



**IG Liddell**  
**Walk the Central Line**



The text in this document is merely an indication of what might be possible ... or what might have been possible at the time of researching (2023-24) or later revision. All walking routes are subject to change, but the pace of urban change is greater than in rural areas.

Each reader must assess whether each part of the route qualifies as suitable or safe for public access. The author does not warrant any point of legality or safety in any part of the description of the route.

Thanks are due to many people who have helped me with route-finding and with intelligence local to a number of areas traversed by the route. Their contributions enrich the route and the stories along it. Clearly, any mistakes and misinterpretations remain with the author.

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Front cover photograph:  
Approaching Aldborough Hatch from Barkingside

# Walk the Underground

## Central Line

Start	Epping station — <b>CM16 4HW</b>
Finish	West Ruislip station — <b>HA4 7DP</b>
Distance	73.3km
Duration	15 hours 17 minutes
Ascent	393m

Start	Woodford station — <b>IG8 7QE</b>
Finish	Leytonstone station — <b>E11 1HE</b>
Distance	20.2km
Duration	4 hours 14 minutes
Ascent	127m

## Introduction

The Central Line was instituted (as the Central London Railway) in 1900 to run between Bank and Shepherd's Bush. Soon afterwards, the line was extended to Wood Lane in order to serve the Anglo-French Exhibition and the 1908 Olympic Games, held at the purpose-built White City Stadium — Television Centre covered the area of the exhibition halls, and the Media centre is on the site of the stadium, which remained until 1984 (hosting the group match between Uruguay and France in the 1966 World Cup), when it was demolished. Around the same time, the line was extended to the east to a new terminus at Liverpool Street.

The line to Ealing Broadway via North Acton was added in 1920: in 1947, Wood Lane station was closed following the inception of a new line between Shepherd's Bush and White City with less hazardous curves.

During the 1930s, plans were made for the Great Eastern Railway's line between Ongar and Liverpool Street to be reassigned to become the major eastern section of the Central Line: this work was suspended after the outbreak of the Second World War. The Hainault Loop (initially known as the Fairlop Loop) connected Leytonstone with the Great Eastern route (part of their suburban

loop line which ran out of Liverpool Street via Ilford, Hainault and Woodford before returning to Liverpool Street) — the link with Ilford was later severed, and the large depot east of Ilford station was built over the junction.. The opening of the service on the loop was delayed by the use of the tunnels as a wartime factory building aircraft components. The section of the line between Ongar and Epping was closed in 1994, a victim of low usage (sometimes fewer than 100 passengers per day).

To the west, the Central Line from North Acton was extended in the immediate post-war period, first to Greenford, and then on to West Ruislip. The proposed westward extension to Denham was never completed after the Second World War due to difficulties in reconciling the line's development with the newly-imposed Metropolitan Green Belt. In any case, the widening (or duplication) of the viaduct crossing the Grand Union Canal and the River Colne would have been ruinously expensive, particularly in the immediate post-war time of austerity.

It is perhaps a pity that Denham was not brought into the Oystercard area (presumably in Zone 7, but possibly, matching the zoning of Epping station with is also beyond the Greater London boundary), in Zone 6). Such a facility would match the Oystercard validity which applies on the London buses serving Denham station on the 331 route.

# Epping to West Ruislip

## 73.3km; 15hr 17min

## 393m ascent

### Introduction

**1** The journey between Epping and West Ruislip, which forms the backbone of the Central Line, is the longest Tube journey (at 54.9km, and taking a scheduled 85 minutes) which may be made without changing trains.

Epping station was opened by the Great Eastern Railway in 1865, and was turned over to London Underground in 1949. It became the terminal station of the Central Line after the closure of the line between Ongar and Epping in 1994. Distance markers along the Underground are measured from Epping station.

A feature of stations on this part of the line is the lattice-work design of the footbridges, a legacy of the Great Eastern days. As the one at Theydon Bois proclaims, these were the work of Sir William Arrol's factory just north of the city centre in Glasgow. Arrol's company also built the (slightly larger) Forth Bridge, with stronger pieces of iron.

Epping town centre lies about 850m to the north. Go to the top of the station approach road, and turn left onto Station Road. At the end of Station Road, turn right onto High Street. Coffee is usually available in the station forecourt.

Passengers should note that both platforms are used, so there may be a requirement to use the footbridge to reach the main station exit if your train arrives on Platform 1. Step-free access is available from Platform 2 (where there are toilets) via the main entrance: for step-free exit from Platform 1, you may need to call from the help point to have the gate opened. The step-free route from Platform 1 to the start of the route is via Hillcrest Way, turning left onto Bower Hill, crossing the railway, and turning left to reach the main entrance to the station.

The Essex Way has its western terminus at Epping station. This is a waymarked walk of 133km, with the other end at

*Roundel attached to the footbridge at Epping station*





*Essex Way plaque  
at Epping station*

Harwich, and is much to be recommended. With a modicum of planning, it may be completed using buses to connect, where necessary, with railway stations between Brentwood and Harwich. Most guidebooks assume that you will be walking eastwards, though there is merit, at least for those based in London, in walking the route westbound — the commuting distances become shorter as the walk progresses, and you will not be walking into the morning sunshine. You may find details of the Essex Way by visiting <https://www.cicerone.co.uk/> and searching for *Essex*. Peter Aylmer's book is as good as they come, and there is an accompanying feature linked from the book's webpage.

## Route

### Epping to Theydon Bois

**3.4km**

**2** From the station forecourt (on the west side of the tracks, by Platform 2), turn right, then turn left onto a path which skirts the station car park (with its chain-link fence on your left) before it turns right and rises by steps to meet Centre Drive.

From this point, this section is predominantly rural (so much so that, while I was researching the route, a group of five fallow deer walked across my path barely 5m in front of me). The corollary of this rurality is that the path will be muddy underfoot in many places after rain or snowmelt, and there may be patches of mud during even the driest weather.

Because of the mud, and because the ground is uneven in many places, a lightweight pair of boots with ankle support should be worn. Trainers are not supportive enough, and in any case will be ruined for use in polite company afterwards.

Turn left onto Centre Drive, and follow it all the way to its end at Bridge Hill, crossing to the right-hand footway at a suitable location after passing the summit of the road. Turn right onto the right-hand footway of Bridge Hill, initially shielded from the roadway, and continue as far as Ivy Chimneys school on the right.

**3** Cross the road at the school, and join a footpath between the houses numbered 68 and 66. The path may, at different times, be grassy or muddy. Cross a field, rising towards a clump of trees to the right of an electricity pylon, then use the bridge to cross the M25 (which will be busy, with a real possibility of watching stationary



or near-stationary traffic beneath you as you stride purposefully above the carriageways).

The path (formerly a lane) descends to the point where a gate bars the way ahead. Turn right here along a path which follows the left-hand edge of a field with horse-pastures taped off on the right.

**4** Just before the path arrives at Great Gregories Farm, turn left and follow another path which later abuts a wood on your left. At the end of the wood, after a right-and-left movement, pass Little Gregories Farm on your right.

Follow the clear path over the summit of Piercing Hill, keeping close (but not too close) to the right-hand side of the field.

At the bottom of the hill, you will come to a gate, with a kissing-gate to its right — a notice informs walkers that the path ahead is dedicated as currently permissive for recreational purposes.

Go through the kissing-gate, and enjoy about 20 seconds of recreation to reach a plank bridge across the stream on your right.

Cross the stream and turn left onto a narrow path (which is often muddy and has overgrowing briars and brambles to catch the unwary walker) with housebacks on your right, and follow it to its end at a road.

At this point, the continuation of the permissive route rejoins the public footpath, coming in from the other side of the hedge on the left. The main footpath may be muddy, but it offers a sheltered route which



*Top — Approaching the M25  
from Ivy Chimneys school*

*Middle — Piercing Hill, with Great  
Gregories Farm in the distance*

*Bottom — Theydon Bois from  
Piercing Hill*

may be more pleasant on a warm sunny day — after all, there are many open fields ahead.

Take the roadway ahead to come out onto Forest Drive, and follow its left-hand footway to its end at the junction with Station Approach. Here, at the end of Forest Drive, Theydon Bois station may be found just to the left along Station Approach.

The centre of Theydon Bois, on Forest Drive and Coppice Row, has a wide range of shops, cafés and restaurants. The Bull Inn, which is situated directly across the road from the end of Forest Drive, serves food and drinks during normal opening hours.

The second word of Theydon Bois is pronounced *Boyce* not *Boys* nor yet as *Bwah* — as is the case with Chesham Bois, passed on the Metropolitan Line's walking route: each of the two villages is named after a Norman nobleman. The Metropolitan Line's walking route is described at <https://walks.london/london/personal/tfl/met/> with maps and directions linked from that page.

Walkers have an alternative route between Epping and Theydon Boyce which keeps to the east of the railway. This is the route taken by the author's *Ring around the Underground* route encompassing the Tube termini (see <https://walks.london/london/personal/tubering/>), and is reprinted below.

This “*Ring alternative*” is the same length as that of the main route. It is perhaps a bit harder than the main route, and when the grass and/or crops are high, has prodigious dew-transfer problems in the early part of the day, but has its own, more remote, charms (as well as an interesting tunnel crossing of the M25).

## **Epping to Theydon Bois via Gardeners Farm**

### **3.4km**

From the front of the station building at Epping, turn right to ascend the station approach road to the top, and turn right. Cross the railway and descend Bower Hill all the way to the bottom of the hill. Cross the road to continue on Flux's Lane (signposted to the golf club). Opposite the scout hut, turn right, passing some houses on the left.

Ignore the footpath on the left which ascends the left edge of a field: it leads to a lane next to a school which practises deterrence through calculated neglect: there is no way through the brambles and nettles (thus speaks the voice of stung, scratched, punctured and clothes-ripped experience).

Keep to the concrete driveway, which swings left uphill to approach a brick-built house on the right: just before the house, take a footpath on the right. This path turns left along the back of the property, before bending right and then left to descend to the foot of the embankment of the M25.



Turn left at the bottom, and use the tunnel (dark and slippery, but it's only mud: this is not a David Attenborough bat-guano cave, though you may like to pretend it is so!) to cross the motorway. A torch might be a helpful accessory in your pack, a head-torch an even better option.

The track turns left to follow the embankment. After 100m, turn right off the track, aiming for an infant stream (look for a change in grass colour). Keep the stream on the left, and follow an often faint (and sometimes almost imaginary) path which hugs the left edge of a field. After a sharp right turn, pass through a hedge on the left to find another stream on the left (a different one, this one flowing towards you). Follow this stream (do not drift towards the railway) until signposted left over the stream. Turn right and follow the path to Theydon Bois station's westbound car park.

There is a shuttered entrance to Theydon Bois station which, now that we have card-readers, could make for easy step-free access to the westbound platform, and which would allow commuting users of the "alternative station car park" on Station Hill to avoid the footbridge on one half of their daily interaction with the station.

Turn right at the end of the station brickwork and cross the railway by the footbridge, passing the station entrance on your right after your descent, to reach the end of Forest Drive at the Bull Inn. After, perhaps, a break there, continue ahead on Station Approach, swinging left at the top to reach the entrance to the station.

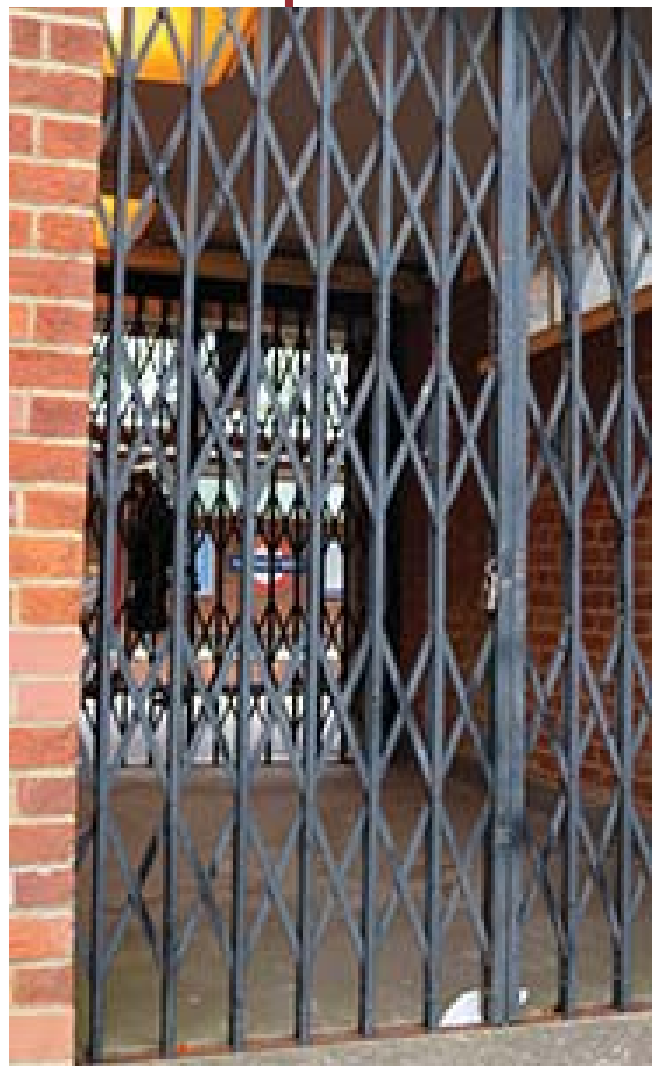
It is at this point that the *Ring* alternative joins up with the main route.

## Theydon Bois to Debden 4.4km

**5** If you are arriving at Theydon Bois station to start your day's walk, turn left onto

*Top — path from the M25 towards Theydon Bois on the alternative route*

*Theydon Bois station — no current access from the eastern side and the alternative route*





*Bull Inn, Theydon Bois*

Station Approach from the exit from the station building. Follow the road round to the right to reach the junction with Forest Drive outside the Bull Inn.

There is no coffee stall at the station — with several options at the foot of Station Approach, none is needed.

From the bottom of Forest Drive, turn right along the right-hand footway (or

continue ahead from the station) to reach a pedestrian crossing. Cross the road and take the right-hand footway of Poplar Row ahead. Follow the footway with the green on your right, passing a pond part-way along.

At the end of the green, cross Poplar Row to pick up a footway to the left of Theydon Park Road, initially shielded from the roadway. Follow this footway, bearing left onto Green Glade, and following its right-hand footway to the turning circle at the top. Pass number 59 on your left to follow the stub end of Green Glade out to, and across, a railway bridge.

*Dangerous stile east of Green Glade railway bridge*



**6** The road turns right after crossing the bridge, forming the access route for a farm. Do not follow the road here, but cross a stile (which is rather dilapidated, is very shaky, and really ought to be replaced by a sturdy kissing-gate — take care, especially if walking alone!). Follow a path, passing a stile rendered unnecessary by the removal of field boundaries, to reach the right-hand corner of a wood.

Turn left to cross a small stream by a footbridge, then turn right to follow a clear path along the right-hand edge of two fields. Follow the path out to reach a larger path, passing through a kissing-gate. Turn right, and follow the path across the stream to pass through another kissing-gate.

At this point, you will enter the access land of Theydon Bois Wood, an area managed by the Woodland Trust.

Turn left to follow the path to reach the bottom of the M11 embankment, where the path bends to the right. Continue along the path to reach another path which leads off to the left and onto a bridge (called Piggott's Bridge) across the motorway (and thence to Abridge — which is



1.4km away, and 1.4km back again, so will probably be describable as “Abridge too far”).

**7** Do not take the path onto Piggott’s Bridge, but continue ahead, keeping parallel to the motorway and soon passing the end of the brake of trees to your right. Just before you reach the second isolated tree on the left, the path bears half-right to reach the southern end of Broadfield Shaw woodland. Bend to the right, then turn left to cross a footbridge. Follow a clear path through the wood ahead, exiting at its north-western corner with a quick right-and-left double turn.

Follow the path ahead across the field and round to the right, to reach a gap in the field’s left-hand edge. Turn left to cross a footbridge (this is the one marked with the *FB* symbol on the 1:25000 Ordnance Survey map of the area) and continue ahead on an enclosed track. Pass a gateway into a sports ground on your left, and ignore a path off to your right, to emerge onto Langston Road, with a huge building across the road, the perimeter of its estate bristling with security.

At this point, you should put your camera away (or zip it inside your jacket) and stay resolutely on the opposite footway. The large building is the Bank of England’s printing works, where banknotes for the Bank and for many overseas banking institutions are printed, and the CCTV surveillance is constant.

Turn left onto Langston Road and follow the left-hand footway, with barriers on each kerb. Pass the access boom and reach the end of the kerb barriers at the western end of the Bank estate. Cross to the right-hand footway and pass another building, then cross its access road.

Take a path on the right, passing two brick electricity substations on your right, to come out onto Lenthall Road. Bear right to the end of the street, then turn left to pick up a footpath on the left, keeping outside the fence of the building to your left. Ascend to reach the railway fence, and turn left. Follow the path alongside the railway for 300m, then ascend the steps on your right to cross the footbridge over the tracks. Descend the steps on the far side and turn left to reach the entrance to Debden station.

*Bank of England printing  
works — the only  
permitted photograph*

Shopping opportunities on Debden Broadway (signposted from the station entrance) include a “pie, eels and mash” café — we know where the residents of Debden’s housing expansion left behind. There follows a range of anything a walker might need — cafés, food shops, a pharmacy — or how about some motor spares?

## Debden to Loughton

3.1km

**8** With your back to the station, take Station Approach to your left, and follow it out to Chigwell Lane. Cross the road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and turn left. Follow the right-hand footway of Chigwell Lane, passing beneath the railway and then crossing Oakwood Road using the traffic-light sequence to time your crossing, since there is no pedestrian crossing light at this junction. Continue along the footway at the side of the road until you reach the hatchments for to slip road off the M11, and turn right to reach, through a kissing-gate, the footpath which leads through Roding Valley Marshes nature reserve.

This may be designated as a footpath, and may be entirely unhardened for much of its length, but you must beware of cyclists what cannot (or who refuse to) distinguish between a footpath and a bridleway.

The path is used by the Three Forests Way, a circular route of 97km, conventionally starting in Chipping Ongar and looping past Stansted Airport (other start-points may be more accessible for public transport users) which links Hainault Forest, Hatfield Forest and Epping Forest. The guidebook to the Three Forests Way may be found at <https://www.trailman.co.uk/product/the-three-forests-way/> (author, Peter Aylmer).

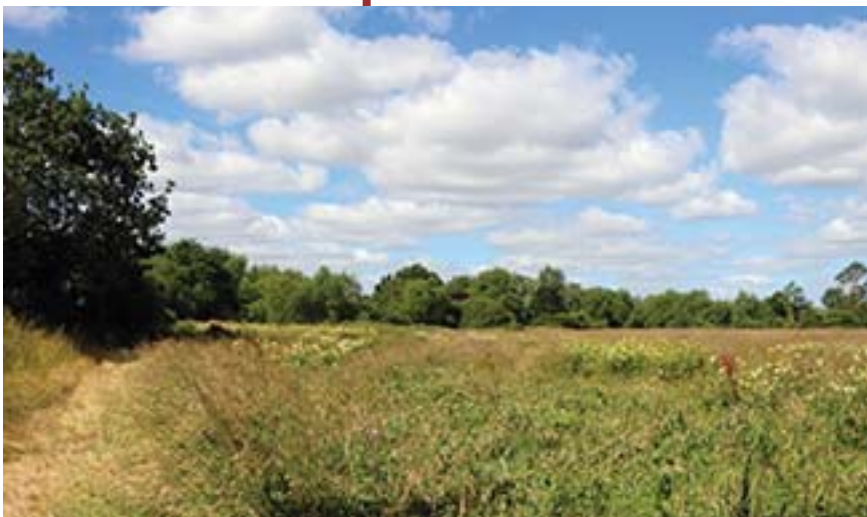
Go through the gate and follow the path along the riverside, initially with woodland on your right. Once the path has open marshland on the right, look for a fork in the path. Take the right-hand fork which leads gradually away from the river and round to the right. With some housing ahead in the distance, turn left to come off the marsh at the edge of Loughton recreation ground.

There are football goalposts to the right, and a cricket pitch away over to your left, but much of the area is no longer managed actively for formal sporting use. If there is a football match being played, or if the grass is wet, turn right to follow the perimeter path round to the left to reach an old changing-block, with tennis courts on the left.

If the ground is dry and there are no sporting endeavours in play, you may choose to cross the grass, making a bee-line for the brick changing-block.

**9** Keeping the tennis courts, and later a sprint track, on your left, follow the path until it meets Roding Road (with a car park entrance on your left).. Follow the road out to a junction, and turn right, still

*Roding Valley marshes  
nature reserve*





on Roding Road. Follow the left-hand footway (still with the Three Forests Way) to the junction at Valley Hill.

The businesses at this junction include a convenience shop. While doing the research for the route, I discovered that one business had decamped to the centre of Woodford, leaving a deceitful and false forwarding address — Woodford is in the London Borough of Redbridge, and not in the area proclaimed by the lie on the sign.

Continue along the left-hand footway of Roding Road, passing school playing-fields on the left. Cross over the railway, and immediately turn left along Gillingham Path to reach the forecourt of Loughton station.

The centre of Loughton lies to the north, following the road out of the station. All facilities are available: there is a modern café at the roundabout beyond the bus stops, and a large supermarket may also be accessed from the roundabout.



*Loughton station*

## Loughton to Buckhurst Hill

### 2.2km

**10** With your back to the station building, turn left. Pass a restaurant and go through an archway in the brick wall, and turn left onto Finlayson Path. Turn right when you reach the tracks, keeping the car park on your right. Beyond a path which comes in from the right, turn left onto Great Eastern Path to pass beneath the railway. Follow the path past sportsfields on the left (the other end of the same sportsfields you passed on Roding Road) and across Roding Gardens. At the end, turn right and follow the path over the end of Highland Avenue and on to Danbury Road.

**11** Follow Danbury Road to its end at Felstead Road. Cross Felstead Road to take a path opposite. Follow the path across Kirby Close and on to Blackmore Road. Follow the left-hand footway of Blackmore Road to its junction with Thaxted Road, and turn left (still on Blackmore Road). Follow the right-hand footway out to Loughton Way and turn right.

Take the right-hand footway of Loughton Way to its junction with Palmerston Road, where turn right. Cross the railway on Palmerston Road, then cross to the left-hand footway at a light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Take the next street on the left, Victoria Road, to reach Buckhurst Hill station.



*Buckhurst Hill station*

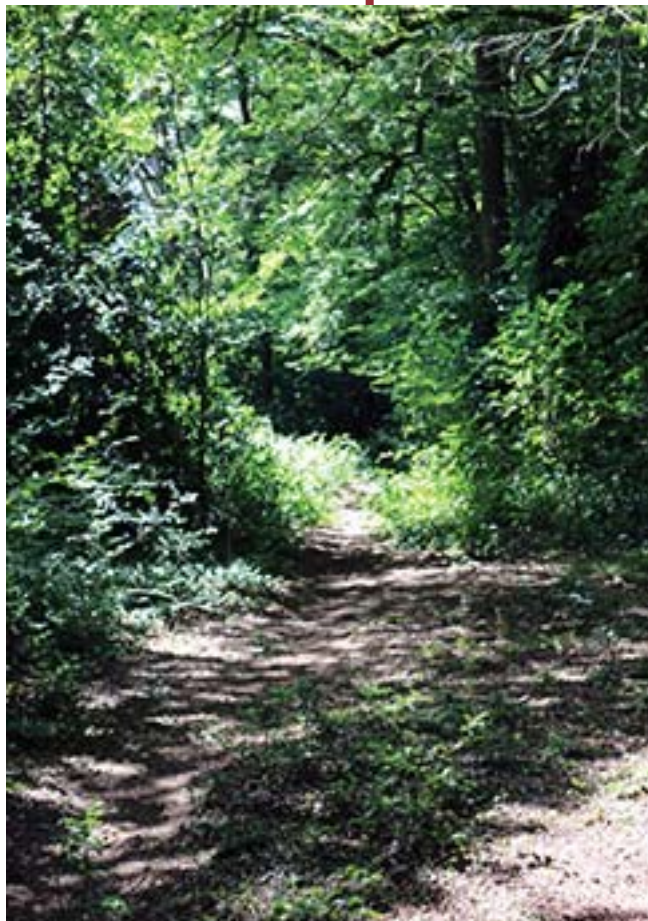
## Buckhurst Hill to Woodford 2.4km

**12** Continue south from the station (that is to say, turning left if exiting the station) along the left-hand footway of Victoria Road to the next junction, where Queen's Road crosses.

At this junction, or just to the right on Queen's Road, there is a pub, a supermarket, and several cafés.

Continue ahead on the left-hand footway of Princes Road as it eases round to the right, crossing over the end of Briar Close. Turn left onto Forest Edge, and take its right-hand footway for 60m until the footway ends. Enter Lord's Bushes on your right and at a fork, take a path parallel to the road (not the path which climbs through the woodland). Follow the path through the woodland, crossing two streamlets and keeping close to the road on your left. Return to the road at the southern edge of the woodland and turn right. Continue on the right-hand footway of Forest Edge to its junction with Farm Way.

*Lord's Bushes*



Roding Valley station (on the Hainault Loop) is about 250m distant from this point, off to the left on Station Way, the eastwards continuation of Farm Way.

**13** Continue across the junction using the tiny refuge, and continue ahead. About 100m beyond Station Way, the street-name changes to Kings Avenue as (at last) this London Underground route reaches London (the London Borough of Redbridge, to be precise) and leaves Essex behind. Follow Kings Avenue to its end, crossing from the right-hand to the left-hand footway at a suitable location, as it merges onto Broadway. Bear left onto Broadway, then bear left again on Station Approach to reach Woodford station.

Woodford station marks the beginning of the Hainault Loop, which rejoins the spinal line at Leytonstone. The description of the Hainault Loop begins on page 61.

The shops on and around Broadway include cafés, restaurants, and a small supermarket.



## Woodford to South Woodford

2.2km

**14** Take the underpass next to the station entrance to pass beneath the tracks. Turn right on exiting the underpass to take the right-hand footway of Snakes Lane East to St Barnabas Road, where cross the road ahead using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and turn right.



*Woodford suburbia —  
St Barnabas Road*

Curiously, all the street signs for St Barnabas Road (and for other saintly nomenclature) have an incorrect full stop after “St”, rendering the name as “Street Barnabas Road”, etc. — since there is no missing text after the abbreviation for *Saint*, the full stop is completely unnecessary; the abbreviation for *Street* may be ambiguous, but assuming that it is the first two letters of the word, the full stop comes into play, thus removing any ambiguity between *Street* and *Saint*.

Transport for London makes the same error with, for example, *St John’s Wood* and *King’s Cross St Pancras*.

Take the left-hand footway of St Barnabas Road, following it through what could be described as rather comfortable suburbia, to reach Broadmead Road, crossing the latter by means of three light-controlled pedestrian crossings.

Continue on the left-hand footway of St Barnabas Road all the way to its end at Latchett Road, where there is a mini-roundabout. Press on ahead onto the left-hand footway of Latchett Road to its end at Maybank Road. Cross Maybank Road and turn right to reach the entrance to the underpass beneath the North Circular Road.

**15** Pass beneath the main road, turning right on emerging from the tunnel, and rise to reach the end of Mulberry Way. Turn left onto Mulberry Way and follow its right-hand footway, passing into the one-way section against the flow of motorised traffic, to reach South Woodford station.

Just before you reach the station, you will see, painted on a wall on the left, a ghost advertisement (for a butchery company). At the other end of the block, just before a pub, look back to see another ghost, this time advertising a drapery/millinery business.

As well as the aforementioned pub, there are convenience shops and a café in the vicinity of the station.

## South Woodford to Snaresbrook

1.6km

**16** Continue past the station (if exiting the station, turn right at the top of the steps leading from the platform to the footbridge) onto the right-hand footway of George Lane's eastern section, and turn right.

Pass bus stops E and D, and take the first road on the right, Pulteney Road. Follow its right-hand footway until the road bends to the left, with Foxdene Close ahead. Take the bend on Pulteney Road, then turn right onto Alexandra Road. Follow its right-hand footway to its end, round a bend to the left, to come out onto Hermon Hill.

**17** Turn right to follow the right-hand footway of Hermon Hill, passing a hospital over to your left, as far as its junction with Sylvan Road, where turn right and follow the right-hand footway of Sylvan Road round a left-hand bend and on to its end at Snaresbrook High Street.

There is a convenience shop on the corner of Sylvan Road and Snaresbrook High Street. To the left, Snaresbrook High Street contains cafés, restaurants, a pub, and lots more. There is, though, a small supermarket on the third block beyond Hermon Hill.

Turn right along the right-hand footway of Snaresbrook High Street to pass beneath the railway at Snaresbrook station.

There is a café on the parade of shops at the station.

Access to the station is by staircases on both sides of High Street at the far end of the bridge (some may be closed at certain times), or by an access road farther along on the left.

*Snaresbrook station*



## Snaresbrook to Leytonstone

2.7km

**18** Continue to the end of High Street (if exiting the station, use the access road), and cross Hollybush Hill using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Turn right, then turn left along the left-hand footway of Snaresbrook Road. Pass Eagle Pond (despite the predominant wildlife, this really is Eagle Pond rather than Seagull Pond).

Turn left at the far end of the pond into a part of Epping Forest. Beyond the pond, the path through the woodland trends to the right. Take the left-hand option where the path forks. When you come out onto heathland, you will come to a major crossing path. Turn left and follow a southerly route across the heath.





There are many paths here, and it does not matter which one you take, as long as you do not bear off to the west (that is, to the right). Keep left, but keep south, and you should fare well. The railway may be heard over to your left as you reach the southern end of the heathland: keep it relatively close.

When you come close to Whipps Cross Road, do not go all the way onto the footway (by reaching the bus stop), but bear left onto a crossing path to cross the railway by a footbridge.



*Top — Eagle Pond*

*Above — Epping Forest at the junction with the main north-south track, looking northwards*

**19** Advance to make your way beneath the Green Man roundabout (and above the A12 which runs in a tunnel beneath your feet). Turn right at a path crossing (signposted *Leytonstone*) to pass beneath the roundabout again and come up onto the right-hand footway of High Road Leytonstone.

Over to your left, you will see the pub which was in the past called the Green Man, giving rise to the roundabout's name. It is now one of a large chain of fake-Irish pubs owned by a company which was famed for making the worst beer in Birmingham.

Follow the road to Church Lane (with the library ahead on the corner), where turn right to follow the right-hand footway to reach Leytonstone station.

This part of Leytonstone, principally on High Road and Church Lane, offers a wide retail range, including cafés, convenience shops,



*Leytonstone station  
from across the street*

restaurants and (just beyond the Church Lane junction on High Road) a pub.

Leytonstone station is the Central Line's junction station at the southern end of the Hainault Loop.

Leytonstone station was opened in 1856 when the Great Eastern Railway started running services between Stratford and Loughton, and was remodelled as part of the London Underground's New Works Programme during the 1930s. The line was transferred to London Underground in 1947, with Tube services

starting on the Hainault Loop in 1949.

## Leytonstone to Leyton 1.8km

*Graffiti commemorating  
Tintin and Milou on the  
Suffragette Line bridge*



**20** Continue southwards on Church Lane (that is to say, turning right if exiting the station). Where the road bends to the left, continue ahead along a path that runs between the car park and the railway, with railings on your left to separate the path from the car park. At the far end of the car park, the path rises on a ramp with a basketball cage and the a children's playground beneath you on the left. At the top of the ramp, turn right to cross the railway and the A12 by a footbridge.

Descend from the bridge and continue ahead, walking parallel to the A12. Pass beneath the Overground line (it is the Suffragette line between Gospel Oak and Barking), noting on the north side of the bridge the graffiti commemorating Tintin and Milou (aka Snowy in English-language versions), which has been defaced by painting over further graffiti. Continue ahead to reach another footbridge at the end of Dyers Hall Road South. Do not use the bridge, but turn right along the short street, and turn left onto Grove Green Road. As Grove Green Road bends to the right to run parallel to the A12, take a parallel path on the left-hand side through a "linear park" next to the railway.



At Central Avenue, there is a convenience shop across the road, which may be reached by a pedestrian crossing.

Continue to the end of the linear park at the junction with Cathall Road.

**21** Cross over Cathall Road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and continue along Grove Green Road to the junction with Langthorne Road — the two parts of Langthorne Road are blocked off at Grove Green Road, and there is a pedestrian crossing at the junction.

Turn left onto Langthorne Road, but do not advance through the traffic barrier (with a railway bridge beyond) Turn right and follow the left-hand footway of Trelawn Road to its end. Turn left onto High Road Leyton and follow its left-hand footway to cross the A12 by the bridge, reaching Leyton station near the top of the downslope.

## Leyton to Stratford

**1.9km**

**22** Cross the road to the right-hand footway at the station by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and continue along High Road Leyton for about 450m to reach Drapers Field (a sports ground) on your right, at the far end of a lay-by.

Between the station and Drapers Field, there are shops, a café and a pub along the left-hand footway of High Road Leyton. The right-hand footway is the easier option to follow, unless you need to make use of the retail opportunities.

Bear slightly right to reach and follow a footpath which runs next to the sports ground's boundary fence — but do not enter the sports ground — to return to the roadside at the junction with Crownfield Road.

Here, at the corner of Drapers Field, there is an alternative route to Stratford station, principally for those who find a shopping mall to be a place of great excitement. Turn right onto Temple Mill Lane and pass beneath the school footbridge. Turn left on Celebration Avenue and follow it past Stratford International station (DLR and Southeastern High-Speed). Enter Westfield Mall and make your way to Stratford station at its far end. This may be a useful route in heavy rain or if the pangs of retail estrangement are particularly strong. To continue, exit the mall and cross the railway by the footbridge, reaching the interchange down a flight of steps.

**23** Continue southwards, now on Major Road, to the junction with Chobham Road at a mini-roundabout. Turn right onto Chobham Road, and cross to its left-hand footway at the light-controlled pedestrian crossing. At the roundabout, turn left onto Leyton Road, and immediately cross the road using the refuge



to follow the right-hand footway, with Stratford New Town on your left, and Stratford Newer Town on your right.

The area known as Stratford New Town pre-dates the post-war Basildons and Cumbernaulds of that appellation: it is even marked as such on the 1863 Ordnance Survey map. This was a mid-Victorian encroachment of London on an area of market gardens and nurseries, seen in so many parts of London and other cities at the time.

These times were the long-gone days when Battersea was famous for growing London's crops of asparagus, and when the location of "the orchards of the Thames Valley" was not in Abingdon but in Brentford.

At the junction with Windmill Lane (on your left) continue ahead, now on Angel Lane. Ascend the right-hand footway through a right bend and then a left turn. Cross the railway and descend to Great Eastern Street. Turn right, keeping to the right-hand footway, and follow Great Eastern Street. Where the road veers to the left, continue ahead onto the station piazza, passing the stairs to the Westfield shopping centre, to reach the interchange between bus and rail at Stratford station.

The first station at Stratford was opened in 1839, but only lasted for eight years before the first reconstruction in 1847, and further improvements were made forty years later. The Central Line arrived in 1946, and this brought some further development of the station.

Services on the Docklands Light Railway started in 1987 and the Jubilee Line opened at Stratford in 1999. The lower part of the station had been upgraded for the Jubilee Line's arrival, and further works were undertaken between 2005 and 2011 to ready the station for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and to plumb the northern end of the station into the Westfield mall. This work served to increase station capacity threefold, to be the busiest

London station outside Zone 1. The Elizabeth Line arrived in 2022, and further works will be needed to improve access for the thousands of commuters, either residents in the post-Olympic flats or those commuting to the various arts and education facilities, and to the residual sports facilities.

There are stalls and shops for coffee and food at the bus station and inside the Tube station. The Stratford shopping centre is across the road from the bus station. Westfield

*The Stratford Centre,  
Great Eastern Street*



Mall, of course, has just about everything — shops, ATMs, restaurants, toilets and more.

Stratford station has Greater Anglia trains to Liverpool Street, and on lines to Cambridge and Norwich. The Mildmay Line of the Overground runs to Richmond and Clapham Junction, the branching point being Willesden Junction. DLR connections serve Beckton, Woolwich and Lewisham. Elizabeth Line trains run eastwards to Shenfield and westwards to Paddington (and onwards to Heathrow or Reading), and there are Tube services on the Central and Jubilee lines.

Stratford is also a major bus hub. Note that this bus hub is Stratford bus station — for Stratford City bus station, you will need to cross the footbridge, descend the stairs on your right, and turn left along Montfichet Road.

If you are breaking your journey at Stratford, you may (once you have passed through the ticketing gates) make use of the only toilet on the huge station. Make for the tunnel over to your right (towards the Central Line *et al*), and turn left just before the tunnel entrance.



*Robert*

*The Railway Tree sculpture,  
aka the Rhubarb, on  
Stratford High Street*

## Stratford to Mile End 3.2km

**24** With your back to the station entrance, turn right and make your way past the bus station, passing it and Robert the Rusty Engine on your left. Pass to the left of a tower block with a ground-floor supermarket, and continue ahead to reach Great Eastern Road, where turn right to reach the junction with High Street.

The metal sculpture on your left is officially called the Railway Tree, commemorating the marshalling yards and other infrastructure in the area now covered by the Olympic Park, but everyone knows it as the Rhubarb.

Turn right along High Street and follow its right-hand footway past Stratford High Street DLR station (which is over on the other side of





the street) and onwards past modern hotel buildings and new-build blocks of flats (which have spilled out of the former Olympic site for lack of space in the Olympic Park) to reach and cross the end of Warton Road.

**There is a small supermarket on the corner of Warton Road.**

Continue along the right-hand footway of High Street, passing the crossing-point of the Greenway.

The Greenway, a long embankment with straight sections, is often thought to be a long-lost railway, but it is in fact a covering for the Northern Outfall Sewer. The section between Hackney Wick and Beckton is now a footpath and cycleway, a sharing which occasionally works.

Continue ahead to reach Bow Roundabout, where the route makes its final crossing of the A12, by means of a set of four light-controlled pedestrian crossings.

Just before you reach the roundabout, turn left to cross the A11 slip road (which is coming off the roundabout). Turn right, and advance to cross the roundabout's east side. Follow the path through the

roundabout, with the A12 beneath and the A11 above. At the other side, cross the roundabout and turn right to cross the A11 slip road (as it comes onto the roundabout). Turn left onto the right-hand footway. You have negotiated the Bow Roundabout.

**25** Pass two churches facing off at each other across the eastbound carriageway of Bow Road, the Anglican on the "island" between the carriageways, and the Roman Catholic to its north.

This calls to mind Robert Louis Stevenson's observation that "to the high entertainment of the angels, we pelt each other with evangelists, like schoolboys bickering in the snow" (*Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes*, 1879).

At the west end of the Bow Church "island", there is a statue of William Ewart Gladstone, who was Prime Minister on four separate occasions between 1868 and 1894.

Continue along the right-hand footway of Bow Road. Cross over the DLR at Bow Church station (the access for which is via a divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing ahead, over on the other side of the road) and continue along the right-hand footway to pass beneath the link railway line between Limehouse and Stratford.

*The Bow Roundabout,  
looking towards Stratford*



Here, there was in the past a station called Bow Road. That station's building remains. It is currently occupied by a branch of a nationwide gambling corporation.

Pass Bow Road Tube station (District Line and Hammersmith and City Line), again on the other side of the road and accessed by a divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing, to reach a girls' school on the right, and the old gateway to a former hospital across the road on your left.

The school is the Central Foundation School for Girls, which moved from premises in the Bishopsgate area. The older building to the east of the modern block bears an inscription identifying it as the Stepney and Bow Coborn Foundation Girls' School, which is now in Upminster. The school is named after Thomas Coborn, a brewer in Bow, whose widow Prisca set up the educational foundation at the start of the eighteenth century.

There is a Central Foundation School for Boys: it is located in Islington. Both schools were set up by drawing on funds from the same foundation that created Dulwich College in south London, though the two schools were always totally independent of the college.

This hospital was built on the site of Bow Workhouse (later known as Bow Institution), and was an outpost of the (Royal) London Hospital. This was a responsibility of the Corporation of the City of London, and like its parent hospital, was a City property *extra muros*. St Clement's was frequently used as a psychiatric hospital.

*The former St Clement's  
Hospital and (right)  
its gatehouse*





The hospital closed in 2006. After passing through several agencies, it became a Community Land Trust. Under the regulations to which the Trust is bound, the rents for housing built on the land are linked to local median salaries.

Here, the street-name changes to Mile End Road and, after you have walked about 1.5km from Bow Roundabout, you will reach Mile End station — again, on the other side of the road and accessed by a divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

Between Bow and Mile End, there are pockets of shops and cafés on one or other side of the road. There is another cluster just beyond Mile End station on the right-hand footway, on Mile End Road and on Grove Street to the right.

Mile End station has services on the Central, District, and Hammersmith and City Lines.

Mile End station (it is not really close to the site of the milestone which was one mile from the boundary of the City of London — that was located closer to Stepney Green station) was opened in 1902 on the line between Whitechapel and Bow, and the line was electrified in 1905.

Railway services were provided by the District Railway: after the consolidation of most of the Underground services under the umbrella of Underground Electric Railways Company of London (UERL), Metropolitan Line services arrived in 1936. These services were re-arranged in 1936 to form the Hammersmith and City Line route between Hammersmith and Barking, though that line was not separated from the Metropolitan Line on the map of the Underground until 1990.

As part of the eastern extension to the Central Line, the station was rebuilt in 1946 to a design created by Stanley Heaps (1880-1962),

*Mile End station*



assistant and successor to Leslie Green, UERL's chief architect (1875-1908), who died of overwork at the age of 33. Green had been responsible for those Tube stations which have ox-blood faience tiling, and semicircular windows above ground level; Heaps continued Green's work, modifying the design to fit stations with escalators rather than lifts, and later designed stations in this newer style, but his legacy lies mainly with the depots he designed for buses, trolleybuses and trains across the capital.

## Mile End to Bethnal Green 2.0km

**26** Continue along the right-hand footway of Mile End Road across Grove Road and beneath a bridge. Continue ahead to Whitman Street. Turn right onto Whitman Street, then immediately take the steps on the left down to reach the towpath of the Regent's Canal. Turn right to follow the towpath past Mile End Lock and pass beneath the railway to reach the bridge which carries Roman Road. Ascend to road level by a flight of steps on the right immediately in front of the bridge.

**27** Turn left onto Roman Road and cross the canal. Continue along the left-hand footway of Roman Road for 1km to reach Bethnal Green station.

At the junction with Globe Road, you will be passing through an area known as Globe Town (the globe sculpture refers). Globe Road is almost certainly named after an inn of that name, and the land which became Globe Town was developed around 1800 to house the influx of Huguenot silk weavers fleeing persecution in France.

As on Mile End Road, there are shops and cafés at intervals along Roman Road. Note that as well as serving food and drink, the café in the park lodge just to the north of Bethnal Green station on Cambridge Heath Road has toilets which may be used by customers and non-customers alike.



*Regent's Canal, north of  
Mile End Road*



*Bethnal Green —  
memorial to the air raid  
shelter disaster*



The large white sculpture (known as the “Stairway to Heaven”) in the gardens on your left is a memorial to the 173 people who died (most of them in a stampede down the stairs) when their air raid shelter — the Tube station — suffered a direct hit from a bomb dropped during an air raid on the night of 3 March 1943.

## Bethnal Green to Liverpool Street

2.9km

**28** Cross Cambridge Heath Road, using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing (or via the station’s underground passageways). Turn right, then immediately turn left onto the left-hand footway of Bethnal Green Road, and pass beneath the railway. Follow Bethnal Green Road as far as Seabright Street on the left, where turn left to reach Weavers Fields.

The reference to weavers is linked with many generations of weavers who settled in the area, but particularly to Huguenot refugees who fled France between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, under the cosh of a wave of anti-Protestant sectarian persecution. The final decade of the eighteenth century saw an upsurge in Huguenot migration in the wake of the annulment of the Edict of Nantes (1689) which enshrined religious tolerance in the laws of France. More recently, the link has been made once more, this time by the

naming of the Weaver Line of the Overground, beneath which you passed at Bethnal Green. Robert Louis Stevenson touches on the fearful Huguenots of the Massif Central mountains in his *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes* (the work was previously mentioned on this route at the Bow Roundabout).

Go through the gate and follow the path through the park as it bends to right and left to reach a crosspath at a sculpture in the middle of a “path roundabout”. Turn right and follow the path to exit the park onto Vallance Road. Turn left to follow the left-hand footway alongside the park.

Cross to the right-hand footway at a pedestrian crossing. Cross Dunbridge Street by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and pass beneath the railway. Continue along Vallance Road as far as the junction with Buxton Street.

**29** Cross Buxton Street and continue along the right-hand footway of Vallance Road. Pass a school on your right and, opposite Vallance Gardens, turn right to pass through the traffic barrier onto Hanbury Street (with

Montefiore Centre,  
Hanbury Street



Old Montague Street taking the road traffic on your left). Follow the left-hand footway of Hanbury Street, passing the Montefiore Centre on your right, to reach its junction with Brick Lane.

Brick Lane has seen waves of ethnic groups colonise the area, normally until they have gained a sufficient foothold in London, and sufficient financial security, to be able to move out to other areas. The mosque near the southern end was previously a synagogue, and before then, a church for French Huguenot refugees.

Over the past thirty years or so, Brick Lane has become a destination in its own right, leading to a certain amount of “settling down”, and even to acts of self-parody.

Cross Brick Lane and continue ahead, still on the left-hand footway of Hanbury Street. Turn left onto Wilkes Street, then turn right onto Fournier Street, taking the right-hand footway, to the junction with Commercial Street. Cross Use the light-controlled pedestrian crossing a few metres on your right to cross Commercial Street, then turn left and immediately turn right onto the right-hand footway of Brushfield Street. Follow the street out to its end to reach and cross Bishopsgate.

On your right as you pass along Brushfield Street is the bustling shopping centre which is on the site of Spitalfields Market. While there are echoes of old Spitalfields in businesses on your left, many of them are now a bit beached after losing their former clients at the old market.

Turn left, passing the eastern entrance to the main concourse of Liverpool Street station, then turn right onto Liverpool Street. Follow its right-hand footway alongside the former railway hotel to reach the station’s main entrance on the right.

At the entrance to the station, there is a memorial to the Kindertransport (the wartime children arrived in London from the Continent at this station); there is another Kindertransport memorial on the main concourse of

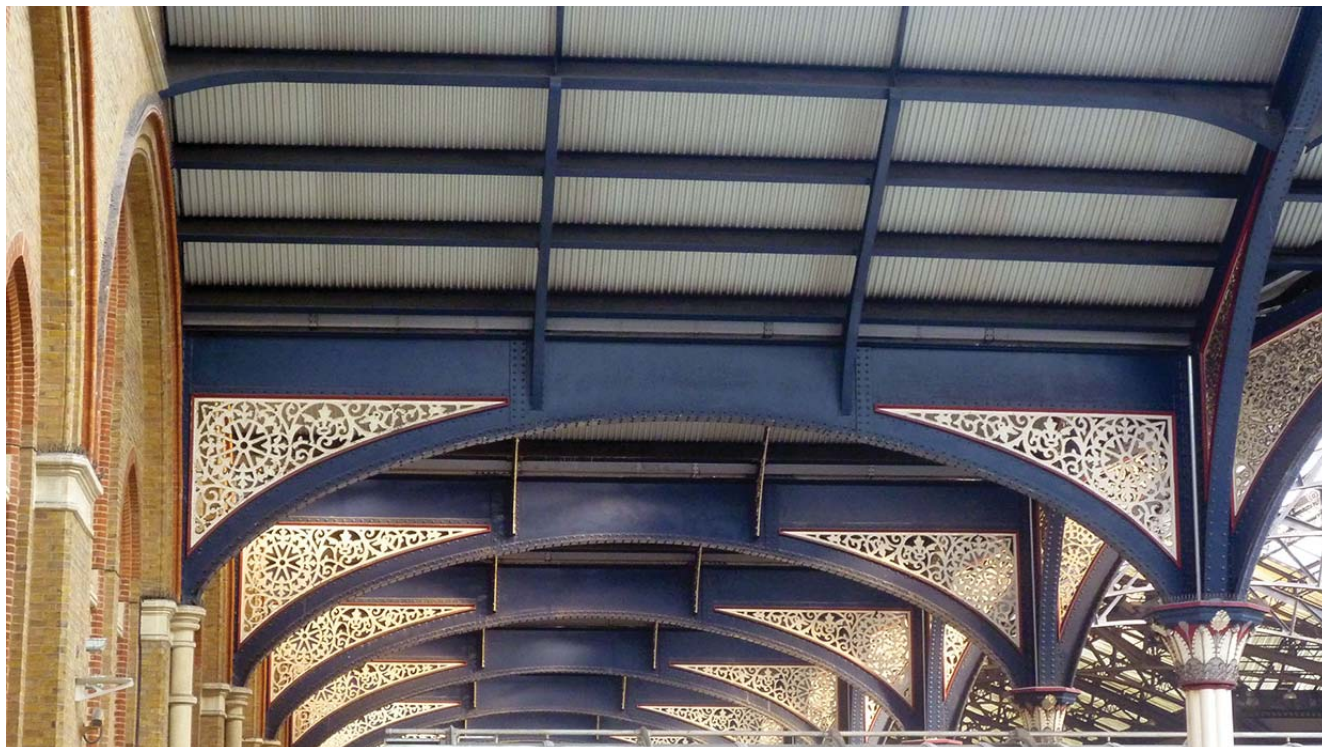


*Brick Lane*



*Faded commerce,  
Crispin Street*





*Liverpool Street station — roofing detail*

*Kindertransport memorial, Liverpool Street*



the station. There are also memorials in Harwich, the port of disembarkation, from which the children were brought here by rail.

As well as the Central Line (for which the easiest access is via the concourse of the mainline station), there are other Tube services (both the Metropolitan Line and the Hammersmith and City Line are best reached from the Tube station entrance on the left-hand side of Liverpool Street), London Overground services to Chingford, Cheshunt and Enfield, and main-line services to Cambridge and Norwich at Liverpool Street. There is an entrance to the Elizabeth Line ahead.

In addition, there is the usual wide range of facilities (such as food sales, ATMs and toilets) down the stairs on the mainline station concourse.

## **Liverpool Street to Bank** **0.7km**

**30** From the entrance to the Underground across the road from the entrance to Liverpool Street station concourse, turn left onto the right-hand footway of Old Broad Street. Cross over London Wall using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and continue along the right-hand footway of Old Broad Street to reach the junction with Throgmorton Street on your right.

**31** Cross over Throgmorton Street and continue along Old Broad Street to reach Threadneedle Street, where continue ahead on its right-hand footway to reach the Bank of England on your right, and Bank station.

On your left, outside the frontage of the Royal Exchange, there is an equestrian statue of the Duke of Wellington. Note the unique Tube station entrance set into the wall of the Bank of England.

Look to your left across the junction to see the pillared frontage of the Mansion House, the official residence of the Lord Mayor of London. This office is not to be confused with the office of the Mayor of London. The latter is mayor of the 32 London Boroughs, and is elected for a four-year term of office by popular suffrage. The Lord Mayor represents the City of London (which has always been a separate county from Greater London) and is elected by the council of the Corporation of London for a one-year term of office.

There are many entrances, both here at Bank junction and in the surrounding streets, to the Bank/Monument station complex, which is served by the Central, Circle, District and Northern Lines of the Underground, by the DLR, and by the Waterloo and City Line (which has operated since 1898 but only became incorporated into London Underground management in 1994). There are also bus services to many parts of central London and to the suburbs from the streets around Bank junction.



*The Bank of England, seen from across the junction*

## Bank to St Paul's

### 0.6km

**32** Cross Princes Street to follow the right-hand footway of the street named Poultry, keeping the brash postmodern “streaky bacon” building across the street on your left. At the junction with the street called Old Jewry, the street-name changes to Cheapside.

The short street called Poultry identifies the location of poulterers (who also sold game), within the area of Cheapside (which means “market-place”. If you look at a map, you will find other street-names which identify the different areas of the market (before and after the Great Fire of London in 1666) — for example, there is a Bread Street and a Milk Street.

Pass on your right a row of clothiers’ shops, which take up the ground floor frontage, appropriately enough, of Mercers’ Hall, then pass Atlas House, looking up to find Atlas himself holding up the





*Above — St Mary le Bow church, Cheapside*

*Below — Holborn Viaduct*



globe above the projecting clock, to reach the junction with King Street.

King Street (south of Cheapside it is named Queen Street) is an important north-south thoroughfare across the City, leading at its southern end onto Southwark Bridge.

Cross over King Street using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and pass the church of St Mary le Bow on your left.

This is the church which defines a Cockney (who must be born within earshot of the bell). The bell is the “great bell of Bow” of the nursery rhyme which lists the bells of the City of London.

Bow Church near Stratford has nothing to do with these tales, and the naming of a pub next to that church as “Bow Bells” appears to be trading under a false premise.

**33** Continue along Cheapside to the major junction at the east end of St Paul’s cathedral (which is over to your left). Bear round to the right to reach (and take) an underpass into St Paul’s station.

Cheapside has many shops, cafés, restaurants and pubs in the vicinity. Indeed, it is almost wall-to-wall retail from this point as far as Marble Arch.

## St Paul’s to Chancery Lane

### 1.0km

**34** Emerge from the station onto Newgate Street, and follow its left-hand footway, passing on your right the ruins of a church which was damaged during the Blitz. As you cross Old Bailey, the street-name changes to Holborn Viaduct. Cross to the right-hand footway here.

**35** On your left as you walk along Holborn Viaduct’s eastern approach, the scene is dominated by the modern building, with its plate-glass and steel exterior which contains City Thameslink station (formerly Holborn Viaduct terminal station, now hidden behind a forbidding streetside office building).

Again here, there is a cluster of shops, restaurants and pubs to aid refreshment and replenishment.

Continue past the station onto the bridge of Holborn Viaduct, which carries the roadway over the Fleet valley and Farringdon Road, linking the area around the Old Bailey with the Inns of Court in the vicinity of Chancery Lane.

Holborn Viaduct was built across the valley of the River Fleet between 1863 and 1869, giving much easier passage for horse-drawn vehicles than the steep drop-and-climb which took them via Snow Hill, Holborn Bridge (across the river), and Charterhouse Street. It was one of the first flyover roads in London. Pedestrian access to change levels was effected by staircases set within four pavilions, one at each corner of the bridge.

The world's first coal-fired power station was situated at Holborn Viaduct, opening in 1882.

Once you have crossed the viaduct, you will come to Holborn Circus (where, on your right, Charterhouse Street rises out of the valley of the Fleet).

The Circus is watched over by an equestrian statue of Prince Albert, genially raising his hat to the never-ending traffic.

Cross New Fetter Lane ahead by the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing and follow the left-hand footway of Holborn to reach on your right a vast red fortress of a building.

This is Holborn Bars, which was built to house the headquarters of the Prudential Assurance Company (and which is now used as an event space): it is a true high-point of Victorian Commercial Gothic. When it was built (work started in 1878), the building boasted a chapel, restaurant and theatre hall. The building had separate entrances for women, who had their own library and roof promenade. The provision of electric lighting and hot running water throughout represented the epitome of modernity. The building is listed Grade II\*.

Continue along Holborn to the corner of Gray's Inn Road. The black-and-white bulk of Staple Inn is on the left, and there is access to Chancery Lane Tube station here.

## Chancery Lane to Holborn

0.8km

**36** If you are arriving at the station at Chancery Lane to start the day's walk, turn right after passing through the



*Holborn Circus and Holborn Bars*



*Chancery Lane station and Staple Inn, seen from the north side of the road*





*The summit of the City of London, High Holborn*

*Great Turnstile at High Holborn*



ticketing gates, and turn right again to ascend the staircase to street level, now pointing west. This is designated on the signwork within the station as *Exit 4 — Chancery Lane*. Continue westwards along the left-hand footway of High Holborn to reach the junction with Chancery Lane.

Just before you reach the junction, there is a strange pole at the refuge. This marks the highest point within the City of London. To the west of this

point lies the London Borough of Camden.

The original entrance to Chancery Lane station, when it was built in 1900, was at 31-33 High Holborn, on the north side of the street, almost exactly at the summit of the City of London.

Continue along the left-hand footway of High Holborn as far as Penderel's Oak pub, where turn left onto Great Turnstile to reach Lincoln's Inn Fields, a square with gardens.

Lincoln's Inn Fields is the largest public square in London, and was laid out in 1630. The fields were used as pasture, so turnstiles were set up in order that the public could pass in and out of the fields without letting the animals escape — hence the street (which is nowadays little more than an alleyway) called Great Turnstile (there is also a Little Turnstile). When the houses were built around the fields during the seventeenth century, there was a condition that the fields would continue to be free for public access in perpetuity. Lincoln's Inn, one of the four Inns of Court, takes up the eastern side of the square.

**37** Enter the park at its corner and turn right along the northern side of the gardens.

The gardens are locked “between dusk and dawn” (the timing may be inexact). If the gates are locked, simply follow the north side of the square.

There are toilets on the east side of the gardens, accessible from the road next to the entrance, but their opening hours may be limited at certain times — they are certainly not unlocked

at the same time in the morning as the gates. There is a café in the south-western sector of the park, which is open from 0800 daily except on Sundays.

During the Second World War, the Royal Canadian Air Force set up its overseas headquarters on the north side of the square: there is a small granite memorial within the gardens opposite the relevant building.

Just beyond the central northern gate, you will pass the memorial, a seat with a bronze cast above, to Margaret MacDonald (1870-1911), a prominent social reformer and wife of Ramsay MacDonald, the first Labour Prime Minister. He ascended to the office in 1924, thirteen years after Margaret's death.

Margaret MacDonald is often referred to as Margaret Ethel MacDonald to avoid the risk of confusion with her contemporary Margaret Macdonald (note the different capitalisation in the surname), who became the wife of Charles Rennie Mackintosh, and helped to design and evolve the "Glasgow Style" most associated with Mackintosh.

The inscription above the seat reads

*This seat is placed here in memory of Margaret MacDonald  
who spent her life in helping others.*

Outside the gardens to your right is Sir John Soane's Museum, in the home of the great Classical architect. Soane was born (without the final letter in his surname) in 1753, the son of a bricklayer, and rose to the pinnacle of the architectural profession. Soane died in 1837, and the museum is as it was at the time of his death, with a vast and varied collection of antiquities, manuscripts and architectural objects. The museum is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.

There is an ornate water fountain at the north-western corner of the park, from which the final word of the dedicative text has been completely (and clearly deliberately) chiselled out, so it now reads

*Fear of the Lord is a fountain of \_\_\_\_*

It appears that the missing word is "life" (in a quotation taken from Proverbs 14:27). Today, not only has the



*Memorial (with seat) to  
Margaret MacDonald,  
Lincoln's Inn Fields*



*Water fountain,  
Lincoln's Inn Fields*



life departed from the inscription, but so has the water from the fountain.

Exit the park at the fountain and bear left across the junction onto Remnant Street, selecting the right-hand footway the end of this short street, turn right onto Kingsway to follow the right-hand footway to the entrance to Holborn station.

There are Tube services on the Central Line and the Piccadilly Line at Holborn station. The entrance to the station is on Kingsway, but those arriving at this point should note that the exit is on High Holborn.

## Holborn to Tottenham Court Road

### 0.7km

**38** If you are exiting Holborn station, turn left along High Holborn to reach the junction with Kingsway. Cross over Kingsway using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and continue westwards on the left-hand footway of High Holborn to reach the fork in the road at Holborn Town Hall, where High Holborn continues on the left-hand fork, and New Oxford Street takes the right-hand fork.

The ornate Holborn Town Hall building was constructed in 1906 as an extension to a public library, whose name is above the eastern doorway, to be the administrative centre for the new Metropolitan Borough of Holborn. It fell out of municipal use with the local government reorganisation in 1973 which created the London Borough of Camden. The building now contains offices, with a restaurant on the ground floor.

*Holborn Town Hall*

**39** By means of two light-controlled pedestrian crossings, cross High Holborn to reach the left-hand footway of New Oxford Street, and follow it to the junction with Museum Street, where the traffic on New Oxford Street becomes two-way (here, eastbound traffic takes Bloomsbury Way).

Cross over Museum Street ahead by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and continue along the left-hand footway of New Oxford Street to the junction with Shaftesbury Avenue.

On the corner, you will find an icon of the area, the umbrella shop of James Smith and Sons, whose window-paintings boast sales of walking sticks, life-preservers, daggers and other excitements for the right hand. The business was founded in 1830, and at times there have been branches in other locations. With some



prices rising above £600 for an umbrella, it is not necessarily for distress purchases during an unexpected cloudburst.

Cross Shaftesbury Avenue using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and continue along the final stretch of the left-hand footway of New Oxford Street, crossing Eamshaw Street by its light-controlled pedestrian crossing, to reach Centre Point. Cross over Tottenham Court Road ahead and turn left.



*Umbrella shop, St Giles*

As well as Central Line trains, there are Tube services on the Northern Line (Charing Cross branch) and on the Elizabeth Line at Tottenham Court Road.

## Tottenham Court Road to Oxford Circus 1.1km

**40** If you are arriving at Tottenham Court Road station to start the day's walk, choose the exit at the corner of Oxford Street and Charing Cross Road and turn right. Follow the right-hand footway of Charing Cross Road for just 60m, and turn right onto Soho Place. Follow this pedestrianised street to its end. Continue straight ahead onto Sutton Row, and follow its left-hand footway to its end at Soho Square,

*Left — electricity substation, Soho Square*

*Right — hotel-front artwork, Carlisle Street*





The square was laid out around 1670 and has, for the past century, been associated with the media industry. The rustic black-and-white building in the centre of the square dates from 1926 (though some of the beams were re-used, having come from older buildings), and houses an electricity substation.

Pass through the middle of Soho Square onto Carlisle Street. Cross Dean Street and take the right-hand bend at the end of Carlisle Street (beneath the towering, glowering angel above a hotel entrance). Turn left onto Sheraton Street and take it to its end at the junction with Wardour Street.

**41** Turn right onto Wardour Street, and immediately turn left onto d'Arblay Street. Follow the right-hand footway of d'Arblay Street across the junction with Berwick Street to its end at the junction with Poland Street, where turn right.

Turn left onto Great Marlborough Street and follow its right-hand footway, passing the stage door of the London Palladium theatre, as far as Argyll Street. Turn right, to follow Argyll Street to Oxford Street, and turn left to reach Oxford Circus.

Oxford Street was formerly known as Oxford Road, and indeed was part of the main stage route between London and Oxford via Uxbridge. However, it has much earlier foundations, being part of the Via Trinobantina, a Roman road which linked Camulodunum (Colchester) with Calleva Atrebatum (Silchester).

There are Underground services on the Bakerloo, Central and Victoria Lines at Oxford Circus. It is significant that Oxford Circus is not served by the Elizabeth Line: the station is already oversubscribed with passengers, and a link to the Elizabeth Line would have overwhelmed it completely. The western (Hanover Square) entrance to the Elizabeth Line at Bond Street station is close at hand. There are bus services to many parts of the capital from this area.

## **Oxford Circus to Bond Street**

**0.7km**

**42** Cross Oxford Circus (Oxford Street and Regent Street) using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing on the diagonal, and follow the left-hand footway of Regent Street to the junction with Margaret Street.

Ahead as you look along Regent Street, your line of sight is concluded by the prow of Broadcasting House; closer at hand and just beyond Margaret Street on the left-hand side of the street is the University of Westminster, the institution founded there as the Polytechnic by Quintin Hogg.

Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of Margaret Street to and across John Prince's Street, and then cross Holles Street by the

light-controlled pedestrian crossing to enter Cavendish Square, whose gardens are over on your right.

Cavendish Square was laid out early in the eighteenth century. The architect was John Prince, whose customer was the second Earl of Oxford. The name of the square commemorates the earl's wife, Henrietta Cavendish-Bentinck. These names have been plundered for several street-names in the vicinity. The square turns up in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson (it's that man again — he also turns up in person as an unhappy schoolboy near Osterley on the Piccadilly Line).

There are benches in the gardens which are suitable for an *al fresco* meal, possibly using food bought at one of the many outlets nearby.

**43** At the west end of Cavendish Square, the street-name changes to Henrietta Place: continue to the end of the street, where turn left onto Marylebone Lane.

Note that Marylebone Lane does not fit neatly into the rectilinear street-grid. This is because it follows the line of the Tyburn, one of London's hidden (*i.e.*, culverted) rivers: Marylebone is a corruption of St Mary le Bourne. The river rises on Fitzjohn's Avenue in Hampstead and empties into the River Thames just upstream from Vauxhall Bridge.

Take the right-hand option ahead to keep the hotel on your left and reach an entrance to Bond Street station.

As well as Central Line trains, Tube services on the Jubilee Line and trains on the Elizabeth Line call at Bond Street.

## Bond Street to Marble Arch

### 0.6km

**44** Turn right (to travel westwards) onto the right-hand footway of Oxford Street, and cross over the end of Stratford Place, with its imposing buildings (and a tatty souvenir kiosk) using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

Continue along the right-hand footway of Oxford Street, crossing first James Street then Duke Street by their respective light-controlled pedestrian crossings, then pass the imposing home of Selfridges (the branding without the



Stratford Place





*Frontage of Selfridges,  
Oxford Street*

apostrophe its etymology demands) to reach the junction with Orchard Street.

The first stage of the vast emporium was opened in 1909, with several expansions over the following thirty years. In 1943, the basement was used to house the scramblers which allowed Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt to communicate securely, with a line extension to the Cabinet War Rooms at Horse Guards for Churchill's use.

**45** Cross over Orchard Street using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and continue along the right-hand footway of Oxford Street as its retail presence winds down, to reach, on the right, the entrance to Marble Arch station.

## **Marble Arch to Lancaster Gate** **1.3km**

**46** Continue westwards (that is to say, turning right if exiting Marble Arch station) along the right-hand footway of Oxford Street, crossing Great Cumberland Street by a light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

Across the road on your left is the Marble Arch which has given the locality its (unofficial) name. It was built on the orders of King George IV to become the ceremonial entry to Buckingham Palace, and is modelled on the Arch of Constantine in Rome (from which the Arc de Triomphe in Paris is also descended. It is faced in white Carrara marble, and measures 14m in height. The footprint of the structure is 18m by 9m.

On the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837, Buckingham palace became the Court's principal London home, but it was too small for that purpose. The Palace was extended with the new East Face, which contains the famous balcony. The arch was removed and was relocated to its present site in 1851.

Cross Edgware Road (at the former junction of Via Trinobantina and Watling Street) using a divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing, then turn left to cross Bayswater Road by another divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing, after which turn right to follow the left-hand footway of Bayswater Road for about 70m. Turn left to enter Hyde Park through the gate.

Hyde Park was established as a hunting park by King Henry VIII in 1536, on 250ha of land taken from Westminster Abbey, and became a public Royal Park in 1637. It was the site of the Great Exhibition in

1851. Hyde Park can be a tranquil green oasis, or it can seethe with events and demonstrations, often causing damage to the grass (particularly in winter).

**47** Immediately after you enter the park, turn right to follow a path running parallel to the fence on the right. Follow the path to its meeting with North Carriage Drive (nowadays busy with horseless carriages) as it exits the park onto Bayswater Road. Bear right to the junction, then turn left to cross North Carriage Drive, timing your crossing with the traffic-light sequence. Turn left onto the right-hand footway of North Carriage Drive, then take the broad path on the right all the way to the Italian Gardens café.

The Italian Gardens, which date from 1860, were almost certainly created as a gift from Prince Albert to Queen Victoria, based on a design he had created for Osborne House on the Isle of Wight. The water for the fountains, and for the Long Water and the Serpentine lake to the south-east, comes from the River Westbourne, which enters the park at Lancaster Gate.

Lancaster Gate station may be reached by following the path on the right, past the toilet block. The station is on the far side of Bayswater Road, over to your right.

At this point, you pass from Hyde Park into the adjacent Kensington Gardens. This area (of 110ha) had been created out of Hyde Park as the private landscaped gardens of Kensington Palace (which was occupied by King William III). It was enclosed on the request of Queen Caroline in 1728, and was returned to public access (but only between dawn and dusk) in 1841.

## Lancaster Gate to Queensway

### 0.9km

**48** Continue ahead (passing from Hyde Park into Kensington Gardens) to pass to the right of the Two Bears drinking fountain, and continue ahead to reach the Inverness Terrace Gate on your right.

The Two Bears fountain was erected in 1939 to commemorate the eightieth anniversary of the founding of the Metropolitan Cattle Trough and Drinking Fountain Association. The sculpture was stolen in 1967, and replaced by a copy in 1970. The workings were restored in 2003, but the sculpture was damaged in an attempted theft in 2019.



*The northern perimeter path, Hyde Park*





*View of the Italian Gardens,  
Hyde Park*

**49** Forge ahead, continuing on the same path to come to the Broad Walk, a major north-south path within Kensington Gardens. Turn right onto Broad Walk to reach Bayswater Road through the Black Lion Gate.

Queensway station is across the street, accessible by a light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

## Queensway to Notting Hill Gate

**0.6km**

**50** Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of Bayswater Road. Pass the entrance to a major coach park, and continue to cross over the entrance to Kensington Palace Gardens with the Russian Embassy on the left. To the right on entry into Kensington Palace gardens is the Embassy of the Slovak Republic, less formally Slovakia.

**51** Beyond the entrance to Kensington Palace Gardens, the street-name changes to Notting Hill Gate, and ahead lies the grey concrete Embassy of the Czech Republic, or Czechia.

This dour building was built as the Embassy of Czechoslovakia: the two successor countries shared the building until 1993, when the Slovaks moved next door.

Continue ahead on the left-hand footway of Notting Hill Gate. Cross Palace Gardens Terrace and Kensington Church Street by their respective light-controlled pedestrian crossings and continue along the left-hand footway to reach the entrance to Notting Hill Gate station.

There are many shops, cafés, restaurants and pubs in the area around Notting Hill Gate station.

Notting Hill Gate station is served by trains on the Central, Circle and District Lines.

The name is derived from Notting Hill, the hill to the north: the “gate” was a toll-gate on the main route to Oxford.

## Notting Hill Gate to Holland Park

**0.7km**

**52** Continue along the left-hand footway (turning left beyond the ticketing gates if exiting Notting Hill Gate station, then

taking the steps on the right to reach street level). When the shops have given way to back garden gates, the street-name changes to Holland Park Avenue, and the road descends towards Shepherd's Bush Green.

Pass Campden Hill Square (home to many celebrities in their time, and to some municipal heroics in *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*, the novel by GK Chesterton). At the junction with a street called Holland Park, the first building on the left houses the Ukrainian Institute in London, and St Volodymyr stands guard on the street corner.



*Holland Park station*

**53** Cross over Holland Park by the refuge, then cross to the right-hand footway at Holland Park station using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

There are many shops, cafés, restaurants and pubs on the stretch of Holland Park Avenue near the station.

## Holland Park to Shepherd's Bush

### 0.9km

**54** Continue to descend the western slope of Notting Hill along the right-hand footway of Holland Park Avenue (that is to say, turning right if exiting Holland Park station). Near the bottom of the hill, you will reach and cross Addison Avenue by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

**55** Continue past Royal Crescent on your right — there is a bench against the railings, which may bring succour to tired legs — to approach the Holland Park roundabout. Bear right to reach the access to an underpass beneath the West Cross Route.

West Cross Route was built as part of a proposed “motorway box” for central London, but this short section (only between the Holland park roundabout and the A40) and a similarly short section in the east (now part of the A12 past Victoria Park) were the only sections to be built before the idea of the motorway box was laid to rest. The road no longer has motorway status.

Cross the West Cross Route using its divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing (or take the underpass) and turn left along the right-hand footway towards the roundabout. Descend a set of steps on the right to reach Ariel Way at Shepherd's Bush Overground station (on the Mildmay Line between Willesden Junction and Clapham Junction). Cross Ariel Way by the light-controlled



pedestrian crossing to reach the entrance to Shepherd's Bush Underground station.

Shepherd's Bush Green, ahead on your left, has many shops, cafés, restaurants and pubs on its three sides, and there are many more of these in the vast Westfield mall on your right, and on Goldhawk Road west of the south side of the Green.

Shepherd's Bush Market station (Circle Line, and Hammersmith and City Line) is at the far end of the Green.

## Shepherd's Bush to White City 1.2km

**56** Turn right, then take the path on the left to pass a line of restaurants on the left, with the bulk of the shopping mall on your right. Follow this path out past the mall to descend onto Wood Lane.

The area covered by the mall was agricultural land until the early years of the twentieth century, when the whole area was turned into a mass of sidings and depots for the Central London Railway Company (the precursor of the Central Line).

**57** Turn right along Wood Lane, passing the White City bus station on your right. Cross an open square, keeping to the left of the shopping mall, and passing a play area. Pass the Upside-down House on your right. Wood Lane station is just beyond the bridge on your right.

The "Upside-down House" is one of several clones around the country offering a challenging sensory experience which preys on the psychological effect of disorientation. It need not detain us on our journey.

*Upside-down House,  
Wood Lane*



The site now occupied by the vast Westfield mall was previously covered, in its entirety, by the Central London Railway Depot and power station. The complex opened in 1900, but the power station closed in 1928 when the electric power for the Underground was provided by its power station at Lots Road. As part of the construction of the Westfield shopping centre, the depot was relocated and sits beneath the mall.

Continue along the right-hand footway of Wood Lane to reach the entrance to White City station, passing Television Centre across the road on your left.

Television Centre (now re-purposed) stands on the site of the bandstand and surrounding buildings of the Great White City (so called



*Two views of Television Centre, Wood Lane*

because of the white marble cladding on exhibition buildings) which were erected on farmland in 1908, initially for the Franco-British exhibition of that year.

## White City to East Acton 2.9km

**58** Cross to the left-hand footway of Wood Lane at White City station using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and turn right to follow the left-hand footway northbound as far as the junction with the elevated Westway, the A40.

White City station is one of the more modest “box of light” Tube stations designed by Charles Holden (1875-1960) during the 1930s. Many of his buildings may be seen in the 1930s extensions of the Piccadilly Line and the Northern Line, but other lines are represented too.

Holden was born in Bolton, and his early work portfolios had commissions from William Hesketh Lever (later ennobled as Lord Leverhulme) for his soap works’ company village of Port Sunlight on the Wirral. He has some important works in Bristol, but his best-known work is in London. In addition to his work on 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 (often fondly known as the London Lubyanka) for the federal headquarters and library of the University of London in Bloomsbury.

Just to the south of the Westway flyover, White City Place (more white-sided buildings, but this time not in marble) stands on the site of the White City stadium, built to house the 1908 Olympic Games, the fourth Olympiad of the modern era. The previous three host cities had been Athens (of course) in 1896, then Paris in 1900, then St Louis in 1904. The distance run as the marathon race for those Games, from Windsor Castle to the stadium, 42.195km, was adopted in 1921 as the standard marathon distance, taking the place of the variable distances used for different marathon races.





*Above — White City Place,  
Wood Lane*

The stadium became a greyhound track, was borrowed for a time by Queen's Park Rangers FC during work on their Loftus Road stadium just to the west of the exhibition area. Its last hurrah was the result of a scheduling error (or a ruse to ensure that all the England team's matches were played at Wembley Stadium), which caused the 1966 World Cup match between Uruguay and France to be played there: it was finally demolished in 1983.

During the 1930s, the White City Estate of five-storey blocks of flats was built by London County Council on land to the west of the stadium. Street names on the estate use a careful selection of the countries which competed in the 1908 Olympic Games, and of locations within these countries.

Pass beneath Westway (the A40) and continue along the left-hand footway to the junction with North Pole Road, where the road ahead

becomes Scrubs Lane.

There are shops, pubs and cafés on North Pole Road.



Proceed northwards along the left-hand footway of Scrubs Lane. Enter a car park on the left-hand side, and follow it to its far end. There is a school on the left. At the end of the car park continue to the end of the school property and turn left along a track.

**59** When you reach stables ahead, turn right. The path then bends to the left, with the stables on your left. Follow the tarmac path along the southern edge of the Scrubs (Wormwood Scrubs Park, to give it its official name) past a sports centre, a hospital, and the well-known prison to reach Braybrook Street, where turn left.

*Top — Wormwood Scrubs Park  
from the sports centre*

*Above — HMP Wormwood Scrubs  
from the park*



Wormwood Scrubs Park is an important green space for this part of London, hemmed in by the railway, Scrubs Lane and the East Acton estate. It is home to a wide variety of birdlife, has play facilities for children, and many sportsfields.

In dry conditions, you may keep to the grass (using the hypotenuse of the triangle whose side is made by the prison wall), but the ground is often churned by the sportive endeavours, so if you are wearing town shoes or presentable trainers, you might as well keep to the tarmac.

Follow the left-hand footway of Braybrook Street to Wulfstan Street, where turn right to follow the left-hand footway as far as the junction with Henchman Street. Turn left onto Henchman Street and follow its left-hand footway round its right-hand bend to reach the junction with Erconwald Street. Turn left and follow its left-hand footway to reach East Acton station, where cross the road and turn left to reach the station entrance.

East Acton has long been taken up as the butt of comedy, appearing (yes, even before the current estate's construction) in the late nineteenth century in *The Diary of a Nobody* by George and Weedon Grossmith.

The *Sykes* BBC television sitcom of the 1970s (with Eric Sykes and Hattie Jacques) was set in a (fictional) house on the East Acton estate. Two decades earlier, an episode of *The Goon Show* on BBC Radio had included in the script a lament for the lack of earthquakes in East Acton.

The East Acton Estate was where author Peter Ackroyd grew up: such street-names as Wulfstan and Erconwald helped, he said, generate an interest in the history of London and of Britain. This large council estate was built with a late nod to the Arts and Crafts movement, with the precise intention to give an olde-worlde village feel to the area, but using modern materials. The whole estate is now protected by a planning directive which limits severely the types of change which may be made to the properties or their surroundings.

In wet weather, or after wet weather, frost-thaw or snowmelt, Wormwood Scrubs Park may be muddy, and you may prefer to turn left off Scrubs Lane onto Du Cane Road, keeping to the left-hand footway until you have passed the prison entrance. Cross the road using a pedestrian crossing, and take Wulfstan Road ahead to re-join the main route at Henchman Street.



*Typical East Acton houses  
on Erconwald Road*



## East Acton to North Acton

2.0km

**60** Continue past East Acton station entrance on Erconwald Street (turning right if exiting the station). At the blocked-off end of the street, bear left and use three light-controlled pedestrian crossings to cross Du Cane Road and Old Oak Common Lane.

*There are shops, including convenience shops, at this junction.*

Turn right to follow the left-hand footway of Old Oak Common Lane to the junction with Brassie Avenue, where turn left. Follow the left-hand footway of Brassie Avenue along its full length.

Most of the streets on this part of the estate have golf-related names — courses at St Andrews, Muirfield and Sunningdale are represented, Fairway, Green and Long Drive for items within a course, and Brassie, an obsolete version of the two-wood club.

Turn left onto The Crescent, then turn left onto Long Drive, to reach Western Avenue (A40) at a footbridge.

**61** Turn right to follow the right-hand footway of the A40 beneath the footbridge. Continue to the traffic lights at Gypsy Corner and turn right onto Wales Farm Road, entering into an area which has seen much development recently, with academic, commercial and residential new-builds.. Follow the right-hand footway to the junction with Portal Way, where turn left. Use two light-controlled pedestrian crossings to cross Wales Farm Road. Pass an entryway on the right, then turn right (beneath the overhang of a building) onto a walkway, climbing a few steps and advancing to Victoria Road at North Acton Square. North Acton station is on the other side of the square, accessed by a pedestrian crossing.

North Acton is the junction station for the branch of the Central Line to Ealing Broadway.

The railway line between North Acton and Ealing Broadway was built by the Great Western Railway to link its main line with the

line to High Wycombe (and onwards as far as Birkenhead), then known as the New North Main Line. Part of the New North Main Line was operated as a joint concern by the Great Western Railway and the Great Central Railway, which ran between Marylebone and Manchester via Nottingham, Rugby and High Wycombe. Underground trains started using the tracks in 1920, and the present station opened in 1923. Ownership of the line

*Footbridge over the A40*



was transferred to the Underground in 1938, ending its usage by the Great Western Railway.

There are shops, cafés, restaurants and pubs in the vicinity of the station.

## North Acton to West Acton 1.8km

**61** Turn left onto Victoria Road (crossing the road by the pedestrian crossing and turning right if exiting North Acton station). At the junction with Chase Road, turn left to follow the left-hand footway of the western flank of Victoria Road to reach the junction with Portal Way. Use the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing to cross Portal Way, and continue along the left-hand footway of Victoria Road to reach the junction with Western Avenue.

Turn right to cross Victoria Road, then turn left to cross Western Avenue and its slip road, using four light-controlled pedestrian crossings. Turn left alongside the slip road and bear right onto Horn Lane. Follow the right-hand footway past the stopped-up end of Cecil Road to reach the junction with Noel Road.

There is a parade of shops on Horn Lane just beyond Noel Road, with a convenience shop, a Polish delicatessen, a Polish restaurant, and a fish and chip shop.

Acton Main Line station, on the Elizabeth Line, is about 300m ahead on Horn Lane.

**62** Turn right to follow the right-hand footway of Noel Road, passing a blunt brickbarn church on the right. Cross Eastfields Road, and enter North Acton Playing Fields by the gateway. Bear left to follow a path parallel to Noel Road, and exit the park at its far end. Cross Westfields Road and continue ahead, once again on the right-hand footway of Noel Road. Cross over Saxon Drive using its island refuge, and bear right at the mini-roundabout onto Princes Gardens.

*Top — the last of the morning mist clears from the upper floors of the towers of the new North Acton*

*Bottom — Noel Road has fine trees of many species*







*West Acton station*

On your right, there is a small Japanese supermarket and two convenience shops, the second of which is also the local post office. There are other businesses here which demonstrate the local concentration of Japanese residents.

Follow the right-hand footway of Princes Gardens to reach the entrance to West Acton station on your right.

West Acton station is one of many designed by Charles Holden (1875-1960), and is built in his “box of light” style. Information about Holden’s life and work may be found on page 43. The round-ended shelters with wooden seats on the platforms make a pleasing addition to the station architecture (and also provide comfort for waiting passengers, of course).

## West Acton to Ealing Broadway 1.5km

**63** Cross to the left-hand footway of Princes Gardens using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing at the station and turn right. Bear left onto Queen’s Drive, another tree-lined (and prosperous) suburban street, which is part of the Hanger Hill Conservation Area, a riot of fake black-and-white. To be honest, after the first 200m, it becomes a bit overpoweringly twee.

*Hanger Hill  
Conservation Area*



Pass a school on the left as the road rises to cross the railway line at North Ealing station.

North Ealing station is on the Piccadilly Line, on the branch between Acton Town and Uxbridge via Rayners Lane. The entrance to the station is tucked away over to the right (*i.e.*, on the north side of Queen's Road).

On the left-hand side of Queen's Road, there is a shopping parade with a pub, a café, and (on the corner of the North Circular Road) a convenience shop. There is also a petrol station on the North Circular Road with a mini-supermarket which is typical of those in such locations.

At the end of the parade of shops, you will reach the North Circular Road, another thunder-channel which is at least as bad as the A40: in fact, the closeness of the buildings to the road and the need to cross the road at ground level may make it the worse of the two major roads.

**64** Cross to the west side of the North Circular Road using the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing just to the south of the junction with Queen's Road. Turn left to follow the right-hand footway, passing the gated entrance (with Dutch-gabled lodges) to the Ealing Village estate.

Ealing Village is a cluster of Art Deco blocks of flats, which was built between 1934 and 1936 in the hope of attracting film stars who were working at the local studios. However, it seems that the film stars had higher aspirations than living next to two railway lines. The estate is listed Grade II.

Cross the Central Line by one bridge, and continue over the District Line and the Great Western Main Line by a second bridge. Turn right onto Hamilton Road, and follow its right-hand footway, taking its left-hand bend at the end, to come out onto The Mall.

Between this point and the junction with Ealing Broadway, there are many shops, cafés, restaurants and pubs.

Turn right and follow the right-hand footway of The Mall as far as its junction with Broadway, where turn right to reach Ealing Broadway station on your right.

As well as Central Line trains, Ealing Broadway station is served by Tube trains on the District Line and by Elizabeth Line trains. There is also a half-hourly Great Western Railway service in each direction on the stopping trains



*Hamilton Road, Ealing*





*Ealing Broadway station  
(2021 edition)*

which run between Paddington and Didcot Parkway.

Ealing Broadway station was opened (named simply as *Ealing*) in 1838 when the Great Western Railway was inaugurated (then only as far west as Taplow — called, in a precursor to Ryanair geography, *Maidenhead*). The Underground arrived in 1920, originally with its own station. The current station, serving all lines from a single entrance, was built in 1961, and the station's entrance hall and forecourt were extensively renovated in time for the coming of the Elizabeth Line in 2022.

## Ealing Broadway to Hanger Lane 2.1km

*West Walk, Ealing*

**65** Turn right if exiting Ealing Broadway station, and follow the right-hand footway of Broadway to reach a roundabout



on Haven Green, where turn right onto Madeley Road. Immediately, turn left to cross Madeley Road by a pedestrian crossing, and advance onto Mountfield Road, ahead on your right. Follow the right-hand footway (it is the only footway) to reach the end of Mountfield Road at the junction with Woodville Road. Cross Woodville Road and continue ahead onto the right-hand footway of Hillcroft Crescent.

Where the road turns to the left, continue ahead on a footpath (West Walk) to reach West Road. Follow the left-hand footway of West Road to its end, passing a covered reservoir on the right, where take the right-hand bend onto the left-hand footway of Hillcrest Road, with a brick water tower prominent in the view ahead.

Pass on your left the entrance to a sports ground, then cross over the end of Fox Lane (which leads to another covered reservoir). Immediately after, opposite the water tower, turn left to enter Hanger Hill Park.



*Left — water tower,  
Hanger Hill*

*Right — Hanger Hill Park*

**66** Once inside the park, continue ahead, passing a play area on your right. Beyond some fitness torture equipment, bear right to descend to a small building which may or may not have an operational café attached. Rise towards the noise of the North Circular Road (here, Hanger Lane), bearing off to the right for the final few metres to the exit from the park.

If the idea of the drop-and-climb is not to your taste, you could turn right at the entrance to the park and follow a path along its right-hand edge to reach Hanger Lane.

Turn left and follow the left-hand footway of Hanger Lane to reach the south-eastern corner of the infamous Hanger Lane Gyrotory System. Access to Hanger Lane station, which is marooned within the gyratory, is via an underpass from the corner of the shopping parade.

At busy times (and when is the North Circular Road anything but busy during walking — or even waking — hours?) you may find yourself walking faster than the motor traffic on your right.

Shops here include a convenience shop, a café, and a Japanese restaurant.

## Hanger Lane to Perivale

**3.2km**

**67** If you are arriving Hanger Lane station to start your day's walk, turn right beyond the ticketing gates and then turn left to follow the underpass beneath the western flank of the gyratory system, and turn right to pass beneath its southern flank,





*Path through the golf course  
approaching the River Brent*

*Perivale old church*



finally turning right to reach road level (on the westbound side of the A40) via the ramp.

**There is a café and a convenience shop at your exit.**

Follow the left-hand footway of the A40 as far as Lynwood Road, passing the entrance to an underpass, where turn left. Immediately, turn right along a lane which leads to allotment gardens. When you reach the gate to the gardens, keep ahead to the left of the fence with the gardens on your right. At the far end of the gardens, continue ahead with Brentham Meadows on your right. Follow the path round a left-hand bend to come out onto Brunswick Road.

**If the route via the allotment gardens is blocked, or if the weather is particularly wet, continue along Lynwood Road and turn right to follow the right-hand footway of Brunswick Road to its end at Neville Road.**

Turn right to follow the right-hand footway of Brunswick Road to its end, where turn right onto Neville Road. At the end of the street, turn left to follow the right-hand footway of Meadvale Road to a gateway opposite Barnfield Road (this is just after you pass 128 Meadvale Road — Barnfield Road is the sixth on the left), where turn right to enter Brent River Park.

**68** Turn half-left onto a path which passes to the left of two children's playgrounds, and then turn left. The River Brent is on your right. Pass some tennis courts on your left, then the green of a golf course on your right. Beyond the tennis courts, where a path arrives from the left, turn right to follow an enclosed path with parts of the golf course on each side.

**This is clearly an ancient path which could not be extinguished by the golf club when it came into existence: it appears on the Ordnance Survey map of 1864-65 as a churching path to the old church of Perivale (ahead).**

Cross the River Brent, and pass a former church on your right to emerge onto Perivale Lane. Turn left and immediately turn right onto Old Church Lane, and follow it to the A40.

**To the right, beyond the bridge, there is a chain pub attached to a budget hotel.**

Cross the A40 by the footbridge,, noting the strange crossover of pedestrian and cycle lanes, and after descending, advance to the corner of Horsenden Lane South. Turn left and follow the left-hand footway past a sports ground. Cross the road by the pedestrian crossing at Perivale station.

## Perivale to Greenford 2.8km

**69** Continue northwards on the right-hand footway of Horsenden Lane South to Bilton Road, then after crossing that road, continue along the right-hand footway of Horsenden Lane North. Just beyond a traffic squeeze-point, take a path on the right which leads down to the towpath of the Grand Union Canal.

This is the Paddington branch of the canal, which runs between the wharf next to the station and Bull's Bridge, near Hayes. On this section, the towpath has been surfaced, so there should be few problems for walkers from mud. On the other hand, the surface is optimal for the many arrogant cyclists who thunder along without giving prior notice and barely giving space for pedestrians.

**70** Turn left along the towpath, keeping to the left-hand edge (so that if anyone in a pedestrian/cyclist battle lands in the canal, it is more likely to be the cyclist) and pass beneath the road. Follow the towpath for 1km to pass beneath a footbridge, then take a path up to the left.

This is part of the Capital Ring, which is followed to Greenford Road: the waymarks may be of use.

**71** At the top, turn right to follow the Capital Ring. You will now be met by solid steel gates across the path. Pull the top handle of the left-hand gate upwards to release the catch, and pass through the gate, making sure that it is shut tight behind you. Repeat the process for a second steel gate a few metres farther ahead.

The reason for this new *matériel* which has been placed across the path is the establishment of a beaver colony, and the desire



*A40 footbridge, Perivale*



*Perivale station*





to keep the area inhabited by the beavers fixed. So please, by all means hold a gate for another biped walker, but slam the gate shut if you see a beaver approaching.

The path passes beneath Green Park Way (through another pair of beaver-proof gates) and comes out onto the junction of Greenford Road and Rockware Avenue. Cross Rockware Avenue using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, then continue along the left-hand footway of



Greenford Road beneath the railway and on to the next junction.

Cross Greenford Road using the pedestrian crossing and continue onto Uneeda Drive (named after the biscuits which were made between 1898 and 2009). Follow its right-hand footway to the end of the street, where turn right onto Oldfield Lane North. Follow the right-hand footway, crossing Oldfield Road North by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing to reach the entrance to Greenford station.

There is a cluster of shops on Oldfield Lane North, including convenience shops, a Polish delicatessen, and a café.

Greenford station is nominally served by trains to West Ealing as well as the Central Line trains,

*Top — Faroese (?) barge on the Grand Union Canal to the west of Horsenden Lane North*

*Above — the Greenford beaver habitat, Paradise Fields*

but the trains may have been replaced by a rail replacement bus service.

Greenford today is big on distribution, but it was in the past the birthplace of the organic chemical industry. In 1856, William Perkin created the first aniline dye in a factory by the Grand Union Canal. Later, glassworks and other industry reached the area (hence the street named Rockware Avenue). It was also a key site of J Lyons, first for the tea and coffee business, then diversifying as Lyons' business did (creating the first commercial computer on the way). The local infrastructure of canal and railway was central to the decision by so many companies to locate in Greenford.

The Who played their first concert under that name in a Greenford pub; a former resident of the area was Freddie Frinton (1909-68), a music-hall comic whose star may have dimmed in Britain, but who remains a posthumous stalwart of New Year television in



Germany and throughout the Nordic and Baltic lands with his *Dinner for One* film routine (1963, with May Warden).

## Greenford to Northolt 3.2km

**72** Pass beneath the railway and follow the left-hand footway of Oldfield Lane North. Cross Ockham Drive and then Auriol Drive most carefully: they are both extremely busy junctions. to the canal, and descend to the towpath. Pass on the left a builder's merchant business, noting on the brick wall the blue plaque commemorating William Perkin. Where a metal barrier appears on the left-hand side of the footway, ease left to keep that barrier on your right. Pass the mortal remains of the former Black Horse pub, then bend left to reach the canal towpath. Turn left and follow the towpath westwards to pass beneath the railway.

**73** Press on ahead on the towpath, rounding a left-hand bend, to reach a footbridge. Cross the canal by the bridge and continue ahead to cross Rowdell Road. Take a path (of crushed stone, so choose your footwear wisely after rain or ahead along the right-hand edge of Belvue Park. Where a path comes in from the right, swing to the left, still on the crushed-stone path, then swing right with the path to come to a church on your right.

Turn right to enter the churchyard, and turn left at the church doorway. Make your way down the path (which has crazy paving, is uneven, and may be slippery) to reach the bottom of the churchyard. Leave the churchyard and bear left along the access road.

Cross a tiny valley and turn right onto Ealing Road, passing a pub on your left. Follow the right-hand footway of Ealing Road as far as the junction with Mandeville Road (with the clock tower over to your left), where turn right and follow the right-hand footway. Cross the road to reach the entrance to Northolt station by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

Just before you reach Mandeville Road, there is a parade of shops with convenience shops, a café, and a Polish restaurant.



*The Grand Union Canal approaches the railway bridge between Greenford and Northolt stations*



*Belvue Park, Northolt*





*Left — Northolt church*



*Right — Northolt clock*

The “rustic” clocktower at the junction of Ealing Road and Mandeville Road was erected to commemorate the coronation of King George VI in 1937.

## Northolt to South Ruislip 3.1km

**74** If you are arriving at Northolt station at the start of the day’s walk, turn left at the station exit. Continue northwards on the left-hand footway of Mandeville Road and turn left onto Eastcote Lane North. Pass the large leisure centre on the left, then follow the left-hand footway for a further 1.5km, passing beneath the railway (Chiltern Line) to reach the junction with Victoria Road at a roundabout, the street-name having changed to Field End Road at the borough boundary.

To your right on Victoria Road, there is a convenience shop and a café for breakfasts and lunches.

**75** Turn left onto Victoria Road, and cross to the right-hand footway at a pedestrian crossing. Follow the right-hand footway all the way to Long Drive.

If you are unfortunate enough to be walking this route when Queensmead School is either inhaling or exhaling pupils, just stay on the left-hand footway.

If need be, cross to the left-hand footway of Victoria Road, then cross Long Drive, by a sequence of light-controlled pedestrian crossings. Turn left to follow Long Drive's right-hand footway, passing beneath the railway, to reach the entrance to South Ruislip station.

There are shops around the junction of Victoria Road and Long Drive: on Long Drive, there is a café, a convenience shop, and a pub, with further convenience shops beyond the station.

South Ruislip station is served by Chiltern Railways services between High Wycombe and Marylebone, as well as the trains on the Central Line.

## South Ruislip to Ruislip Gardens

1.4km

**76** Continue westwards on Station Approach (that is to say, turning right if exiting South Ruislip station) to come out onto West End Lane, where turn right.

**77** Follow the right-hand footway of West End Lane for 1km, passing the entrance to RAF Northolt on your left and continuing as far as Ruislip Gardens station on your right.

Ruislip Gardens is served only by the Central Line: the Chiltern Line by-passes the station.

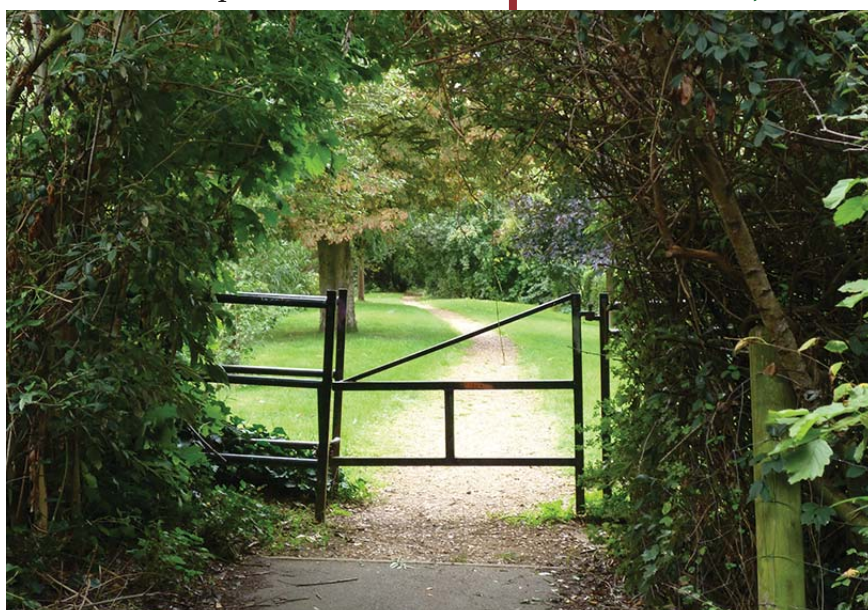
## Ruislip Gardens to West Ruislip

3.4km

**78** Just beyond the entrance to Ruislip Gardens station (turning right if exiting the station), turn left to cross West End Lane by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and then turn right to cross Yeading Brook. Turn left onto a path announcing Stafford Road Open Space.

Do not turn left onto Bedford Road which lies ahead. Yeading Brook will be flowing directly on your left.

Look out for waterfowl on the brook, ranging from the



*Entry into Stafford Road  
Open Space from West End  
Lane at Ruislip Gardens*



common mallards to the white flash of a little egret. Overhead, hedgerow birds take seeds and insects, and raptors forage for the small mammals which live (and sometimes die) on the rough ground.

Paths branch off, but just keep as close to the bank of the brook as you can. The path is partly semi-hardened and partly unmade, and it can become quite muddy. Over to your left, the various residential and operational buildings of RAF Northolt fill the view.

Eventually, these buildings peter out. About 1.2km from the point where you left West End Road, you will come to an old gate on the left, with fallen trees and other entangling vegetation in front of it.

This used to be an emergency access route onto the base, as you might infer from the straight-line path coming in from your right. In former days, the bridge gave access to Hill Farm, the site of which has been obliterated by the airfield. There is a footpath which goes

off to the right at this point, identified on the signpost as footpath R201. This was the Hill Farm access road, and indeed it is still marked as Hill Farm Lane on some maps.

After rain or snowmelt, parts of the path ahead may become waterlogged. By turning right at this point to follow Hill Farm Lane, you may have a slightly drier route to Austin's Lane — the track includes a swing to the left, finally emerging on the main route and turning right to reach Austin's Lane.

The main route continues ahead from the path junction. After you cross a footbridge and go through a metal barrier, you will come out onto a meadow at a wooden gate. This is where you are most likely to encounter standing water after rain. Here, the path veers slightly away from the river bank, but rejoins it at another gate, next to a footpath sign, with an information board nearby.

Go through the gate and turn right to join the Hillingdon

*Below — access path  
beside Yeading Brook,  
Stafford Road Open Space*

*Bottom — open land of  
Ickenham Marsh to the right  
of the route*





Trail — details are linked at <https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/walking> — on its way towards Ruislip and Harefield. Do not carry straight on along the Hillingdon Trail ahead (towards Yeading and Cranford), or else you will end up by the A40.

**79** The path leads out onto an enclosed track, and on (past the end of Hill Farm Lane on your right) to a road at the bend of Austin's Lane and Glebe Avenue.

Press ahead along Austin's Lane to the end of the houses on the left-hand footway, then cross to the right-hand side of the road for the section of Austin's Lane without a footway. On the left, as you rise towards the railway bridge, you will see a gate which leads into a small park with a children's playground. Continue along Austin's Lane to reach High Road at a pub.

Turn right to follow the right-hand footway of High Road as it rises onto the railway bridge at West Ruislip station.

There is a small supermarket on the other side of High Road on the approach to the station.

This is the western end of the Central Line's backbone route. In the 1930s, there were plans to extend the line to Denham, but something happened in 1939 which first put these plans on hold, and then sank them completely. In hindsight, although this could have been very useful (there was enough land for what could have become a parkway station just off the M40, where the golf course is now), the challenge of widening the Colne viaduct, or of providing a parallel bridge, would probably have made the costs prohibitive.

The station was opened in 1906 as by the Great Western and Great Central Joint Railway ; Underground services arrived in 1947. The current entrance to the station was constructed during the 1960s for British Railways and is thus different in style from the Central Line stations.



*Junction with the Hillingdon Trail, Ickenham Marsh*

*West Ruislip station*







# The Hainault Loop — Woodford to Leytonstone via Fairlop

20.2km; 4hr 14min  
127m ascent

## Introduction

**1** In 1903, the Great Eastern Railway Company (later folded into the London and North Eastern Railway) built a line between existing lines at Ilford and Woodford to provide the means to run a loop service out of Liverpool Street via Stratford, Ilford, Newbury Park, Woodford, Leytonstone and Stratford. As part of the New Works Programme of the 1930s, London Underground proposed to make the loop from Leytonstone with a tunnel between there and Newbury Park, and took over the line in 1949. The line between Ilford and Newbury Park was taken up to leave what we know as the Hainault Loop (previously known as the Fairlop Loop). The section between Woodford and Hainault is now almost exclusively a shuttle service less frequent than over the rest of the line.

## Route

### Woodford to Roding Valley 1.5km

**2** On exiting Woodford station, turn right and take the underpass beneath the tracks to emerge onto Snakes Lane East.

There are shops here, including convenience shops and a café, with the general local accent on Romanian and other central European goods.

Turn right past the shops, then turn left onto Hillside Avenue, using its left-hand footway.

There is a toilet block on Hillside Avenue, but the facility has been closed for some time.

**3** Follow Hillside Avenue until it bends right and becomes Buckhurst Way.

Hillside Avenue runs in a straight line, with a series of short cul-de-sac roads paired on each side, many named as a single word ending in “-way”. At the south end, these roads pass between





*Early morning wildlife,  
Cherry Tree Rise*

houses to reach a “second layer” of dwellings, but beyond Courtway/Greenway, the houses on the side streets are, in conventional fashion, built on each side and at the end. The pairings continue, and just when you feel that the list of paired “-ways” will run out, they do. The final pairing is the unimaginative Crossway and (not on a ridge) Ridgeway, with the final Grangeway being left unpaired.

At the bend, turn left onto Cherry Tree Rise, which soon bends right: the Hainault Loop

runs behind the houses on the left. Just before you would reach a parade of shops, turn left onto Station Approach to reach the southern entrance to Roding Valley station.

## Roding Valley to Chigwell 2.9km

**4** Use the footbridge to cross the line (there are no ticketing gates, just card validation machines) and continue out onto Station Way.

There is a convenience shop at each end of this parade, which has businesses more useful to the walker than the hairdressing, therapies and guns on Cherry Tree Rise. There is also a pub at the foot of the road.

*Roding Valley station*



Descend Station Way and turn left at the pub. Immediately, turn right onto Chestnut Avenue. Continue ahead at the next junction, onto Hornbeam Road. Where Hornbeam Road swings to the left, turn right onto a path, Squirrels Lane. Pass to the right of a sports pavilion and a rugby pitch to reach the River Roding.

At the bottom corner of the field, take the path which leads round to the right beneath the railway viaduct, and then take the footbridge over the River Roding. Turn left onto a rough

lane. After 200m, go through a traffic barrier and pass a row of houses on your right.

Traffic is much heavier here, thanks to the presence of a large waste facility on the left-hand side of the road.

The road (Luxborough Lane) is hemmed in by tall fences. Rise to cross the bridge over the M11.

**5** Continue up the road to reach the A113. Turn left along the busy main road, being sure to keep to its left-hand footway.

With some exceptions, the houses along High Road tend to be without particular architectural merit, the population preferring ostentation to substance, and luxuriating in closed gates in preference to providing warm and welcoming entrances.

The road descends, passing a garden centre on the left and a golf clubhouse on the right. Continue along the left-hand footway of High Road, now walking uphill, with similar housing re-appearing, first on the right, and then also on the left.

On the right, frontages have colonised the area where the footway should be (these colonised zones are the main reason why you should remain on the left-hand side of High Road).

Eventually, you will come to Chigwell station, over on your right. Cross the road using the pedestrian crossing which lies just beyond the station building.

Farther along High Road, there is a parade of shops, with a convenience shop and a café amongst the other businesses which need not detain us.

*Top — River Roding*

*Middle — Chigwell station*

*Bottom — Chigwell seen from the approach to Grange Hill*







*View ahead just before the  
“cemetery turn” on the  
approach to Grange Hill*

## **Chigwell to Grange Hill**

**1.8km**

**6** Turn left off the pedestrian crossing (or turn right if exiting Chigwell station), then turn right at the mini-roundabout just ahead. Advance along the full length of Station Road, using the right-hand footway (there is only one). Cross Hainault Road ahead and turn right to follow its left-hand footway over the railway bridge to its junction with The Chase.

Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of The Chase (which soon becomes Lechmere Avenue). Turn left into Hycliffe Gardens, and follow its left-hand footway to its merger with Dacre Gardens. At this point, between the two low-level street signs, turn left down a path which leads to the Central Line.

**7** Cross the railway and turn right onto a path which bends left to follow the perimeter of a cemetery on the right. At the far end of the cemetery, turn right to follow another path out onto Manor Road at a kissing-gate. Turn right, crossing to the left-hand footway at a suitable location to reach Grange Hill station.

## **Grange Hill to Hainault**

**1.7km**

**8** Continue along the left-hand footway of Manor Road (or turn left onto Manor Road if exiting Grange Hill station).

There is a parade of shops here, which contains a convenience shop and cafés. Note that there is no shop on the route for over 7km until you reach a convenience shop at Newbury Park station.

Follow Manor Road to the junction with Millwell Crescent, where turn left.

Look ahead — the far horizon is actually the ridge of the North Downs, between Otford and Wrotham, about 35km distant.

Follow the left-hand footway of Millwell Crescent to the bend in the road. Immediately after taking the bend, turn left onto a footpath. Cross over View Close to reach High Meadows, where turn right to follow the right-hand footway out to Copperfield, where turn left.

**9** Follow the left-hand footway of Copperfield for about 400m, passing both ends of a crescent called Trotwood, to reach the junction with Southdale (just before the main line of Copperfields bends to the right. Turn left onto Southdale, then immediately turn right onto a path which



*Exuberant vegetation,  
Thurlow Gardens*

leads to Thurlow Gardens. Follow the left-hand footway of Thurlow Gardens to its end on New North Road.

Turn left to pass beneath the railway. Cross New North Road by a light-controlled pedestrian crossing and turn right. The entrance to Hainault station is ahead.

*There is a convenience shop at the crossing.*

## Hainault to Fairlop

**1.9km**

**10** If you are exiting Hainault station, turn right onto New North Road and pass beneath the railway. Immediately beyond the bicycle storage facility, you will come parallel with the light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

Pass to the left of the bicycle storage facility onto a footpath which leads out to Davids Way. Follow Davids Way, choosing the left-hand footway when it appears, to its end at Walden Way, where cross the road ahead and turn left to follow its right-hand footway to its end at Inverness Drive, where turn right to reach the end of the road.

Turn right onto a path which keeps to the left of the fence bounding the property of 48 Inverness Drive. After 20m, turn left onto a path which passes between sportsfields and then makes its way as a road (sometimes adequately made up) through an industrial estate to reach Forest Road.

**11** Turn right along the right-hand footway of Forest Road, keeping ahead at a mini-roundabout, to pass beneath the railway, with Fairlop station on the right.





*Top — the diminutive Fairlop station*

*Above — Do not be fooled by the placid entrance to Footpath 85 — there is jungle ahead*

## Fairlop to Barkingside

1.3km

**12** Cross Forest Road by the pedestrian crossing at the entrance to Fairlop station, and turn right to follow the left-hand footway of Forest Road all the way to Fulwell Cross.

There is a chain pub across the roundabout to your right, but there is little else in the way of provisions here.

**13** Just before you reach the roundabout at Fulwell Cross, turn left onto Starch House Lane. Where the road turns right onto Virginia Gardens, you will see Footpath 85 ahead, heading for Barkingside.

This grassy footpath looks inviting enough, but it soon degenerates into a tangle of nettles, brambles and briars. It is really only suitable for single-minded path completists.

The pragmatist will turn right to follow Virginia Gardens out to the next crossroads, at Craven Gardens.

Over to your right, you will see a brick wall with a church behind it. The wall encompassed Barkingside Village, which became the first homing facility for girls within the ambit of Dr Barnardo's children's charity organisation. The Village was set up in 1873, and the charity is still headquartered on the site.

Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of Craven Gardens to its junction with Carlton Drive, where turn left and advance to a mini-roundabout at an Underground roundel sign.

The right-hand option ahead is the access road for Barkingside station.

## Barkingside to Newbury Park

2.1km

**14** From the end of the access road to Barkingside station, take the left-hand option ahead (or turn sharp right at the mini-roundabout on exiting Barkingside station) onto Station Road, and rise to cross the railway. Continue ahead onto a path where the road ends.

Where the woodland on the right comes to an end, and a sign on the left indicates a route to Fairlop, turn right onto a dirt path which leads to Aldborough Hatch Farm. Bear right to the corner of Oaks Lane, then follow the left-hand footway of Oaks Lane to the right (west).

**15** Take the bend to the left at the masjid, and continue along the left-hand footway of Oaks Lane. At the *No Entry* sign, keep ahead to the left of the hedge, thus being shielded from a large school on the right, to reach the junction with Crownfield Avenue. Turn right to follow the right-hand footway of Crownfield Avenue through its left-hand bend to reach Eastern Avenue. Turn right to follow its right-hand footway to Newbury Park station.

Newbury Park station was opened in 1903 by the Great Eastern Railway Company, and was on that company's loop line out of Stratford via Ilford and Woodford. Tube services began in 1949 with the opening of service through the Gants Hill tunnel. The striking bus shelter, designed by Oliver Hill and now a Grade II listed structure, opened in 1949, following the demolition of the old station building as part of the Eastern Avenue works.

## Newbury Park to Gants Hill

### 1.7km

**16** Continue along the right-hand footway of Eastern Avenue, turning right if exiting the station (Tube or bus). At King George Avenue, there is the promise of a supermarket. Ignore it: the shop is 800m away (and 800m back again). Cross King George Avenue and follow Eastern Avenue for 300m to reach a petrol station, just beyond a hotel.

The petrol station is furnished with the usual mini-supermarket: this is the first opportunity to replenish stocks without deviating from the route since Grange Hill, more than 7km distant. The next useful shop is at Gants Hill, 1.4km ahead.



*Top — Barkingside village*

*Above — Approach  
to Aldborough  
from Barkingside*





*Newbury Park station*

*Gants Hill station, with the giant fly-swatter behind*

**17** Continue on the right-hand footway of Eastern Avenue all the way to the Gants Hill roundabout.

Note that the use of the term “hill” here applies a good portion of hyperbole.



The through route, and the route taken if you are breaking your journey at Gants Hill station, is to use the labyrinth of underpasses. Descend the ramp, and turn left. Turn right to reach the entrance to the station at the ticketing gates on your left.

As well as the Underground services, Gants Hill station is a stop on the SL2 express bus service between Walthamstow Central and North Woolwich Pier Head

There are shops here, and your choice of visiting any of them may influence your route through the roundabout. There is a coffee stall in the station below ground level, and underpasses in all directions. There is a small supermarket on the southwest corner, between Cranbrook Road towards Ilford and Eastern Avenue towards Redbridge, and an underpass which leads onto that corner. There is a convenience shop, selling East European goods, at the north-western corner, between Woodford Avenue towards South Woodford and Eastern Avenue towards Redbridge. The entire roundabout is ringed by light-controlled pedestrian crossings at street level. Just make sure that you end up on Eastern Avenue westbound.

## Gants Hill to Redbridge

1.4km

**18** If you are exiting Gants Hill station, turn left on exiting the ticketing gates, and turn left again. At the end of the corridor, turn left, then turn right to ascend the ramp. Continue ahead up the stairs to reach the left-hand footway of Eastern Avenue. There is a prominent fast-food outlet ahead on your left.

If you find, once you have reached street level out of the Gants Hill underground labyrinth and started out on the left-hand footway, that, just beyond the end of the shops, you reach a church with a green copper spire, turn left onto Ethelbert Gardens (keeping the church on your right). Take the right-hand bend and follow the left-hand footway of Ethelbert Gardens to its end at Beehive Lane (with a convenience shop on the right). Turn left along the left-hand footway of Beehive Lane to reach Eastern Avenue. Turn right and cross Beehive Lane by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, then turn left to cross Eastern Avenue by the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Turn right onto the left-hand footway of Eastern Avenue to regain the route towards Redbridge.

Follow Eastern Avenue westwards as far as Beehive Lane. If you have been following the right-hand footway, cross to the left-hand footway using the refuge to cross Beehive Lane and the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing to cross Eastern Avenue.

**19** Continue along the left-hand footway of Eastern Avenue across, among other streets, Beehive Lane, to reach Redbridge station over to your right, which is reached by an underpass.

There is a petrol station at the underpass entrance, with the usual mini-supermarket.

The tunnels between Gants Hill and Redbridge were used as an underground munitions factory during the Second World War, while work on the Central Line extension was suspended. For details of the wartime history of the factory, you may visit

<https://www.guardian-series.co.uk/news/10935598.history-secret-factory-underground/>

(other histories are available).

Redbridge station is on the north side of Eastern Avenue, accessible from the south side by an underpass. If you have been walking on the right-hand footway, or have joined the route at the station, pass through the underpass: from the left-hand footway, descending the ramp just beyond the bus stop.





*North Circular Road bridge*

## Redbridge to Wanstead 1.4km

**20** Follow the path from the south side of Eastern Avenue to pass beneath the eastern side of the roundabout (following signs for Wanstead), then pass beneath both carriageways of the North Circular Road.

Turn left (following a sign for Wanstead Leisure Centre) to pass beneath the western side of the roundabout, then turn

right. Cross over the end of Royston Gardens to reach the level of Eastern Avenue. Regain the left-hand footway of Eastern Avenue and follow it over the River Roding.

Cross over the end of Redbridge Lane West and follow the left-hand footway of Eastern Avenue past a gas management installation on your left. Just before you come to a large road sign which lists the restrictions on using the A12 tunnel ahead, turn left down a flight of steps, and continue along a path to reach River Close. At the junction, cross over the end of Corbett Road, and follow the right-hand footway of Redbridge Lane West, keeping a school on your left through a junction, to reach the junction with Drummond Road.

*Horse trough, Wanstead*



**21** Turn right onto Drummond Road, and follow the left-hand footway to the junction with Chester Road, where turn left to the left-hand footway. At the end of the road, turn right onto Mansfield Road and follow its left-hand footway to Harrier Avenue, where turn left to reach the entrance to Wanstead station.

If you are looking for a shop, café, restaurant or pub, you will find such on High Street, across Harrier Avenue to your right.

## Wanstead to Leytonstone 2.5km

**22** From the station, cross the street called The Green and turn half-left, keeping the trough on your right, to take a diagonal path across George Green to Draycott Road.





Bear right at the junction onto Felstead Road, and follow its left-hand footway to Blake Hall Road, where turn left.

Follow the left-hand footway to the junction with Bush Road. Turn right to cross Blake Hall Road by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, then turn left to cross Bush Road. Turn right along the verge.

Immediately, turn half-left on a path. Pass a building on your left, then join a path which comes in from your right. At a major path crossing, turn right to follow the broad path westwards. When you reach a tarmac path, turn right and follow it out to reach the street named Bushwood. Cross the road and take the right-hand footway of Leybourne Road ahead.

**23** At Stanmore Road, make a quick left-and-right double turn to



*Top — George Green, Wanstead*

*Middle — Epping Forest, west of Blake Hall Road*

*Bottom — Leytonstone station*



reach Barclay Road. Follow the right-hand footway to its end. Turn right onto Leytonstone High Road, crossing to the left-hand footway by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Continue over the end of Burghley Road, then turn left onto Church Lane, following its left-hand footway to reach the entrance to Leytonstone station across the road.

There is a pub on Leytonstone High Street, and there are shops, cafés and restaurants between there and the station.