus stop on the other side of the road, much closer to you.*

**7** Continue ahead from the junction, keeping the roar of the A1 on your right. The path drops to brook level, making its way downstream.

At this point, you are walking on the routes of two waymarked paths. The major path is the Capital Ring, which encircles London roughly at the radius of the North and South Circular Roads (though not always quite as closely as at this point).

The Capital Ring guide-book and website describe the route in a clockwise direction: here, you are travelling anti-clockwise. You are also going against the grain of the Dollis Valley Greenwalk, which is described in a downstream direction (for the obvious convenience) from Moat Mount via Barnet to this point, and onwards to Hampstead Heath. For these reasons, you are more likely to see earnest way-walkers coming towards you than sharing your westbound steps.





*Mutton Brook and footpath make parallel ways beneath the North Circular Road*

Follow the path alongside Mutton Brook: up to your right, the garish advertising hoardings nail the point of divergence of the A1 and the North Circular Road. The path continues into a tunnel beneath the North Circular Road, and soon after, you will reach another divergence.

Here, the Capital Ring goes off to the left, downstream on the joined-up Dollis Brook and Mutton Brook, from here to the Thames called the River Brent. The Dollis Valley

**Greenwalk heads upstream with the Dollis Brook.**

Turn right to follow the Dollis Valley Greenwalk — in fact, you will follow it all the way to Barnet playing fields, not far from the end of this section.

Head north with the water on your left (as it will be for fully 2km). Soon, you will have house-backs on your right, and then the path passes beneath the A1, which is carried by a 1930s bridge. After a bend to the left, the path takes a subway under Hendon Lane.

Walkers with claustrophobia may follow the roadway up to the bridge, turning left to cross the brook, the road, and back across the brook to regain the Greenwalk.

There are bus stops up Hendon Lane to the right: these link north-eastwards to Finchley Central station and south-westwards to Brent Cross.

*Right-angled turn on the Dollis Valley Greenwalk (leaving Capital Ring)*



**8** Beyond Hendon Lane, the path enters Windsor Open Space, keeping close to the brook. There is some open space off to the right, but the brookside has trees, and after some time, the trees encroach on both sides of the path.

Ignore one footbridge on your left which carries a transverse path: this will be about 1.5km from the confluence of Dollis Brook and Mutton Brook. Carry on until you are carried off to the left across the brook, and out to Dollis Road.

For Mill Hill East station, turn left, continuing on Bittacy Hill to pass beneath the tracks and reach the station.

At this point, there is a shortcut alternative which reaches Stanmore Little Common via the trackbed of the former railway between Mill Hill East and Edgware, and the Tube termini at Edgware and Stanmore: the shortcut takes 13km off the distance..



This is described at the end of the narrative for the main walk.

**9** To continue, keep on the right-hand side of the road: for much of the way to the viaduct, there is no pavement on the left as the road goes round a blind corner. Suddenly, the Dollis Brook Viaduct is set before you in all its brick-built splendour.

The viaduct was built between 1855 and 1861 to carry the Edgware, Highgate and London railway: it has thirteen arches and carries the line 18m above ground level (the highest bridge on the Underground). However, with the extension of the Northern Line, it became a minor branch, with the stub of the Northern Line between Finchley Central and Mill Hill East the only passenger service to survive the Second World War. Freight services lasted until 1964, when the line west of Mill Hill East was abandoned — the trackbed is now buried under roads and housing (including the M1) for some of its way.

Pass beneath the viaduct, still on the right-hand pavement, and advance to the bend in the road. Here, take good care when crossing the road, going far enough round the bend that you may gain the best vantage-point for traffic in each direction.

Once across the road, follow the Dollis Valley Greenwalk away from the road, and back to the brook. Cross the brook by a bridge (the first of many: you will be playing hopscotch with the brook all the way to Totteridge Lane).

The path wends its way upstream, mainly in woodland. Houses abutting on the left arrive just before the route crosses Fursby Avenue.

If you follow Fursby Avenue to the east, you may reach West Finchley station.

**10** There are sports and play facilities on your left in Riverside Park beyond Fursby Avenue, up to Argyle Road.

There are shops and eating establishments up to the left here, and the 221 bus service, connecting Edgware with Turnpike Lane (via Mill Hill Broadway, Mill Hill East, North Finchley, New Southgate and Bounds Green) plies Argyle Road.

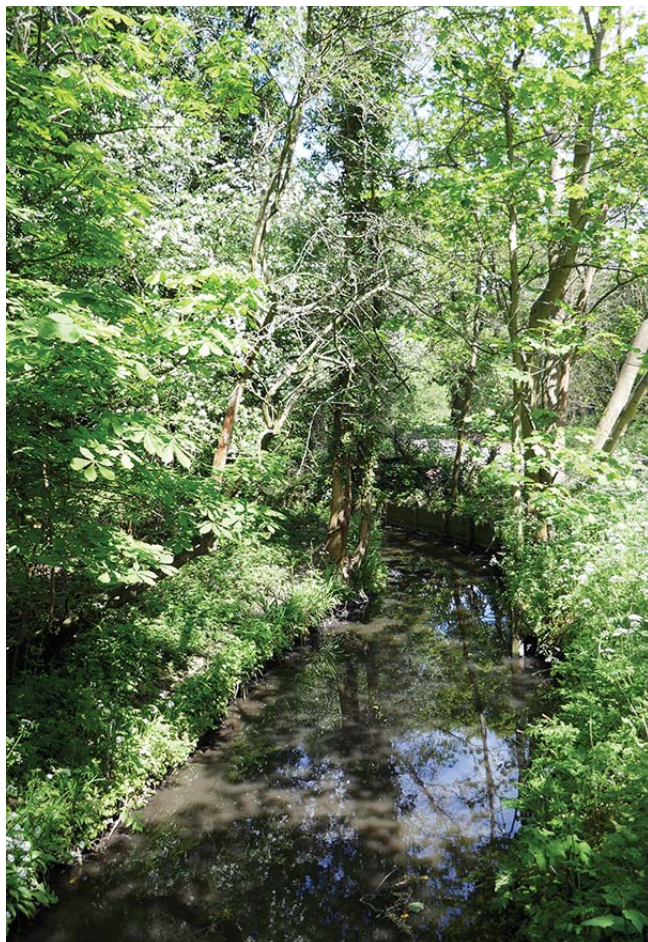
Beyond Argyle Road, the path runs between house-backs (on the left) and the brook to reach Southover



*Riverside Park*







*Dollis Brook south of  
Whetstone Stray*

*Dollis Valley Greenwalk  
north of Totteridge Lane*



(it's a street-name). Here, turn right and follow the right-hand pavement for about 250m to Tillingham Way, where turn right.

Cross the twin crescents of Twineham Green until you reach a bend in the road.

By continuing on Tillingham Way to its end, and then executing a right-and-left, you may reach Woodside Park station (Northern Line, High Barnet branch).

**11** Follow the Dollis Valley Greenwalk to the left, now with the brook on your right. Cross a bridge before coming up to Laurel Way, where cross the bridge and continue with the brook on your right. Soon, cross the brook again and continue onto an area known as Whetstone Stray.

In Yorkshire, a *stray* is an area of open grassland: the term has extended in a few cases to other parts of the country (for instance, the Brookstray in the west of Coventry), and Whetstone Stray does not deviate from the definition.

The path runs out onto Totteridge Lane: rise to the road at a row of shops, and turn right to reach the top of the grassy area on the left.

Totteridge and Whetstone station is ahead (with its massively understated entrance): there are bus services to and from Edgware, High Barnet, Arnos Grove, and Brent Cross.

**12** From Totteridge Lane, turn to the north (that is, to the left if you are continuing your walk, or to the right if you are arriving from Totteridge and Whetstone station) to follow the Dollis Valley Greenwalk across Brook Farm Open Space. There are two



parallel paths: the higher (and rougher) one is supposed to be for pedestrians, while the cyclists are encouraged to take the low road.

Keep to the upper path for about 1.5km until, with the houses of Western Way ahead and on your right, there is an opportunity to merge left onto the other path. Pass the end of the street on your right, and go through a gap in a steel fence.

Bear left to keep Dollis Brook close on your left, then pass to the right of a building to reach Barnet Lane in the Underhill area of Barnet.

**13** Cross Barnet Lane, and continue along the path opposite. The path keeps close to the brook; after squeezing close to the gable ends of terraced housing and then passing a hedged allotment area on your right, the meadow opens out.

The route now follows the London Loop all the way to Hatch End (and its link to the station there): its signage should help throughout..

Cross over a footpath (to the left it leads to a school — as will be obvious at certain times of day — and thence to Totteridge), then keep to the path as it drifts towards the houses on the right, clipping the end of Alan Drive. Pass the houses of Dollis Brook Walk, which face the brook, to the end of Connaught Road, then bear left to the corner of the meadow.

Bus connections to Barnet (and beyond towards Turnpike Lane) are available at the top of Connaught Street.

Cross a track, and continue close to the brook for about 230m, and cross the brook by a footbridge. Turn right to follow round the corner of the field, then go through the hedge on your right. Turn right to make your way round the edge of the field to reach a crossing path, linking Totteridge Common with May's Lane.

Buses run along Totteridge Common, but there is little point in making for the stop at the top of the path: our route runs closer to the bus route a little way ahead, without having to climb so far on an off-route diversion.

**14** Continue ahead, keeping close to the brook on your right, for almost 1km until you meet a path in the corner of a field. Do not cross the brook, but turn left, and follow the hedge on your right for about 300m. Turn right to pass through the hedge, then turn left. Go through the next

*View towards Scratchwood  
from Mote End*



hedge and turn right to follow the path out onto Hendon Wood Lane.

If you need to break the journey via the 251 bus route which links stations at Arnos Grove, Totteridge and Whetstone, Mill Hill Broadway, Burnt Oak and Edgware, turn left on Hendon Wood Lane to its junction with Totteridge Common.

**15** Turn right onto Hendon Wood Lane to descend to Dollis Brook, using the right-hand pavement. Swing left with the road (ignoring a footpath straight ahead) and ascend for 180m, where turn left onto a footpath. Turn left after 130m and cross the brook. There follows 300m of ascending path to reach a path junction near the top of Mote End.

**16** Turn right (but not sharp right: be sure to keep south of west) following the London Loop signage. After 400m, the path bends to the left to descend excitingly through mature woodland.

You will see a building building (an outdoor centre) over to your right: here, the path rises to reach another path (a fingerpost sign will help). Turn right to descend. This path leads you out of the quietness of the woodland to face a complete contrast: the mighty roar of the A1.

Moat Mount Open Space, however, is at some times less open than at others: it seems that certain groups may seal off the entire space from access by others during an event. This happened to the author on one occasion while following the Loop eastbound, forcing an all-on-road route via Stirling Corner (uphill) and Barnet Lane. The westbound diversion would start on Hendon Wood Lane, following it to its end and turning left onto Barnet Lane; at Stirling Corner, it would hardly be worth the descent just to ascend through Scratchwood, so the route would continue along Barnet Lane from the roundabout.

*Moat Mount woodland*



There is a bus stop near the exit from Moat Mount with services to Colindale and Edgware (also a non-TfL service to Queensbury).

There now follows a descent down the side of the A1 to reach a subway near the clubhouse of Mill Hill Golf Club for the benefit of golfers: the course is riven in two by the road.

Ahead lies Apex Corner, with shops and a café (plus a wider choice of buses).

**17** Go through the subway, and turn right to regain all the height lost on the descent from Moat Mount. Pass the entrance to Moat Mount (oh, for a footbridge!) across the noise and fumes of the dual carriageway, and take a path a little farther up the road to enter Scratchwood.



Follow the path through the woodland until it comes out to the top of the golf course (but not onto the golf course). The path continues to rise, and takes the left-hand edge of a field with a car park off to the right (access to the car park is from the northbound A1).

Nestling in the gap down to the west are the buildings and lights of what began life in 1969 being called the Scratchwood Service Area on the M1, until some marketing whiz-kid decided (in 1999) that “London Gateway” was a more genteel name for the service area, despite the fact that it is indistinguishable from countless other approach-spots around the Capital which could bear the name with equal authority. Indeed, we have a shipping port near Stanford-le-Hope on the Thames Estuary which bears the same name. The geographic association is thus lost to tawdry neon commercialism.

**18** Bear left to head away from the car park in a roughly west-north-westerly direction, at first keeping a hedge on your right. After 600m, having dipped into a small valley and risen again, turn right (still with the London Loop signage for reassurance) and rise to meet Barnet Lane. Turn left along the road, using its right-hand pavement, to reach Cornerstone House (a mental health facility) on your left.

**19** Continue along Barnet Lane, crossing the Midland Main Line (and Thameslink), the tracks running in a tunnel beneath your feet. Turn right on Deacons Hill Road and follow it through the suburbia of Borehamwood. At the far end, you will reach Allum Lane.

Almost immediately on the right stands Elstree and Borehamwood station, beyond which lies the retail centre of Borehamwood. On the main street (Shenley Road), there are bus services to New Barnet, Edgware and Colindale, and a non-TfL service to Watford.

**20** Turn left along the right-hand pavement of Allum Lane. Pass the end of Barham Avenue, opposite Fir Tree Court, turn right onto a path which threads between trees on either side. After 450m, this path reaches a T-junction of paths: turn left to reach Radlett Park golf course.

Be sure to observe golfing etiquette, remaining motionless and noiseless when a player prepares and executes a shot.

Slip behind a green and a tee on your left, then bear slightly right to pass in front of a green which lies to your right, Pass behind the next green, then ease left to reach the edge of the course. Turn left, then turn half-right to pass through the hedge and out onto an open field.



*Acorns beside the A1*



*Masses of buttercups in the field on the descent to Watling Street*

Follow the linepast some allotment gardens on your right to reach the right-hand end of the field and follow it out onto Allum Lane. Turn right to the junction with Watling Street.

**21** Turn left and, after 30m, turn right to reach a path leading away from the road. Follow this clear path in a straight line across two fields to reach Aldenham Road. Cross, and take Reservoir Road on the

opposite side of the road, just over to your right.

Just before you reach a gate across the road, turn left and follow a path which leads to the reservoir, which is behind a high mesh fence). Turn left and follow a rough and rocky path (surely this could not be an act of passive deterrence?) alongside the reservoir with the fence to your right. When you reach Watford Road, exit to the roadside on your left (the lakeside path ahead goes nowhere) and cross the road, next to the car park for an Indian restaurant over to your right.

**22** Turn right along the left-hand pavement, and pass the restaurant. Pass the Waterfront, a miscellany of commercial concerns (ranging from orthopaedic surgery to wholesale charcuterie), on your left, and continue to a roundabout. Cross the roundabout, and follow the road ahead beneath the M1, keeping to the left-hand pavement.

**23** Turn left with the London Loop sign, and head off on a bearing of 145° across the field. Descend to the far end, and turn right then left to ascend with a hedge on the right. Watch carefully to keep to the path when it leaves the lane (it is hardly obvious) and continues on the left-hand side of the laneside hedge, thus avoiding a contretemps with a potentially intemperate local (who could, after all, defuse all rancour by erecting a simple “footpath this way” sign).

The path subsequently returns to the lane: follow it out to Warren Lane. Take Warren Lane to the left, and follow it to its junction with Wood Lane at Stanmore Little Common.

*This is where the shortcut from Mill Hill East via Edgware returns to the main route, arriving from Wood Lane on your left.*

*Stanmore station may be reached by following the shortcut in reverse: this route includes one of the finest views in north London, stretching right across the London basin to the North Downs in the south, and with excellent views to the south-east and south-west.*



**24** Turn right, and pass the entrance to a sportsfield car park. Just beyond the car park entrance, take a narrow path which leaves the road on its right, keeping the sportsfield fence to your right. After passing a lake on your left, ease left to reach a more open stretch of water, Wood Lane Pond, where there is a bench: this would make a good stopping point for a short rest and refuelling.



*Wood Lane Pond and adjacent Dutch-influenced residence*

Turn your back on the pond, and follow a path which takes you to the top of a line of houses on the left. Follow the path ahead out onto the sportsfield and turn left. Do not follow the path all the way out to the road, but turn right (at the waymark) to reach a lake, Brewery Pond.

Keep the lake on your left through several turns (right, left, left, right, right). Turn left to pass between Brewery Pond and a smaller pond to your right, then follow the path, leftwards at first, out to Warren Lane at the corner of the cricket ground. Cross Warren Lane and take the path ahead. This path arcs round to the left to rejoin Warren Lane at a car park.

*The obvious shortcut along Warren Lane might be useful at any time, and may be advisable in muddy conditions.*

Follow Warren Lane to its end on The Common, opposite Priory Drive.

The Priory in the street-name refers to Bentley Priory, once a priory of Augustinian canons, which later hosted a stately home. It became the headquarters for Fighter Command of the Royal Air Force. Most of the buildings were demolished to make way for housing, though there is a museum in the remnants of the priory.

*Buses stop here on their way to Brent Cross (right-to-left) and Watford (left-to-right).*

**25** Cross the road and enter Priory Drive, taking careful steps to avoid raising dust to the manicured (and off-limits) lawns. Turn right at the T-junction, then left onto a signposted path. After about 300m, turn right onto another path. This path contours the open space, with the ground falling away to your left.

After 850m, the path enters a narrow shaft of land, and eventually comes out onto Common Road.

*There are bus stops just down the hill — uphill for Watford and downhill for Harrow.*



Contouring path across the Bentley Priory estate

**26** Cross the road, and take a path ahead which plunges into the woodland. After 150m, turn left on a clear (if sometimes muddy) path. There are long bridges in places where the mud is at its most taxing.

Follow this path until you reach estate housing on your right. The prim house called *The Bothy* bears no resemblance to the bothies of the Scottish hills. Turn left and follow the clear track all the way to the road at Old Redding.

Turn right to follow Old Redding for 100m past a former pub, *The Case is Altered*, which closed in 2022.

The management (and/or the suits at the managing company's head office) blamed the pub's closure on the closure of the nearby council car park, but standards had been declining for some years and the establishment had simply fallen out of the Venn diagram of pub-going sub-tribes.

*The Case is Altered*, Old Redding, in former days



There are several pubs of this name scattered around the country. The derivation of the name is disputed: at least one of the other pubs has a sign depicting two lawyers arguing (though there does not appear to be any back-story to support the interpretation in that instance), while others cite corrupted Spanish as *la casa alta* (the high house). This latter idea would certainly have been an appropriate option for the pub here: as well as its lofty position



on the Old Redding bluff: after all, the iconography of the pub sign made clear reference to the Peninsular War — though it must be admitted that the one in Eastcote is not very high in the landscape, so it may have come from a different source (or, of course, it may be just a random pub name, cloned from another that the landlord had heard somewhere).

Ah, the mists of toponymy!



*Grimsdyke Hotel*

The route ahead takes you through the gateway to the Grimsdyke Hotel, but before you take the driveway, wander onto the bluff opposite and feast your eyes on a superb panorama across west London.

**27** Return to Old Redding, and follow the driveway through a left-hand bend. Where the driveway takes a subsequent right-hand bend, take a path on the left and follow it to the corner of the hotel garden.

Grimsdyke House was designed by the renowned architect Norman Shaw; by 1890, it had passed into the ownership of WS Gilbert, the librettist for the series of Savoy operas for which his musical collaborator was Sir Arthur Sullivan.

Gilbert and his wife made significant changes to the estate, planting many of the redwoods and other trees seen today. The house remained in the family until Lady Gilbert's death in 1936; after wartime requisition (with top-secret work undertaken), the house passed through hospital service and is now a hotel.

Follow the path westwards to reach the lake.

*The Lake, Grimsdyke Estate*

The boating lake was very popular with Gilbert, who enjoyed a swim there. In 1911, two local girls were swimming in the lake, and one got into difficulties. Gilbert went to her rescue (successfully), but he himself drowned in the process.

The lake was partially drained (hence the height of the remaining jetty-piles), but was not fully drained,



since it was found to be an important breeding site of the great crested newt (and oh, how Gilbert could have worked that into a plot, if it were not for the tragic preamble to the draining!).

Make your way round the left-hand side of the lake, and continue out to a lane, with Old Redding off to your left. Turn right, and follow the lane, later keeping to the right-hand edge of a golf course. At the bottom of the golf course, turn half-left to follow a path through some rough land (said to be rough because wartime bomb damage was brought here to clear the streets) to reach Oxhey Lane at its junction with Little Oxhey Lane.

**28** Cross Oxhey Lane, and take the right-hand pavement of Little Oxhey Lane ahead. Pass a garden centre (with café), a cemetery and some houses on your right, and take the pedestrian bridge over the West Coast Main Line railway.

**29** Just past the railway fencing on the left, turn left along a path running parallel with the railway. After 320m, and underneath the power lines, pass into a large field, bear slightly right (almost due south) and cross the field.

Take the right-hand fork ahead (therefore not into Sylvia Avenue) and bend round to the left to pick up a path along the left-hand edge of a large field, towards another set of power lines. After passing beneath the power lines, go right into the corner of the field. The London Loop link takes you out of the field and onto Grimsdyke Road.

**30** Turn left, and keep to the left-hand pavement of Grimsdyke Road all the way to Uxbridge Road, where turn left. Follow the left-hand pavement of Uxbridge Road to Hatch End station, on the left just before the railway bridge.

**Uxbridge Road is the commercial centre of Hatch End, and has a wide variety of opportunities for refreshment at the end of the route.**

*Grimsdyke Road, hatch End*



**Buses from Uxbridge Road serve Stanmore, Pinner and Harrow.**

The railway arrived at Hatch End in 1842: the current station building dates from 1911. It is on the Watford DC line between Euston and Watford Junction.



# Shortcut route via Edgware

## Dollis Road and Stanmore Little Common

**S1** The gap between Dollis Road and Stanmore Little Common may be shortened by 13km by taking a route via Edgware and Stanmore stations. This keeps the route within London (and therefore within TfL's main Oyster zone) and makes use of an old railway trackbed.

**S2** From the main route's arrival point on Dollis Road, turn left and follow the right-hand pavement to Holders Hill Circus. Walk past the parade of shops (with a café) and continue ahead on Bittacy Hill. Cross over the end of Frith Lane on your right, and continue past a supermarket and beneath the Northern Line to reach Mill Hill East station.

Northern Line trains run the 1.45km line to Finchley Central, and there are local buses. Across Bittacy Hill, a small supermarket takes a ground-floor corner of a block of flats.

The line between Finchley Central and Edgware formed part of the New Works project of 1932, and was to be electrified. Much preparatory work was completed, but in 1939, war intervened. After the war, the short section to Mill Hill East (then primarily serving the large army barracks) was electrified as a single track, but nothing else was done. The tracks to Edgware were used by steam freight trains until the M1 unceremoniously severed the line near Bunns Lane. The tracks were lifted soon after, though some lineside furniture may still be seen on the trail along the trackbed.

This has left Mill Hill East station looking more substantial than its stub-end railway: it is likely, however, that passenger numbers will increase as the site of Inglis Barracks is engulfed in housing (mainly chunky, sharp-edged blocks of flats).

*Mill Hill East station*



**S3** Continue past the station and turn left onto Bittacy Road (opposite the supermarket). At the end of the road, bear half-left across the grass, then half-right to keep a hedge on the left. Squeeze through a gap between the hedge and a house, then pick up the trackbed ahead, passing beneath Sanders Lane.

Follow the trackbed ahead, passing beneath Devonshire Road. Beyond the bridge, a school and some sportsfields abut the trackbed on the right. You will come to the end of the walkable trackbed at Page Street: rise on the left to road level and cross the road.

**S4** Take an enclosed path ahead and follow it out to Rowlands Close. Turn left and follow Rowlands Close as it bends to the right and comes out onto Bunns Lane. Turn left and follow Bunns Lane through three bridges under the A1, the M1, and the Midland Main Line railway.

Bear right at the mini-roundabout to remain on Bunns Lane, and follow it past Woodcroft Avenue and Lyndhurst Avenue (both on the left), crossing to the left-hand pavement at an appropriate location. Beyond Lyndhurst Avenue, Bunns Lane rises to cross the line of the old railway: just before you reach the “bridge”, turn left to enter a park.

Take the right-hand path to keep close to the right-hand edge of the park. The path exits the park down the side of a house on the left, then turns left to pass the frontages of a few houses to reach the corner of Benningholme Road and The Meads.

**S5** Turn right and follow The Meads for its whole length to Dryfield Road, where turn right. Follow Dryfield Road for its whole length to Deans Lane, where turn right. Cross the line of the old railway opposite the entrance to Edgware Train Depot, then cross to the left-hand pavement of Deans Lane using the pedestrian crossing ahead.

Turn left into West Way and follow it all the way to the sharp right-hand corner, where the street-name becomes Farm Road. Take the path to the left of the houses ahead. Cross Deans Brook by a footbridge and continue to Brook Avenue. Carry on ahead on Brook Avenue and, where the road bends to the right, take Bakery Path off to the left. The path zigzags up to Station Road; turn left and follow the left-hand pavement to Edgware station.

This is the commercial centre of Edgware, and there are many opportunities for refreshment or replenishment.

Edgware bus station, adjacent to the Tube station, has many service in all directions.

**S6** Continue along the street as it begins to descend, and cross to the right-hand pavement at the Church Way junction. Turn right at the next major junction onto High Street.

Continue uphill; the street-name changes to Stonegrove (don't worry, it's still a part of good old Watling Street). Pass Day's





almshouses on the right and, just past a synagogue, cross to the left-hand pavement at the end of Jesmond Way.

*Day's almshouses, Edgware*

**S7** Cross Jesmond Way to continue along the service road to Pangbourne Drive, where turn left. Follow Pangbourne Drive's right-hand pavement, passing Dalkeith Grove on your left. Follow Pangbourne Drive to Morecambe Gardens (there is a school on the left here). Turn right onto Morecambe Gardens, with a little left-and-right, to its end at London Road. Turn left on London Road to reach Stanmore station.

The Tube station was opened here in 1932. It was then a branch of the Metropolitan Line: you may be able to see similar architectural signatures (facsimile again, here evoking cottages) in stations such as Croxley (on the Watford branch) or Preston Road.

In 1939, after the boring of new tunnels between Finchley Road and Baker Street, the Stanmore service was transferred to the Bakerloo Line. Forty years later, it became the northern terminus of the Jubilee Line.

Plans were made to extend the line north of Stanmore soon after it was built: this would have taken the line in a tunnel out to Bushey Heath (where the line would have linked up with the proposed line from Finsbury Park, part of the Northern Heights project) and Aldenham. The Stanmore part of the enterprise was quashed before the Northern Heights (it was dropped from London Transport's Programme of Work for 1936), and after the war, the plans were effectively dead and buried.

Jubilee Line services have their northern terminus here. There are also bus services from the station forecourt to Watford, Pinner,



*Modernist architecture  
on Valencia Road  
at Kerry Avenue*

Harrow and Brent Cross, and to Edgware from the other side of London Road.

**S8** Cross London Road by the pedestrian crossing at the station to reach Kerry Avenue.

The houses opposite Stanmore station on Kerry Avenue, and at the end of Valencia Road off Kerry Avenue, are prime examples of the modernist style of architecture which grew up, often around new or newly-enhanced transport hubs (as here) in the two decades after 1920. This area, which was sold out of the Warren House estate in 1921, was slow in being re-developed (not until the 1930s, in fact) after the original developer went out of business.

Following the Paris Exhibition of 1925, when Art Deco was introduced to its widest audience, the style was taken up by enthusiastic architects in Britain. Later, the ranks of Modernism were swelled by such notable émigrés as Ernő Goldfinger, who designed 1-3 Willow Road in Hampstead, and Trellick Tower in North Kensington). The plan for the Warren House estate was to be largely Modernist. However, the sniffy conservatism of the British snuffed out this excitement, and only a handful of houses were built in the Modernist style, before the Tudorbethan facsimile style overwhelmed Stanmore's Metro-land as it had all the other areas.

The few houses at the east end of Valencia Road were built in 1935, but those in Kerry Avenue were not built until two years later, after the suppression of the idea of tunnel construction on the line of Kerry Avenue. Perhaps the tunnel plan explains the broad central reservation along the southern half of Kerry Avenue, and indeed



the later date (1937) for the construction of the houses on Kerry Avenue itself. If you have sufficient time or breath, a brief diversion up Kerry Avenue to Valencia Road and back would be a worthwhile use of a few minutes.

Cross the semi-circle of grass to follow Kerry Avenue to its top and enter Stanmore Common. Once on the common, bear gradually left on an arcing path which rises, then falls into a small valley. Cross the small stream and turn right (north). After 110m, bear right to reach the bottom of a large field. Continue in a northerly direction, ascending to the bluff at the top.

Turn around to enjoy one of the finest panoramas over London. The whole city is spread before you, the far horizon formed by the North Downs. Early morning is best (otherwise you are looking straight into the sun), and particularly in February and March, for the best chance of the clearest atmosphere.

Turn left at the viewpoint, and follow the broad path out to Wood Lane.

When volunteers are present, there may be any or all of toilets, a café, and an information point at the Wood Lane entrance.

Turn left along Wood Lane, and follow it to its junction with Warren Lane, and with the main route of the Chicken Run.