

Walk the District Line



I G Liddell

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) 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:
Upminster Windmill

Walk the Underground

District Line

Start	Upminster station — RM14 2TD
Finish	Richmond station — TW9 7AA
Distance	54.4km
Duration	11 hours 05 minutes
Ascent	131m

Start	Edgware Road station — NW1 5DH
Finish	Earl's Court station — SW5 9AA
Distance	5.4km
Duration	1 hour 05 minutes
Ascent	14m

Start	Earl's Court station — SW5 9AA
Finish	Kensington Olympia station — W14 0NE
Distance	1.7km
Duration	20 minutes
Ascent	0m

Start	Earl's Court station — SW7 9AA
Finish	Wimbledon station — SW19 7NL
Distance	11.1km
Duration	2 hours 19 minutes
Ascent	64m

Start	Turnham Green station — W4 1QN
Finish	Ealing Broadway station — W5 2NU
Distance	5.4km
Duration	1 hour 08 minutes
Ascent	30m

Introduction

The Metropolitan District Railway opened in 1868 between South Kensington and Westminster, and sundry extensions and branches soon followed. Some of these extensions came into being by taking on services which shared the tracks. For a short time, services operated west of Ealing Broadway on Great Western Railway tracks to Windsor via West Drayton, but that service was not economically viable (or was made so by the Great Western Railway) and was soon cut back. Between 1910 and 1939, summertime services ran to Southend-on-Sea.

Current branches off the spinal (Upminster to Richmond) line are

- Edgware Road to Earls Court (see page 59)
- Earl's Court to Wimbledon (see page 64)
- Earl's Court to Kensington Olympia (see page 77)
- Turnham Green to Ealing Broadway (see page 81)

*Upminster station —
main entrance*





*Upminster station —
original building*

Upminster to Richmond 54.3km; 11hr 04min 128m ascent

Introduction

1 Upminster station opened in 1885: the entrance beside Platform 1 uses the original station building. When electric services on the District Railway started in 1932, a new station entrance on the bridge was built: it has been subsequently remodelled into the architecturally negligible construction we see today.

Upminster station is at the eastern endpoint of the District Line. In fact, it is the easternmost station on the entire Underground network.

Route

Upminster to Upminster Bridge 1.3km

2 Upminster station forms a link with the rest of the railway network to the east, but is the end of the DC electric line as used by the Underground.



Central Upminster

The station is also served by c2c services between Southend and London: you are often able to gain a few minutes by changing between the Underground and a c2c service at Barking or (particularly, given the Jubilee Line connection) at West Ham. Oystercards are also valid on c2c services between London and Upminster. There are Overground services on the short Liberty Line which links with Romford. There are toilets (and ticketing gates) on Platform 1, with a café outside

the ticketing gates.

All facilities are available in the centre of Upminster: most are situated on Station Road to the south of the railway.

Leave Upminster station by climbing the steps and exiting ahead onto the bridge (that is, not the subsidiary, but original, exit directly off Platform 1 at platform level), turning left along Station Road.

Look back (if you must) at the station entrance, which seems to date from the nadir of British Rail station design — it contrives to make West Ruislip look like high art.

Upminster windmill



Follow the left-hand footway of Station Road to reach the junction with Howard Road. Cross Station Road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and follow the right-hand footway of Branfill Road ahead. At the end of the street, turn left onto Champion Road, still following the right-hand footway. Turn right onto Highview Gardens, then turn left onto Cranbourne Gardens, all the time using the right-hand footway. At the end of Cranbourne Gardens, turn right onto St Mary's Lane to reach Windmill Field on your right.

Upminster Windmill, built in 1803 and operated commercially until 1934, is listed Grade II*: it may be seen on your right.

3 Continue along St Mary's Lane as it descends to the valley of the Ingre Bourne.

There is a pub on the right just beyond the bridge over the river.

Pass beneath the railway to reach Upminster Bridge station on your left, crossing to the station

using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

Upminster Bridge station was opened in 1934. It contains Art Deco features, including a swastika-like mosaic pattern on the floor of the entrance hall). It is built in brick to a design by William Henry Hamlyn (1889-1968), the in-house architect of the London Midland and Scottish Railway Company, whose work includes the Queen's Hotel at Leeds City station.



There is a long-established traditional breakfast-and-lunch café at the western end of the parade of shops next to the station, and a convenience shop on the other side of the road.

Upminster Bridge to Hornchurch 1.5km

4 Pass the shops on your left and turn left onto the left-hand footway of Highfield Crescent. Follow the street through two half-right turns. Where the main street makes a 90° turn to the right, continue ahead on Highfield Way, at the end of which take a path out onto Hacton Lane.

Turn left onto the left-hand footway of Hacton Lane, crossing to its right-hand footway at a refuge. Turn right onto Ravenscourt Grove at a mini-roundabout.

5 Follow the left-hand footway of Ravenscourt Grove to its end at Station Lane. Turn left, and follow the left-hand footway of Station Lane to Hornchurch station, crossing to the right-hand footway at a light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

There is a café and a pub (with rooms) on Station Lane before you reach the station, and a café, a convenience shop and a small supermarket beyond the railway.

Hornchurch station was opened in 1885, and the station was rebuilt in 1932 as part of the programme which created Upminster Bridge station.



Taxi office (and, it appears, part-time litter bin) next to Hornchurch station



*Bungalows to infinity
on Randall Drive*

The quaint building next to the station (pictured) is a taxi office but, to judge from the warning notices, the gap between brick wall and windows is considered by the locals as a litter bin.

Hornchurch to Elm Park 2.0km

6 Continue over the railway (turning right if exiting Hornchurch station), where the street-name becomes Suttons Lane. Follow the right-hand footway of Suttons Lane as far as Randall Drive, where turn right. Follow the right-hand footway of Randall Drive (a street which consists mainly of bungalows) to reach its junction with Hunter Drive and Lancaster Drive.

7 Turn right onto Lancaster Drive and follow its right-hand footway to its crossing with Farm Way. Turn right along Farm Way, then turn right onto South End Road. Cross South End Road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and continue ahead onto Maylands Avenue.

Follow the right-hand footway to reach a mini-roundabout. Turn right onto Broadway, crossing to the left-hand footway at the pedestrian crossing.

There is a small supermarket on the parade of shops down to your left.

Follow the left-hand footway of Broadway up to the railway bridge at Elm Park station.

Elm Park station was opened in 1935, the last station to be built on the District Line's eastern extension to Upminster, opening as a result of housing developments in the area.

Elm Park to Dagenham East 3.9km

8 Continue along Broadway (or, if you are exiting the station, turn left onto Broadway) and descend to a roundabout.

There are shops on both sides of the road here, including a traditional breakfast/lunch café on your left near the station. There is a small supermarket and a coffee shop on the roundabout on the far side of Broadway Parade.

Notice the history of the building which houses a pharmacy on the south-eastern corner of the roundabout: the 1930s building

was formerly a branch of Grays Co-operative Society.

Continue northwards from the roundabout, using the left-hand footway of St Nicholas Avenue to its far end, where cross Warren Drive and take a path ahead into Harrow Lodge Park.

Turn half-left to take a path to the left-hand edge of the lake. From the corner of the lake, bear off to the left on a grass path, aiming for a bench and a bin. Just before you reach the bench and bin, turn right on a grass path and make your way through the trees. Beyond the trees, bear left to reach and cross Upper Rainham Road at the right-hand edge of the park, next to some houses on your right.

9 Take a right turn, then immediately turn left at a footpath sign onto a lane known as The Chase. Continue along the road across the River Rom and past a riding school on the right.

Continue ahead on a path, passing a small cemetery on the right. On emerging from the tree-lined section of the path, turn left to enter Eastbrookend Country Park and turn right to follow a crushed-stone path.

This path eases left, and then right, to reach a play area with the Visitor Centre behind it. Keep the play area on your right to reach a crossing path.

Eastbrookend Country Park was created in 1995 after the clearance of derelict land and the planting of 50000 trees: it measures 84ha. There is a fishing lake, and a Discovery Centre in the Visitor Centre.

The visitor centre on your right contains toilets and a café.



*Path through the trees
Harrow Lodge Park*



Eastbrookend Country Park

Left — entry at The Chase

*Right — The first ripe
blackberries of the season*



10 Turn left to follow the path (signposted *Beam Valley Country Park*) southwards, passing Bardag Lake on your left, then bend round to the right. Pass another lake on the right to reach a path junction at an information board describing *Tom Thumb*. Turn left and follow a straight path southwards to meet a crossing path, where turn right.

Continue westwards from this path junction, passing a sports ground (with high-security entrances) on your right. Follow the path out, with industrial and educational premises on your left, to reach Rainham Road.

There are convenience shops to your right, and there is a chain pub to your left, as you enter Rainham Road.

Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of Rainham Road, crossing to the right-hand footway by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Rise to cross the railway at the entrance, on your right, to Dagenham East station.

Dagenham East station was opened (as *Dagenham*) in 1885 as a mainline station between Barking and Upminster. The station was rebuilt in 1932 as part of the programme to upgrade stations and to create new ones on the District Line.

Dagenham East to Dagenham Heathway

1.7km

11 Continue ahead (or turn right if exiting the station) and descend from the bridge. Cross Shafter Road and pass a parade of shops.

There is a convenience shop here.

Turn right onto Dewey Road and follow its left-hand footway. Where the road turns through 90° to the right, continue ahead on a path, passing allotment gardens on your right, to reach the corner where Exeter Road meets Blackborne Road. Continue ahead on the right-hand footway of Blackborne Road to its junction, on the left, with Harrison Road.

12 Continue westwards on the right-hand footway of Blackborne Road to its far end, and climb the steps to the Heathway shopping centre. Within the shopping centre, take a right-hand turn, then a left-hand turn, to reach Heathway. Turn right, and cross to the station entrance.

If the shopping centre is closed, follow the path to your left which leads out onto Church Elm Road. Turn right onto Church Elm Road, and follow it to the junction with Heathway. Turn right to rise to the railway bridge at Dagenham Heathway station.

There are shops and cafés on each side of Heathway and, of course, in the shopping centre.

Dagenham Heathway station was opened in 1932 to serve the rapidly increasing population in the area, primarily fuelled by the creation of the Becontree estate.

Dagenham Heathway to Becontree 2.0km

13 Continue ahead (or turn left if exiting Dagenham Heathway station) to reach Parsloes Avenue, where turn left. Follow the left-hand footway of Parsloes Avenue to its junction with Meadow Road, where bear half-left to cross the grass to the corner of a church's high-security fence (whether to keep the congregation from escaping or to keep out those whom the congregation would presumably term lesser mortals, we cannot be certain).

Continue across Parsloes Park on grass paths in a westerly direction, aiming to the right of sports buildings. Cross the access road to the sports centre at the left-hand edge of its car park.

14 Bear half-right along a fence-line on your left, passing some all-weather pitches to reach a lake on your right. Turn left, then follow the path round to the right, keeping the lake on your right. At the next corner of the lake, continue ahead westwards, and turn left to exit the park at the junction of Rugby Road and Gale Street.

Turn half-left onto Gale Street and follow its right-hand footway onto the railway bridge at Becontree station.

To the north lies the vast estate of Becontree, which was built by the then London County Council between 1921 and 1937. The population of the estate when completed was over 115000; it is the largest public housing development in the world.

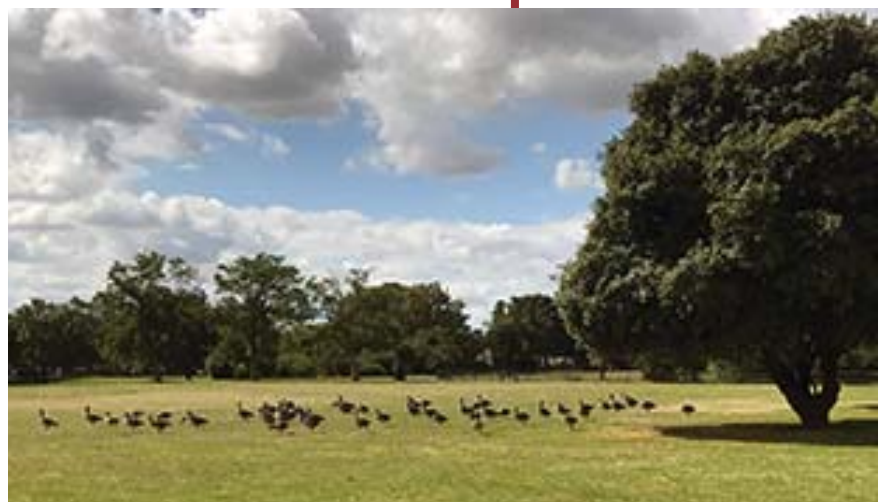
Becontree station was constructed as part of the upgrade/expansion of stations on the eastern part of the District Line during the early 1930s.

Becontree to Upney 2.3km

15 Continue off the bridge (turning right if exiting the station) and pass some shops to reach some steps, where turn right to descend to Sheppey Road.

There is a café on the left opposite the staircase, and a small supermarket beyond on the left.

*Goose parliament,
Parsloes Park*





*Mayesbrook Park —
the lakeside path*

Follow Sheppey Road for about 370m, and turn right onto a path which leads across the railway by a footbridge onto Rugby Road, where turn left. Follow Rugby Road out to its end at the junction with Lodge Avenue, and turn right along the right-hand footway.

16 Cross Lodge Avenue using a light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

To the right, on Lodge Avenue, there are shops, including a small supermarket.

Turn left along the right-hand footway, then enter Mayesbrook Park with a car park on your right. Bear left to descend and pick up a lakeside path with the water on your left. Bear left at a path junction to keep close to the lake.

At a canoe clubhouse, transfer your attention to the lake on your right, and follow it to a right-hand bend. Take a half-left turn to follow a path to the western edge of the park. Cross the Mayes Brook and exit the park.

Mayesbrook Park is an important green lung for the area as Becontree shades into East Barking. The lakes encourage a variety of wildlife, and offer a range of activities.

From the park gates, walk on straight ahead, and follow The Drive to the end of the street on Upney Lane. At first, the footways are hidden behind kerbside foliage, but you will find the left-hand footway without trouble.

Upney station is on the bridge, up to your left, where you should cross the road by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

*Mayesbrook Park —
the north lake*



There is a convenience shop on the left just before the end, round on Edgefield Avenue, and there is also a fish and chip shop on Rugby Road.

Upney station dates from the eastbound expansion of stations on the District Line during the 1930s.

Upney to Barking 1.8km

17 If you are joining the route at Upney station, turn right on exit and follow the right-hand footway of Upney Lane to reach a staircase on your right. Descend, and follow the path out to a street. Turn left, then turn right to reach the junction at the corner of Lambourne Road.

Keep to the right-hand footway to follow Lambourne Road, turning left with the road to reach Ripple Road, where turn right. Pass some shops, and keep to the right where Ripple Road ascends to cross the railway. Cross the end of Suffolk Road to reach the end of Essex Road, where turn right.

18 Follow the right-hand footway of Essex Road, crossing the end of Suffolk Road. At the end of the street, turn right onto a path which crosses the railway by a footbridge and descends to Salisbury Avenue.



Front plot, Essex Road



Barking station

Follow the left-hand footway of Salisbury Avenue to its end at Station Parade. Turn left, then immediately cross Station Parade by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Turn left to reach Barking station.

All facilities may be found in the vicinity of the station.

Barking Manor was mentioned in a charter in 735CE, though Barking Abbey claims 666CE as the date of its foundation, just two years after the Synod of Whitby settled the calculation of Easter in favour of the Roman, rather than the Irish, model. The name derives from “the settlement of the followers of Bereca” ... or possibly from the more prosaic “settlement near birch trees”.

The fishing and farming which was the mainstay of the local economy gave way to market gardening and industry, the latter along the River Roding, with the coming of the railway. Most of the eels for the London pie and mash shops were landed at Barking — today, the eels all come from Denmark.

Barking has seen two vast changes in the past hundred years in terms of housing. The huge Becontree estate, built to house 115000 people, took land to the east of the town centre a hundred years ago, and today, modern high-rise flats cluster around the railway station to provide homes for commuters into London. Further change is inevitable.

Barking to East Ham

2.6km

Barking station was opened in 1854, one of the earliest stations of the London, Tilbury and Southend Railway Company, and the Underground arrived in 1908, when the station was redeveloped:

further changes were made in 1959. A more recent railway arrival for Barking has been the “new Silk Road” weekly freight service from Yiwu in China. The London end of the journey is at the DB Eurohub facility on the Rainham line east of Barking stati. The rail journey from Yiwu takes eighteen days to traverse Asia and Europe.

19 Take the right-hand footway of Station Parade (East Street) from Barking station (turning right onto the road if exiting the station), and follow it to the junction with Ripple Road.

Former Quaker burial ground, now a park





Barking gurdwara

Bear right to cross the pedestrianised junction and pick up the left-hand footway of London Road, passing a large supermarket on your left.

At the junction with North Street, turn right to cross London Road by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, then turn left to cross North Street in like manner. Turn right to follow the left-hand footway of North Street, crossing over Whiting Avenue and passing modern housing on your left. With the Barking Gurdwara on your right at the second junction with Whiting Avenue, pass into a small park and follow its right-hand edge to Gurdwara Way, the Barking Northern Relief Road

This little park was, in fact, a Quaker burial ground, and the simplicity of its history is carried through to today's park facility. The accompanying Friends' Meeting House was situated across the road, and the original seventeenth-century meeting house was rebuilt in Queen Anne style. That building has, since 1971, formed part of the gurdwara, the Queen Anne gables still obvious at the corner of North Street and Gurdwara Way.

Cross Gurdwara Way using the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and turn left along the right-hand footway. Take a path which descends onto Cowbridge Lane and continue ahead to the point where the roadway turns right through 90°. Take the bend, then turn left to pass a traffic barrier and follow a path ahead with a block of flats on your right. This path bends round to the right to reach a footbridge over the River Roding on your left.

The River Roding rises near Stansted airport and flows south through Essex, leaving that county definitively behind at the viaduct which takes the Hainault Loop of the Central Line over the valley and (despite the delusions of fantasy-address advocates) continues through two London boroughs, firstly Redbridge and then Barking and Dagenham. Finally, it flows into the River Thames having taken



Left — Downstream view of the River Roding from the footbridge



Right — former gasworks, viewed from above the North Circular Road

the name of Barking Creek for its tidal section which begins just to the south of the footbridge.

20 Cross the River Roding using the footbridge, and continue along a path which is bounded by industrial premises on each side to reach Hertford Road. Turn left, then double back to your right, onto the ramp of a footbridge by which you will cross the North Circular Road.

On the far side of the North Circular Road, take the right-hand footway of Watson Avenue, with the former gasworks fence on your right and, part-way along, a startling display of banana palms in the front garden of a house on the left, to its junction with Burges Road at a painted mini-roundabout.

Continue ahead along the right-hand footway of Burges Road to the junction with Bridge Street.

Left — Bananas, Watson Avenue



At this point, a convenience shop occupies one corner of the junction.

Continue ahead, all the way to High Street North. Turn right to reach East Ham station.

There are shops, cafés and a pub in the vicinity of the station.

East Ham to Upton Park 1.3km

21 Cross High Street North by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing at the station, and turn right to follow the left-hand footway as it descends from the railway bridge. Turn left onto Milton Avenue and follow its left-hand footway along its straight route all the way to its end at Katherine Road.

22 Cross Katherine Road, and take the left-hand footway of Elizabeth Road

ahead to its end at Grangewood Street, where turn right to the junction with Plashet Grove.

Turn left onto Park Road and follow its right-hand footway, with the railway on your left after you have taken the right-hand bend, all the way to Green Street, where turn left to reach a light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Cross the road to reach the entrance to Upton Park station.

There are many shops on Green Street in the vicinity of the station.

Upton Park to Plaistow

1.7km

23 Turn right onto Green Street, then turn left onto Harold Road. Follow Harold Road, which leads onto Terrace Road, to the junction with Stopford Road. Bear left, still on Terrace Road.

There are convenience shops amongst the businesses which line Terrace Road at this point.

24 Cross Terrace Road by the pedestrian crossing and turn left to reach the street corner. Cross over Pelly Road and turn left. Just before reaching the railway, turn right onto Lettson Path.

Continue with the railway wall to the left onto Libra Road, passing a redbrick surgery building on your right. Where Libra Road narrows to less than the width of a car, continue ahead to reach a block of new housing on the left, and the simple nineteenth-century Willow Lodge Cottage (which is listed Grade II) on the right.

Turn left in front of the new housing and ascend a staircase to reach Plaistow Road (the *i* is silent in *Plaistow*).

If the staircase is blocked off, continue ahead with the housing on the left and a small park on the right to reach Valetta Grove — is this just a mis-spelling of *Valletta*, the capital of Malta, or is there another, more obscure, option? Continue ahead to follow the road out to Plaistow Road, and double back along Plaistow Road to reach the top of the staircase.

Cross Plaistow Road by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

Plaistow station is directly ahead.

There are shops ahead at and around the junction with Upper Road. If you decide to visit the shops, it would be sensible to

Willow Lodge Cottage



use the alternative route laid out below to reach the Greenway via Upper Road.

Plaistow to West Ham

1.8km

25 Turn left (or turn right if you are arriving at Plaistow station to start the day's walk), then immediately turn right to descend a staircase to reach the end of London Road, where turn left. At the end of a row of workshops, turn right onto a path which leads to Juliette Road, where turn right. Pass through a traffic barrier and turn left onto Hartsworth Close.

Follow the left-hand footway, continuing ahead on Whitelegg Road, to reach the embankment of the Greenway. Ascend the staircase to reach the Greenway through its decorative metal archway, and turn right.

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

If the staircase at Plaistow station is blocked, or if you would prefer not to have to use the staircases at all (the one at the end of Whitelegg Road is crumbling slightly in places), there is an alternative route to the Greenway arch at the top of the stairs. Follow the right-hand footway of Plaistow High Street from the station entrance to reach the junction with Upper Road, where turn right. Follow the right-hand footway of Upper Road as far as the Greenway, and turn right. The top of the staircase leading up from Whitelegg Road will be reached after 400m of Greenway walking.

26 Follow the Greenway for another 40m, and descend (by steps or by a ramp) on the left to reach a spacious recreation ground. This is Memorial Park. Follow the clear path across the park, taking a slight left-hand bend on the way, to reach a floodlit football pitch.

Keep the pitch on your right along two of its sides, and continue ahead to reach a basketball court on the left. Turn right to cross the surface of a car park, then turn left to follow a path onto Memorial Avenue. Turn left to follow the right-hand footway of Memorial Avenue to its end at the entrance to West Ham station.

West Ham station offers District, Hammersmith and City, and Jubilee Line Tube services, the Docklands Light Railway, and C2C train services on the line between Southend and London.

There is a café on the left at the end of Memorial Avenue, offering cooked breakfasts and sandwiches, and there is a convenience shop attached to the post office.

West Ham station was rebuilt to accommodate the coming of the Jubilee Line in 1997, and there are works to provide extra access to the station. In the past few years, there has been much redevelopment of industrial land, with blocks of flats taking shape and repurposing the whole neighbourhood of the station.

West Ham to Bromley-by-Bow 2.6km



Above — West Ham station

27 From the corner of the station, turn right onto Manor Road and follow its right-hand footway beneath the railway lines. Follow Manor Road almost as far as the next bridge, where follow the Capital Ring signpost up the steps (or up the much longer ramp) onto the Greenway.

Turn left onto the Greenway and follow it over Manor Road below. Follow the Greenway over the Channelsea River (which is no more than mud at low tide) for about 350m to reach an eye-catching painted-pump sculpture.

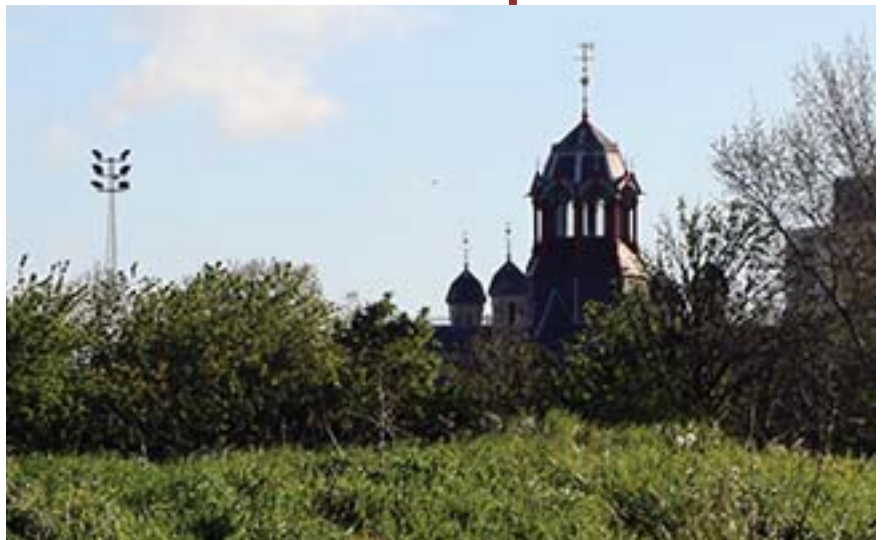
Here, it is worth continuing along the Greenway to get a better view of Abbey Mills pumping station.

Known popularly as the Cathedral of Sewage, this Victorian Byzantine edifice is the crowning glory of Joseph Bazalgette's sewerage programme: it was built between 1865 and 1868. After viewing this marvel of mid-Victorian engineering, return to the painted pump sculpture.

Turn left (or turn right if you are returning from visiting the pumping station viewpoint) at the painted pump, and descend on a path to reach the level of the Channelsea River.

Below — Abbey Mills pumping station glimpsed from Three Mills Green

Bottom — Low tide at Channelsea Island, viewed from the Greenway





View from Three Mills Park

The natural quietness of this linear park is under severe threat from new housing developments in the area — both on the gasworks site to the south and between Abbey Mills and Three Mills. There is, alas, no practicable alternative.

Follow the path ahead, rounding a point, the elliptical geometry of the old gasholders drawing the eyes across the stream. Turn right to pass Three Mills Lock, with its Modernist superstructure. Follow the

path to a footbridge, where turn left to reach Three Mills Park.

28 Pass through an area of blocks and trees, and turn left onto a circular path. Follow the circle for 70m, then leave it onto a path straight ahead. This path leads to a bridge: do not cross the bridge but turn left across the brick surface to descend to a cobbled road, Three Mill Lane. Turn right to follow this road past the old custom house on the right.

In this area, various channels have been cut or tapped to provide mill power, and Three Mill Lane gives you an idea of the density of mills in the area. This includes the House Mill, a tidal mill with a small exhibition area (open on Sundays between 1100 and 1600) as part of the complex ahead. Of course, these buildings have now been granted new uses, including a busy secondary school — it would be wise to avoid arriving in the area at the beginning or end of the school day.

Pass the Clock Mill on your left, then pass the House Mill on your right.

For a view of the mill from downstream, turn left. Return to the route by retracing your steps

Press ahead across the River Lea, and follow the left-hand footway of Three Mill Lane out to its end.

There is a large supermarket on the left.

Turn left, and head along Dipper Drive, with a block of flats between you and the roaring A12 on your right. At the end of the block, turn right to reach and pass through the underpass beneath the A12 to the other side of the busy road (which is the approach road for the Blackwall Tunnel).

Three Mills, seen from the downstream side



The entrance to Bromley-by-Bow Tube station is up the flight of steps on your left.

Bromley-by-Bow to Bow Road

2.1km

29 Turn right (or if you are exiting the station, turn left and descend the stairs) to follow a path which returns to road level at the corner of St Leonard's Street, at a former pub (now converted to flats but retaining external tiling advertising the brewer's wares which are no longer an option at this location).

Continue ahead onto St Leonard's Street (not onto the footway of the A12) and follow the street's left-hand footway past Grace Street and a bus stop to reach an access point to a park on the left at a war memorial.

Turn left to cross the park, passing a play area on your left and easing round to the right beyond the buildings on your right. At the exit gate of the park, continue ahead (that is to say, northbound) along the left-hand footway of Edgar Street. At the end of the street, turn left onto Bromley High Street, and follow its left-hand footway through a right-hand bend and out to Bow Road.

There is a convenience shop on the left at the bend.

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. Behind Gladstone's back, two churches face 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*).

30 Turn left onto the left-hand footway of Bow Road. Pass the entrance to Bow Church DLR station on your left, and continue to make your way along Bow Road to reach a railway bridge over the road.

Here, there was in the past a station called Bow Road, which was on the link line between Limehouse and Stratford. The station building for that Bow Road station remains, across the road on the right. It is currently occupied by a branch of a nationwide gambling corporation.

Pass beneath the railway and continue ahead, still on the left-hand footway of Bow Road, to reach the entrance to Bow Road Tube station (which has been on this site since 1902) on your left.

Bow Road to Mile End

0.6km

St Clement's Hospital

Below — main building

Bottom — gateway

31 Continue ahead (or turn left if exiting Bow Road station) and follow the left-hand footway of Bow Road as far as the junction with Merchant Street.

32 Pass a blunt brick church, then pass a large school over on your right, to reach on your left the former St Clement's hospital.

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 mures*. For much of its time, St Clement's was used as a psychiatric hospital.

The hospital finally 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.

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 also 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 Central Foundation schools were completely independent of the college.

Continue along the left-hand footway of Mile End Road (the street-name changes at St Clement's), passing a few shops on the left. Cross over the end of Southern Grove, and arrive at the entrance to Mile End station.

Mile End station is also served by Central Line trains.



The area around the station is well-served with shops, cafés, restaurants and pubs.

Mile End to Stepney Green 1.0km

Mile End station (which 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 (now Hammersmith and City Line services) arrived in 1936.

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), assistant and successor to Leslie Green (1875-1908), the chief architect of Underground Electric Railways of London (UERL) who died of overwork at the age of 33. Green was responsible for those Tube stations which have ox-blood faience tiling, and semicircular windows above ground level; Heaps continued Green's work, but his legacy lies mainly with the depots for buses, trolleybuses and trains across the capital.

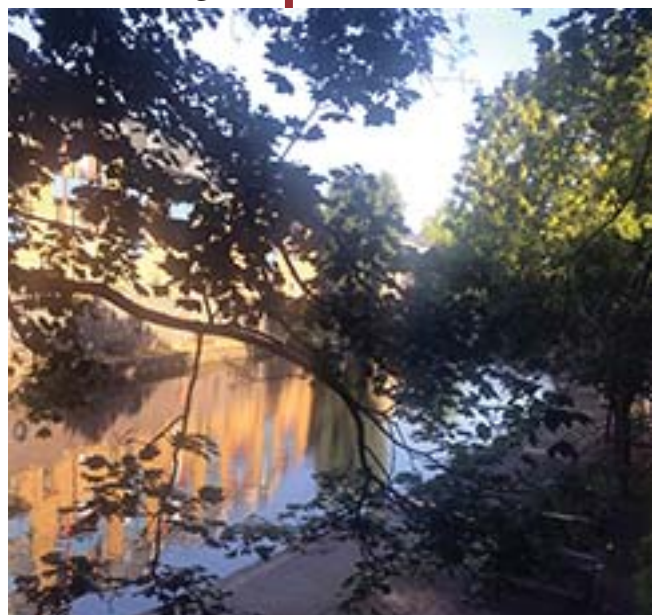
33 Continue ahead (or turn left if exiting the station). Pass beneath a former railway bridge, the old line now a green corridor path. Cross over the Regent's Canal and continue along the left-hand footway until you reach the clock tower of Queen Mary University of London, over on the other side of the road, with the contemporaneous Queen's Building behind it.

The genesis of the founding of a university in Mile End was the proposal (accepted) that East London College should teach towards Bachelor of Science degrees of the University of London, the first of which were awarded at the start of the twentieth century. The Queen's Hall, built as a "People's Palace" during the Victorian era, was destroyed by fire in 1931. This had the effect of bringing about a separation of the People's



Mile End station

*The Regent's Canal from
Mile End Road*





*Queen Mary
University of London*

*Left — Clock Tower and
Queen's Building,*

*Right — Mathematical
Sciences building*



Palace and the East London College, and the latter decided upon a name-change to bury what some thought unfortunate connotations of “East London”. The new college charter was presented to the institution by Queen Mary (the wife of King George V) in 1934. In 1989, there was a shotgun marriage with the smaller Westfield College (the first college to award University of London degrees to women) and the merged institution was called Queen Mary and Westfield College. The current name has been in use since 2000, and Westfield College is only commemorated by an insignificant lane on campus.

34 Continue ahead on Mile End Road, passing a succession of university buildings — you will notice the geometric tessellation on the wall of (appropriately) the Mathematical Sciences building on the right. Beyond the university, pass on the right the miniature entry to Mile End Place, a cul-de-sac with a terrace of houses on each side (and a warning that it is not suitable for heavy goods vehicles): Stepney Green station is on your right.

The impressive Half Moon pub (which is over on the right-hand side of Mile End Road) just before you reach the station has had a curious history, having been in former times a theatre (the company having started out in a rented synagogue in Whitechapel) and a Methodist church. It is now (*sic transit gloria mundi*) home to a

branch of the immense pub chain known by the fictitious name of JD Wetherspoon.

As well as the pub, there are many other shops and restaurants in the area, many of which are geared to the large local student population.

Stepney Green to Whitechapel

1.0km

35 Continue ahead on Mile End Road (that is to say, turning right if exiting the station). Pass the entrance to a retail park on the right, and continue past shops to reach the junction with Cleveland Way.

The impressive Beaux Arts building on the right, just to the east of Cleveland Way, which today houses, on the ground floor, the Queen Mary Café (part of Queen Mary University of London, was once Wickham's department store.

36 Beyond Cleveland Way, there is a service road set back from Mile End Road, offering a brief respite from close proximity to the traffic if you are following the right-hand footway. If you have not migrated to the right-hand footway before this point, do so now and follow the service road parallel to the main road. Shortly before the end of the service road, you will pass the almshouses of Trinity Green behind railings on the right.

Trinity Green Almshouses date from the late seventeenth century, and were constructed by Trinity House to accommodate retired sailors or their widows. Following bomb damage during the Second World War, the buildings were restored by London County Council.

Continue ahead through two street-name changes on Mile End Road, then on Whitechapel Road, then on Whitechapel High Street, to reach Whitechapel station, all the way using the right-hand footway.

On the left-hand side of the road opposite Whitechapel station are two impressive brick buildings, firstly the street-facing building of the Royal London Hospital, and then Tower Hamlets Town Hall.

As well as the Tube services, Whitechapel station is served by Overground services on the Windrush Line and by

Trinity Green





Left — Whitechapel station



*Right — Tower Hamlets
Town Hall*

the Elizabeth Line. Indeed, Whitechapel is the junction station for the two eastern branches of the Elizabeth Line, serving stations to Shenfield and Abbey Wood.

There is no shortage of shops, cafés, restaurants and pubs in the area around Whitechapel station. There is a large supermarket off to the right on Cambridge Heath Road, but the entrance will take you some way from the route.

*Aldgate East station,
Whitechapel Gallery
entrance*

Whitechapel to Aldgate East 0.9km



37 Continue westwards (turning right if exiting Whitechapel station), following the right-hand footway. Cross over Vallance Road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and continue to the junction with Greatorex Street.

38 Continue along Whitechapel High Street, crossing over Osborn Street by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Pass the Whitechapel Gallery (with secondary access to Aldgate East Tube station at certain times next door).

Continue to the junction with Commercial Street, and cross the road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing to arrive at the main entrance to Aldgate East Tube station.

Aldgate station, for the Metropolitan Line, is 300m ahead along Whitechapel High Street on the right-hand side of the road.

Aldgate East to Tower Hill

1.0km

39 Turn left onto Leman Street, and follow its right-hand footway to the junction with Alie Street, where turn right.

On the left-hand corner of the junction, of Alie Street, there is a fine eighteenth-century building. It is a former dispensary “supported by voluntary contributions” (as the inscription on the wall has it). It is now a bar, so in effect it is still a dispensary supported by voluntary contributions — the voluntary part being the decision-making on whether to have a drink.

Follow Alie Street to its junction with St Mark Street, where turn left. When you reach the junction with North Tenter Street, turn right to follow its right-hand footway, passing a school on your left.

40 Continue ahead onto the pedestrian Tenter Passage. Advance to the end of the passage onto Mansell Street, and turn left to follow the left-hand footway, crossing to the right-hand footway using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Turn right onto Portsoken Street, and follow it to its end at Minories (the first *i* in *Minories* is short — the word is derived from a religious order, and has nothing to do with small round-topped cars).

Cross over Minories and turn left to pass beneath the railway (it is the line from Southend which terminates at Fenchurch Street).

To reach Fenchurch Street station, take the lane on the right just before you reach the railway bridge.

Pass the already-dated and frankly somewhat tawdry Tower Gateway DLR station on the left. Where the buildings end on the right, turn right onto a path which leads to the entrance to Tower Hill station.

On your left as you approach the station entrance, you will see a fine section of the Roman wall which was built around Londinium once it had become a strategically important port around 200CE. On a little green at the foot of the wall, a statue represents Emperor Trajan (65-117CE, reigned 98-117CE). Beyond the end of the wall, on the other side of the main road, lies the bulk of the Tower of London.

Slip left-and-right at the station entrance to continue on the route.

Tower Hill station also has services on the Circle Line, which shares the tracks with this

Emperor Trajan, Tower Hill



part of the District Line as far as Gloucester Road. The station exit is located at the far end of the building.

There are many opportunities for refreshment and replenishment in the area. The offers range from fast-food kiosks to genteel afternoon tea services, via the usual gamut of cafés, restaurants and pubs.

Note that the area will usually be crawling with tourists, many of whom do not seem to have grasped the “left foot, right foot, repeat” concept of ambulation. This makes Tower Hill a candidate for a break-point on the journey and an early start from the station.

Tower Hill to Monument

0.7km

41 Turn left at the station exit to follow a path to the roadside (Tower Hill), and turn right along the right-hand footway, passing two war memorials for the merchant marine.

The first memorial commemorates the Falklands campaign of 1981, and the second (larger) memorial is to those lives lost in the Great War and the Second World War.

On the right stands Trinity House, the headquarters of the lighthouse authority for England and Wales — Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own institution, the Northern Lighthouses Board, which is headquartered in Edinburgh.

Continue straight ahead onto Byward Street to reach Great Tower Street, where turn right. Cross to the left-hand footway, and follow Great Tower Street (and later, Eastcheap) westwards to St Dunstan’s Hill on your left.

Trinity House (as was)



42 Continue westwards: at Fish Street Hill, look to your left, down the hill and up to the sky, to see the Monument (to the Great Fire of London of 1666). Continue ahead to King William Street, where there is access to Monument station. To the left lies the northern approach to London Bridge.

Monument to Cannon Street

0.4km

43 Cross King William Street by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and continue ahead along the left-hand footway of Cannon Street. Across the road on your right, you will see the newest entrance to the Bank/Monument Tube/DLR station complex, after which you will pass Abchurch Lane on your right.

44 Continue along the left-hand footway of Cannon Street to reach the entrance to the rail and Tube stations of that name. The entrance to the Tube station is beyond that of the railway station, situated at the corner of Dowgate Hill.

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

Cannon Street station was built by the South Eastern Railway between 1863 and 1866, mainly to serve commuters to the City from the south-eastern suburbs. Indeed, the concentration on commuter traffic led to the suspension of off-peak services, and to the complete closure of the station on Sundays for about a hundred years. It is now open every day, and while commuters remain the backbone of passenger footfall, some services link Cannon Street with places in Kent.



Cannon Street station

Cannon Street to Mansion House **0.2km**

45 Continue walking along the left-hand footway of Cannon Street to cross over the end of College Hill — here, the dome of St Paul's cathedral now fills the end-of-street horizon.

St Paul's and Cannon Street

46 Continue to follow the left-hand footway of Cannon Street as far as the scissors junction at Mansion House station, where cross over the end of Garlick Hill and continue onto the left-hand footway of Queen Victoria Street.

The Mansion House, which is the official residence of the Lord Mayor of London, is not here: it is up to the right next to Bank station. The confusion is down to the differing dates of construction of the various lines and stations of the Underground.



Mansion House to Blackfriars **0.7km**

47 From Mansion House station, descend Queen Victoria Street using its left-hand footway.



The Black Friar



Blackfriars station

There is a postage-stamp linear park with a brick pergola on the left. The park contains a few wooden benches, offering the possibility of a short rest, unless the toxin-sprayers from the offices have come out to pollute the air with tobacco residues.

Continue ahead to reach the northern end of the Millennium footbridge: Tate Modern is in view to the left, and St Paul's cathedral is to the right. Ahead on your left is the City of London School, with the memorial stone to its foundation in 1442 set into the wall at a low level, which has occupied this site since 1986.

48 Follow the left-hand footway of Queen Victoria Street downhill, past the College of Arms on the right to the junction with White Lion Hill. Cross the road carefully (in busy times, use the underpass) and complete your descent of Queen Victoria Street as you reach Blackfriars (the priory, the station, the bridge and the pub).

The priory at Blackfriars, situated on the southern slope of Ludgate Hill, is first recorded in 1317 and continued until the Dissolution in 1538. It was the site of proceedings leading to the divorce of Catherine of Aragon and King Henry VIII.

Blackfriars railway station was originally situated on the south side of the river, but moved to the north side in 1886 to join the Underground station, which had been opened in 1870 — for once, the Tube station was not built to connect with the railway, but in effect the reverse was true. The original railway bridge was later removed, leaving the pillars in the water.

In 1988, Thameslink services between Bedford and Brighton were inaugurated, using the Snow Hill tunnel between Farringdon and Blackfriars.

In 2009, the station was reconstructed and extended to span the river, with entrances on both banks. The station canopy, which stretches all the way across the river, is covered in solar panels.

The current Blackfriars road bridge was opened in 1869 by Queen Victoria (as commemorated by a statue on the north bank). In 1982, Italian banker Roberto Calvi was found hanged beneath the bridge. In 2007, five *mafiosi* were

acquitted of his murder for “lack of evidence”. The River Fleet flows into the River Thames from its culvert beneath Blackfriars Bridge.

The Black Friar pub, which occupies a thin triangle of land which a Scot would define as a *gushet*, was built around 1875 close to the site of the priory. It was remodelled in 1905 and boasts fine Art Nouveau features.

Blackfriars to Temple

0.7km

49 Cross the northern approach to Blackfriars Bridge (the road bridge), using two light-controlled pedestrian crossings separated by a central island, to the former Unilever House, and bear left to follow the building (on your right-hand side) round the corner and onto Victoria Embankment.

Unilever House is Grade II listed, and is one of London’s most impressive example of Art Deco Neoclassicism. It was built to house the London headquarters of the Lever soap business — the soap was made in the company’s village (built to house the employees and containing the Lady Lever Art Gallery) of Port Sunlight on the Wirral peninsula on the bank of the River Mersey), which had merged with the Dutch *Margarine Unie* to become Unilever: the lease was arranged in 1930 by Lord Leverhulme (as William Hesketh Lever became on the death of his father in 1925), and was completed in 1933.

The company has now vacated the building, which has been re-fitted (inevitably) as a luxury hotel — I suspect that the soap in the bedrooms will not be the orange-glowing Pears brand of bars whose aroma used to suffuse the air in and around Port Sunlight.

Unilever House (as was)

Pass the brick building which was the home (from 1879 to 1986) of the City of London School — the school’s current location was passed earlier on the route, on Queen Victoria Street next to the north end of the Millennium Bridge. The building previously housed Sion College. Beyond Temple Avenue, the lawyers’ accommodations are reached.

Continue, with the Temple gardens visible behind the railings on the right, along the right-hand footway of Victoria Embankment, to reach Middle Temple Lane.





Temple station

Boundary mark,
City of London



The Temple is one of the chief legal districts of the City of London, clustering around the Temple church (that is, historically, the church of the Knights Templar), today containing legal offices, residences and gardens.

On the far side of the street (Victoria Embankment), you will see the national war memorial to the Submarine Service of the Royal Navy.

50 Continue along Victoria Embankment

and exit the City of London (which is a separate county from Greater London) at its statuesque dragon mark. Follow the right-hand footway to reach the entrance, on your right, to Temple station.

Temple to Embankment 0.6km

51 Continue past the station to cross Temple Place at the west end of the station building.

On the corner of Temple Place, there is a statue of Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806-1859). The positioning of the statue has Brunel being supported above the major achievement of his fellow engineer Joseph Bazalgette (who, contrary to popular rumour of the time, was supported most enthusiastically by Brunel) — his huge outfall sewer which runs beneath the embankments on the north side of the river. Bazalgette's network — a main sewer on each side of the river and many connecting sewers — included no less than 132km of sewer pipe.

The official opening of the new sewer was undertaken in 1865 by the Prince of Wales, although work continued on the project for another ten years. It is only 150 years later that the Tideway project will create a new sewer system on the scale of the work of Joseph Bazalgette.

After the creation of the embankments, the Thames ran in a narrower, more managed, channel. This had the knock-on effect that the

river flowed much more quickly, and further increases in the flow speed came with the rebuilding of bridges with fewer arches (or, indeed, as single spans), this meant that the river would not freeze over, and the celebrated Frost Fairs were consigned to the frozen wastes of history.

Continue ahead beyond the Brunel statue. Pass Somerset House on the right, and pass beneath Waterloo Bridge.

Somerset House is the second such building on the site. Old Somerset House was built in the sixteenth century, but on his execution, the Duke of Somerset's properties were sequestered by the Crown. It later became the home of Anne of Denmark, wife of James I (James VI of Scotland). Oliver Cromwell's body lay in state in Somerset House.

Despite renovations by Sir Christopher Wren, the building fell out of favour, and demolition began in 1775. Almost immediately, Sir William Chambers embarked on the building of a new Somerset House. Since the Thames was not yet constrained by the Embankment, the design included an arch at river level so that boats could enter within the structure.

Down the years, Somerset House has served as Government offices, notably the Inland Revenue, the Register of Births, Marriages and Deaths, and a laboratory to detect adulteration of tobacco products. Today stands, in front of the arch (but above at the Terrace level), the memorial to members of the Civil Service Rifles who fell in the Great War. It is now occupied by the Courtauld Institute.

The first Waterloo Bridge was designed by John Rennie, the Scots engineer of canals, docks and bridges, and was opened in 1817. By 1920, however, there were severe structural problems (partly caused by increased water flow following the building of his New London Bridge), and a new bridge was built to the designs of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott (who also designed the telephone box).

*The City seen from
Waterloo Bridge*





*Sir Arthur Sullivan's
memorial in Victoria
Embankment Gardens*

Scott was the grandson of Sir George Gilbert Scott, whose signature building is the iconic hotel frontage of St Pancras station. The current Waterloo Bridge was opened in 1942, but was not completed until 1945: it has Grade II* listed status.

52 After you have crossed Savoy Place, take a path on the right to take you into Victoria Embankment Gardens — it will relieve you from the stench of idling coaches and other vehicles. Follow the central path through the gardens to its end at Villiers Street, enjoying the variety of people commemorated in the gardens.

The first memorial of note on the walk through the gardens has been described as “the sexiest statue in London”. It is to Sir Arthur Sullivan, the composer who worked with WS Gilbert on the Savoy Operas (such as *Iolanthe*, *The Mikado*, and *The Pirates of Penzance*). It is on the left of the path, so that Sullivan is looking towards the Savoy Theatre. One might say that the memorial contains two busts, the one of Sullivan and that

of the weeping muse of music, who is so distraught by her loss that her clothes are falling off (though Sullivan does not seem to notice her *déshabillé*). Gilbert has his own memorial nearby, but not in the gardens: his memorial is on the river wall on the Embankment.

Moving on, the next statue (on the right, at the foot of Carting Lane, whereby goods were carted up from the river to Covent Garden fruit and vegetable market) is of Robert Raikes, pioneer of the Sunday School movement. His were not the first Sunday Schools, but his promotion of the idea ensured his primacy as pioneer. Raikes is descended from the same stock which produced William Wilberforce, the founder of the Anti-Slavery Society.

Next, on the left, is the memorial to Henry Fawcett, an economist who supported Charles Darwin’s work on evolution and was a strong believer in women’s suffrage. During his time as Postmaster General, he introduced the idea of savings stamps to allow funds to be built up, even a penny at a time; he also introduced the ideas of parcel post and postal orders, and even set up the (at that time theoretical) financial framework for payphones.

Moving on, the monument on the left is an unmissable shout to posterity on behalf of the third Lord Cheylesmore, a society baronet and Guards officer in the Great War. Cheylesmore bought out the struggling Royal Indian Engineering College overlooking Runnymede Meadows, remodelling the main building (Pillar Hall) for the coming-of-age of his heir. He was the first peer to be killed in a motor accident, in 1925. The monument is by Sir Edwin Lutyens,

who also designed (among many other edifices) the Cenotaph, Liverpool Cathedral, Lindisfarne Castle and (linking back to the Cheylesmore connection) the lodges on the riverside at Runnymede Meadows.

Opposite the Cheylesmore memorial is a statue of Sir Wilfrid Lawson, a hard-nosed Liberal politician from Aspatria (in Cumbria) who was often said to be “anti-everything”. Having had little formal education save lectures from a local Congregational minister, he threw himself with gusto into many social pressure-groups and campaigns against the Establishment. His chief hobby-horse was the temperance movement, and, having had a Bill to restrict alcohol sales defeated on no fewer than eight occasions between 1863 and 1878, had a Resolution passed in Parliament in 1880. The Gladstone government took no action on the Resolution. On the death of the celebrated huntsman John Peel, Lawson bought Peel’s pack of hounds.

At the point where three paths diverge (the other two splitting off to your left), two statues bring animals to mind. At the confluence of paths is the monument to the Imperial Camel Corps, but on the right, a bigger statue recalls a smaller animal — the statue is of the poet Robert Burns, and the animal is, of course, the mouse whose nest he turned over with his plough, his “wee sleekit, cowerin’, timorous beastie”.

Finally, on the right you will see a stone gateway. This was a watergate to allow the Duke of Buckingham to board his river vessels: the Thames may have already retreated from the Strand, but in 1626, it was still wide enough to reach this point. It was only with the creating of the Victorian sewerage system by Sir Joseph Bazalgette that the watergate was left high and dry.

Exit the gardens and turn left to pass through Embankment station’s street-level concourse.

The name of the Underground station (which opened in 1870) has fluctuated, being known at different times as *Charing Cross*

Below — Robert Burns

*Bottom — Buckingham
watergate*



(Embankment), then *Charing Cross Embankment*, then *Charing Cross*, and finally (in 1976) *Embankment*, when the two stations known as *Trafalgar Square* and *Strand* were merged to become *Charing Cross*. The current Embankment station building, which was opened in 1915 after the arrival of the Bakerloo Line, is said to have been one of the favourite Tube stations of Sir John Betjeman.

Embankment to Westminster

0.6km

53 Turn right out of the concourse to emerge onto the Victoria Embankment (having previously turned right if exiting the ticketing gates of Embankment station) and pass beneath the Hungerford Bridges and, between the two, the Charing Cross railway bridge, using the right-hand footway.

The original Hungerford Bridge was a suspension bridge which was built in 1845 by Isambard Kingdom Brunel. In 1859, the railway company bought the bridge so that its line could be used for its new railway bridge (its official name is actually *Charing Cross Bridge*), and a footbridge was constructed on its downstream side.

The chains for Brunel's Hungerford Bridge were recycled for use on the Clifton Suspension Bridge in Bristol. The lineside footbridge was dismantled and rebuilt as twin footbridges on both the upstream and downstream sides, opening in 2002: their official title is the Golden Jubilee Bridges, but everyone still calls them Hungerford Bridges.

It was here, beneath the Charing Cross railway bridge, that Charles Dickens laboured as a child to mix blacking for boots in order to earn a few pennies for his rent and sustenance while his father was in the Marshalsea debtors' prison.

*View from the downstream
Hungerford Bridge towards
Charing Cross station*



Just beyond the bridges, on the riverside, is the memorial to Joseph Bazalgette: the Latin inscription, *Flumini vincula posuit*, translates as *He put chains on the river* — in other words, by the building of the embankments to cover his sewer, he tamed the sideways creep of the Thames.

Cross Northumberland Avenue and enter Whitehall Gardens (again, this detour is advisable to escape vehicular pollution) and follow the path parallel to the Embankment. At the far end of the first garden. Just beyond a statue of William Tyndale, ease right to exit onto Horse Guards Avenue.

William Tyndale (1494-1536) was the first person to translate the Bible into English using

the original Greek and Hebrew texts, and he was the first to publish it using the printing press. Having been arrested in the (Catholic) Holy Roman Empire, he was executed near Vilvoorde in 1536.

54 Cross over Horse Guards Avenue to enter a garden of military memorials with the Ministry of Defence building on your right. Over on the riverside, you will see a golden eagle landing on the top of a tall column: the national Royal Air Force memorial.

The first statue you will see, on your right, is of Lord Portal, who joined the Royal Flying Corps in 1915 as a dispatch rider, and rose to be Chief of the Air Staff during the Second World War. The Fleet Air Arm memorial on its column is next. Next on your right is the Korean War Memorial, followed by a statue of Viscount Trenchard, Father of the RAF. He was the first Chief of the Air Staff. The next memorial is to the Chindit special forces who served under Major General Orde Wingate behind Japanese lines in Burma (now Myanmar) during the 1943-44 campaign.

At the end of the gardens, continue along Victoria Embankment past the current location of New Scotland Yard, headquarters of the Metropolitan Police: across the road is the Battle of Britain Memorial.

When viewed from Victoria Embankment Gardens, the Battle of Britain Memorial is backed, across the River Thames, by the London Eye and County Hall.



Memorial to the fallen of the Korean War (foreground) and to the Fleet Air Arm

Left — Boudicca statue, Westminster Bridge

Right — Elizabeth Tower from Victoria Embankment



Turn right, and follow the Victoria Embankment to Westminster Bridge, at the bronze of Boudicca and her daughters.

Boudicca was Queen of the Iceni (from whose name we derive the Icknield Way), who mounted an unsuccessful rebellion against the Romans in 60-61CE. The bronze statue dates from 1850.

Turn right at the end of Westminster Bridge to reach Westminster station opposite the Elizabeth Tower of the Palace of Westminster.

This is an area which suffers from being completely mobbed by very slow-moving, unthinking tourists. For this reason, Westminster station could be a useful break-point, especially if you can arrive before 0800 to start a day's walking — it is the best chance that you will have for some room to move.

The Elizabeth Tower contains at its top the famous clock. Part of the workings of the clock are its bells, the largest of which is known as Big Ben.

- Repeat after me — the building across the road is not Big Ben, it is the Palace of Westminster.
- Repeat after me — the tower is not Big Ben, it is the Elizabeth Tower.
- Repeat after me — the clock is not Big Ben, it is in fact the Great Clock of Westminster.
- Repeat after me — the chimes are not Big Ben, they are the Westminster carillon.
- Repeat after me — Big Ben is only the largest of the bells which ring out the Westminster carillon attached to the Great Clock of Westminster in the Elizabeth Tower of the Palace of Westminster.

It really is very simple.

Westminster to St James's Park

0.7km

55 Continue ahead from the main entrance of Westminster station, crossing over Parliament Street and taking the right-hand footway ahead along the north side of Parliament Square, with Churchill glowering on your left. Cross Great George Street to pass along the west side of the square, with a statue of Abraham Lincoln on your right. Pass the Supreme Court building and bear round the right, onto Broad Sanctuary.

Follow the right-hand footway to pass a rather nondescript triangle of grass (United Nations Green, actually) on your right, with the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre behind it and the Methodist Central Hall in front of you, and with the west door of Westminster Abbey across the road on your left.

56 Cross over Storey's Gate. Do not take the main road, Victoria Street, ahead but continue onto Tothill Street with the side of Central Hall forming its right-hand side. Cross to the left-hand footway at a suitable location and follow the street out to its junction with Broadway. In front of you on the left-hand side of Broadway is the bulk of 55 Broadway, which houses St James's Park Tube station beneath it.

55 Broadway is the building designed by the company architect Charles Holden (1875-1960) to be the corporate headquarters of Underground Electric Railways of London, the main forerunner to London Underground. Successively, London Transport and Transport for London took over the building, but it was vacated in 2020 when TfL moved out to Stratford. Its fate is to be gutted and re-fitted to become a luxury hotel.

Above ground floor level, the building is cruciform with a central tower — this was to maximise the natural light in the building, but it also created a cathedral of transport. The building, completed in 1929, boasts avant-garde sculptures on each side and has many Art Deco features inside and out. It is Grade I listed. Holden reworked much of the design in his Senate House building in Bloomsbury (often known fondly as the London Lubyanka) for the University of London.

Charles Holden was born in Bolton, and his early work included commissions from William Hesketh Lever (later ennobled as Lord Leverhulme) for Port Sunlight, his Merseyside company village on the Wirral. He was responsible for important works in Bristol too, but his best-known work is in London, particularly his Tube stations. He contributed greatly to the Piccadilly and Northern Lines when these lines were extended north and south/west during the 1930s.

St James's Park to Victoria

1.0km

57 Cross over to 55 Broadway by the pedestrian crossing and turn left along the right-hand footway of Great Smith Street to reach Victoria Street.

The modern blocks on the left have been built on the site of New Scotland Yard, the third headquarters building of the Metropolitan Police to have that name. The Police left the building in 2016 to Curtis Green House on

55 Broadway





*Christchurch Gardens —
memorials to Henry Purcell
(left) and the suffragette
movement (right)*

Victoria Embankment, which was promptly renamed New Scotland Yard.

On the right at the junction with Victoria Street is a statue of Henry Purcell. At the opposite corner of Christchurch Gardens, there is a memorial to the Suffragettes.

Turn right onto the right-hand footway of Victoria Street and follow it to the junction with Buckingham Gate and Artillery Row, next to the Albert, an ornate (and Grade II listed) Victorian pub. Cross Victoria Street by its light-controlled pedestrian crossing on the diagonal.

There are many opportunities for retail, refreshment and other facilities and services, both on Victoria Street and in the surrounding streets (particularly in the Cardinal Place shopping centre across the road from Cathedral Piazza.

58 Press ahead on the left-hand footway of Victoria Street as far as Cathedral Piazza on the left, with Westminster's Roman Catholic cathedral on its far side of the piazza.

The cathedral was opened in 1903 and was consecrated in 1910, after the church hierarchy had decided, following the then financial strictures, that the building was free of debts and with its fabric completed. The architecture makes several references to the Byzantine style, and its composition of red brick walls interlaced with white stonework has given rise to its being called the "streaky bacon cathedral". It is the primary church for Roman Catholics in Britain.

Beyond the cathedral's piazza, continue to the junction of Vauxhall Bridge Road. Cross over to reach Wilton Road, where turn left to reach a light-controlled pedestrian crossing which gives access to the forecourt of Victoria station.

Victoria station was built in 1860, and was rebuilt at the turn of the twentieth century, the new station opening in 1908. In reality, Victoria was two adjoining stations, one for the Sussex and Surrey services and the other for the Kent services. In 1924-25, following the bringing together of all of these services under the umbrella of the Southern Railway, the wall which separated the two stations was knocked down and the platforms were re-numbered in a single sequence. The original split echoes down the years, with Southeastern services making use of the lower-numbered platforms and Southern services the higher.

Victoria station is served by the Victoria Line (no surprise there!) as well as by the Circle and District Lines. The bus station — for local red buses (the coach station will follow a short distance ahead) — in the forecourt of the railway station is a busy part of the transport interchange.

Victoria station has all the shops, cafés, toilets and other facilities that you would expect to find in a station of this size. In addition, there are shops, pubs, cafés and restaurants in the surrounding streets, including (as already noted), the Cardinal Place shopping centre.

Victoria to Sloane Square 1.4km

59 Make your way along the frontage of Victoria station to reach and cross Buckingham Palace Road ahead.



Westminster cathedral



Victoria station



Maréchal Ferdinand Foch

In the gardens ahead, there is an equestrian statue of Maréchal Ferdinand Foch (1851-1929), the French Chief of Staff who served as Supreme Allied Commander during the Great War.

Turn left to follow the right-hand footway of Buckingham Palace Road, with the western flank of Victoria railway station across the road on your left. Cross over Eccleston Street. Pass Victoria Library to reach the corner of Elizabeth Street.

The Art Deco corner of Victoria Coach Station is directly ahead.

Victoria Coach Station was opened in 1932 by London Coastal Coaches, the building having been constructed in Art Deco style. It was requisitioned by the War Office during the Second World War, when coach travel was limited.

The ownership changed hands a few times after the war, until it was transferred to the National Bus Company under the terms of the Transport Act 1968, by which point it was serving routes across the country. Following the transfer of bus and coach services to private operators, "VCS" is now managed by Transport for London.

Its location as the primary London coach terminus seems to be under almost permanent review, with interchange points on the motorway network in the suburbs being considered (as has been effected in Milton Keynes, for example), along with the idea of capitalising on the importance of Heathrow Airport's coach terminals, with the airport's bus, rail and Tube links to many parts of London.

Victoria coach station



In heavy traffic, outbound coaches tend to lose contact with their timetabled schedules before they reach the North or South Circular Road, and inbound coaches drift later than ever. Today, the main coach station building is used only for departing coaches: arriving passengers alight in another building on Eccleston Place, just off Elizabeth Street.

Turn right onto Elizabeth Street and, with the wall of the coach station over to your left on the other side of the road, follow its right-hand footway, crossing over Eccleston Place, then crossing over the coach exit from the arrivals building on your right.

Opposite the station on Elizabeth Street, there is a pub, a café, and a small supermarket which all seek to attract coach passengers' custom, as

well as seeking passing trade from others. There are more cafés, restaurants and pubs ahead on Elizabeth Street.

Cross over to the left-hand footway of Elizabeth Street at a suitable location, and cross over Ebury Street to reach Chester Square.

60 Turn left and follow Chester Row to its far end, where turn right onto Holbein Place. Follow the right-hand footway of Holbein Place as it bends to the left, then turn right to reach the entrance to Sloane Square station on your right.

Sloane Square station was opened by the District Railway Company in 1868. The work was made complicated by the River Westbourne, which runs in a pipe — underground, but above the level of the trains as they pass through the station. The casing for the pipework may still be seen today, crossing the tracks on the diagonal.

Sloane Square to South Kensington 1.4km

61 Turn left to follow the south side of Sloane Square, and cross King's Road at the corner of the square. Pass the main entrance to the Peter Jones emporium to reach the north-western corner of Sloane Square.

There is a wide range of shops, and of places to eat and drink, on Sloane Square and King's Road.

Cross over Symons Street and turn left along its right-hand footway. At the tree-clad triangle, bear round to the right, then turn left onto Draycott Place. Follow Draycott Place to its end (taking the left-hand footway will keep you out of any crowds at the Spanish consulate-general) and turn right to cross Draycott Place using the pedestrian crossing.



Top — Chester Row

*Above — Sloane Square
station platform*



Béla Bartók

*South Kensington — former
Piccadilly Line entrance*



Follow the right-hand footway of Sloane Avenue ahead as far as the junction with Fulham Road.

At the corner of the building on your right which takes the corner of Whitehead's Grove, there are two plaques, one commemorating the American social reformer Frederick Douglass (1817-95), the other commemorating Vera Atkins (1908-2000), who worked in the France Section of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) between 1941 and 1945 during the Second World War.

62 Follow the right-hand footway of Sloane Avenue as far as the junction with Fulham Road. Turn left to cross Sloane Avenue, then turn right to cross Fulham Road, each by a light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Continue along the left-hand footway of Pelham Street ahead to its end at the junction with Old Brompton Road.

On your left, there is a statue of Béla Bartók (1881-1945), the Hungarian composer, by his renowned compatriot Imre Varga (1923-2019). Bartók stayed in this part of South Kensington while he was in London.

The Underground station building on your right, which is immediately identifiable by the tiling and windows as having been designed by Leslie Green, was built to serve the deep-level Piccadilly Line.

Leslie Green (1875-1908) was an architect who created the design for many Underground stations in British Art Nouveau style. He died at the age of 33 from overwork. His style incorporated semi-circular windows above ground-floor level to maximise natural lighting within his stations, with ox-blood faience tiling on the outer walls and more tilework, in green and cream, inside the station buildings.

Turn right at the Bartók statue (that is to say, standing back-to-back with the composer), cross over the end of Pelham Road, and continue along the right-hand footway of Old Brompton Road to reach the southern entrance to South Kensington station.

Connectivity between the District and Circle Lines and the Piccadilly Line is now made within the original station layout, with a series escalators linking the four levels — the

westbound Piccadilly Line, the eastbound Piccadilly Line, the District and Circle Lines, and the ticketing gates.

Access to South Kensington station may be gained from either end of an arcade of shops between Old Brompton Road and Thurloe Street.

South Kensington station was opened in 1868 by the Metropolitan Railway and the District Railway to accommodate each company's services. A deep-level express line, with South Kensington as the only stop between Charing Cross and Hammersmith, was proposed as early as 1898, but never came to fruition. The arcade, the station structures, and the pedestrian tunnel to the museum quarter on Exhibition Road are all Grade II listed.

South Kensington station is served by Piccadilly Line trains, as well as those of the Circle and District Lines.

There is a wide variety of restaurants, pubs and cafés on Thurloe Street, Exhibition Road and Old Brompton Road, and in the surrounding streets.

South Kensington to Gloucester Road

0.7km

63 Cross to the main station entrance: do not enter, but turn left to follow the right-hand footway round the corner. Pass one light-controlled pedestrian crossing, then use the second such crossing, turning left to cross Cromwell Place to reach Harrington Road ahead. Follow its right-hand footway to reach and cross Queen's Gate.

There is a café and a convenience shop on Harrington Road at Queen's Gate.

64 Continue ahead, now on the right-hand footway of Stanhope Gardens, with the gardens themselves on your right, to reach and cross Collingham Road.

Turn right at the junction with Gloucester Road and follow the right-hand footway of to reach the Tube station. Cross the road by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing — the entrance to the station is a few metres to your left.

Gloucester Road station is also served by Piccadilly Line trains.

There is a wide range of shops, cafés, restaurants and pubs, and indeed all other facilities, on Gloucester Road.

It is easy to see that the station was once two separate stations. The right-hand side was originally the building for the station operated by the Metropolitan and District Railways, while to the left, the Piccadilly Line station with its ox-blood tiles and semicircular windows, the architectural fingerprints of Leslie Green (see page 42 for details of his work).



Gloucester Road station

Gloucester Road to Earl's Court 0.9km

65 Continue along the right-hand footway of Courtfield Road, passing a fine row of red-brick mansion flats on the right, to reach the junction with Collingham Road, by which point the street-name has changed to Courtfield Gardens.

66 Continue ahead across Collingham Road and follow the right-hand footway of Courtfield Gardens, turning right at the T-junction at the end of the street. Turn left onto Barkston Gardens and follow its right-hand footway to the junction with Earl's Court Road, where turn right.

Follow the right-hand footway of Earl's Court Road to a point opposite Earl's Court station, crossing to the left-hand footway using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing at the entrance to the station.

Earl's Court station was opened in 1878 by the District Railway, replacing the 1871 station which stood on the opposite side of Earl's Court Road until it was destroyed by fire. In 1911, Earl's Court became the first Underground station to be furnished with escalators. It is the primary gathering-ground for District Line branches to and from termini at Edgware Road, at Wimbledon and (on the odd occasions when TfL deigns to run a service) at Kensington Olympia.



Earl's Court station

Standardisation of the station name (with an apostrophe) came as late as 1951.

All facilities for retail, eating, drinking and other pursuits may be found in the vicinity of Earl's Court station.

Earl's Court to West Kensington

1.2km

67 Turning left if you are exiting Earl's Court station (or turning right if you have just crossed the road), follow the left-hand footway as far as the junction with Trebovir Road. Turn left to follow its right-hand footway to Warwick Road, where turn right. Cross to the left-hand footway at a light-controlled pedestrian crossing (where there is a traffic light on a boom high above the middle of the road) and continue to reach West Cromwell Road.

68 Turn left onto the left-hand footway of West Cromwell Road, protected(?) from the traffic by a low crash barrier but, sad to relate, entirely unprotected from the hectoring of the huge advertising boards which will blot out any appreciation of what scenery you are traversing, and which consume large quantities of energy in their attempts to induce passers-by (on foot



West Kensington station

or in a wheeled can) to buy whatever they are trying to hawk. Turn left onto North End Road to reach the entrance to West Kensington station on your left.

West Kensington to Barons Court 0.5km

69 Follow the left-hand footway of North End Road past the bus stop and across the railway, having turned left if you are exiting West Kensington station. Turn right to cross the road at the light-controlled pedestrian

crossing and continue ahead onto Barons Court Road. Follow this street through a left-and-right zigzag, continuing on its right-hand footway as far as the junction with Barton Road, where a one-way traffic system takes hold.

A blue plaque on the wall on the right indicates the student accommodation once occupied by Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948). A little farther along the block, another blue plaque marks the home of Sir Geoffrey de Havilland (1882-1965), the celebrated aeronautical engineer.

70 Continue ahead along Barons Court Road, keeping to the right-hand footway at the fork, to reach the end of the street at its junction with Palliser Road. Cross over Palliser Road, and turn right to reach the end of Margravine Gardens, with the entrance to Barons Court station ahead.

Note the lack of an apostrophe in the station name, indicating plural barons, compared with a singular earl at Earl's Court. The railway came through Barons Court in 1874, when there was nothing but fields in the vicinity, so no station was provided. By the turn of the century, though, the area had been colonised by housing (to a great extent, by the housing we see today), and in 1905, the District Railway Company opened the station.

The station building has survived almost intact, and still retains most of its original features, including terracotta finishings and Art Nouveau lettering. At platform level, the benches are of a design which is unique on the Underground network. The station is listed Grade II.

There are shops and cafés in the vicinity of the station.

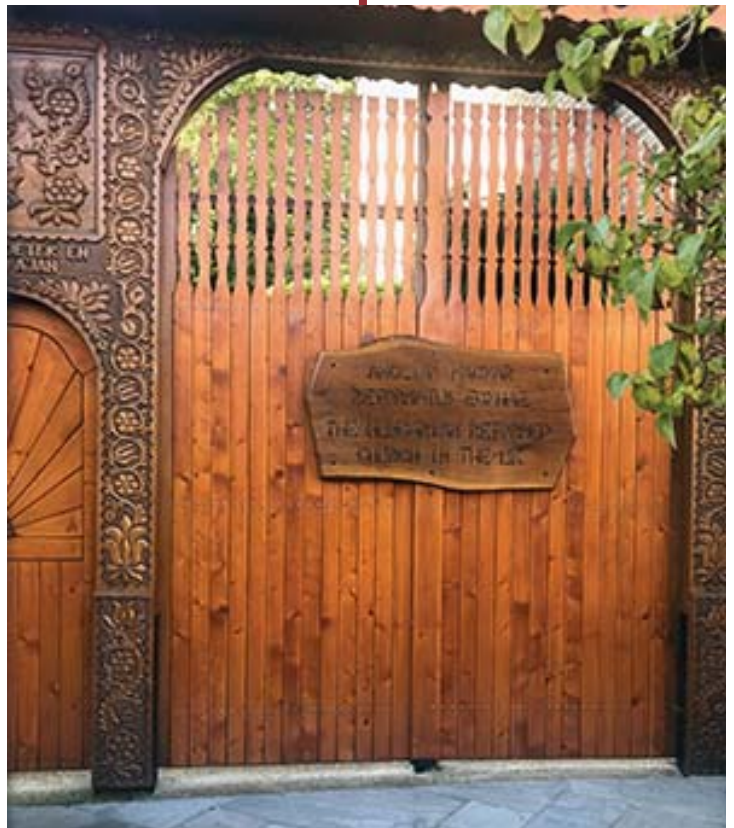
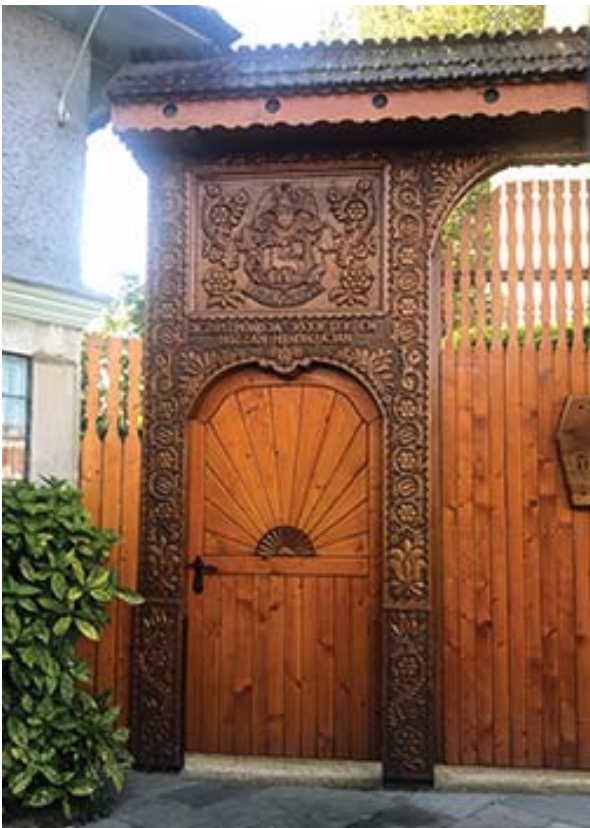


Barons Court to Hammersmith 1.3km

Barons Court station

71 Turn left onto Margravine Gardens (or, if exiting Barons Court station, turn right and right again), and follow its left-hand footway as far as St Dunstan's Road, where another one-way traffic system is in place. Turn left along the left-hand footway to reach the bend in St Dunstan's Road.

*Székelyi kapu (gate),
Hungarian reformed church,
Barons Court*





*Guinness Trust flats,
Fulham Palace Road*

On the left, at the bend in the road, the small building at 17 St Dunstan's Road was built early in the twentieth century as an artist's studio: it is Grade II listed. Since 1958, it has been home to the London centre of the Hungarian reformed church. To the right of the building, there is a traditional and elaborately carved Transylvanian wooden gateway — known there and in Hungary as a *Székelyi kapu*.

72 At the church, take the bend to the right and follow the left-hand footway of St Dunstan's Road all the way to its end at Fulham Palace Road, where turn right.

Fulham Palace Road has a range of shops, cafés, restaurants and pubs. Charing Cross Hospital is adjacent on the left.

Follow the right-hand footway of Fulham Palace Road, crossing to the left-hand footway at a suitable location, to reach the Hammersmith flyover and gyratory system — make sure you approach on the left-hand side where Fulham Palace Road divides a the triangle in front of the junction.

On the way, you will pass some of the Guinness Trust's 66000 dwellings. The philanthropic trust, to provide homes for working-class families, was set up by the first Earl of Iveagh, a descendant of Arthur Guinness, who established the brewery in Dublin.

Cross the southern side of the Hammersmith gyratory system by means of a pair of light-controlled pedestrian crossings to reach the entrance to the Broadway shopping centre, within which is the access to Hammersmith's Tube station for the District and Piccadilly Lines.

If you are not ending your day's walk at Hammersmith, you may turn left and follow the footway round to the right. Pass another access to the Tube station on your right (where two lanes of the gyratory system peel off left to become Hammersmith Bridge Road) to arrive at the junction with Broadway and King Street at the main entrance to the shopping centre.

All facilities (including toilets and Hammersmith bus station) are also to be found within the shopping centre, and there is a vast range of shops, cafés, restaurants and pubs on Broadway and the surrounding streets.

Hammersmith station was opened in 1874 by the District Railway, initially as its western terminus. The Piccadilly Line arrived in 1906, terminating at Hammersmith before its extension to Hounslow West was created in 1932 (and before its subsequent extensions to serve Heathrow Airport's various terminals).

Note that the station for the Hammersmith and City Line (and for the Circle Line) is not connected to the station for the District and Piccadilly Lines within the shopping centre, but is a separate building on the north side of Beacon Road, a few metres to the north-west of the Hammersmith Gyratory System. Travellers connecting across the two stations are charged as for one journey.

Hammersmith to Ravenscourt Park

1.0km

73 From the northern entrance to the shopping centre, turn left to cross the north-western corner of the Hammersmith gyratory system onto King Street using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and follow its left-hand footway westwards to the junction with Holcombe Street.

74 Cross to the right-hand footway and continue westwards along King Street to reach the junction with Ravenscourt Road on the right. Turn right to reach Ravenscourt Park Tube station on your right.

A few paces beyond Ravenscourt Street on King Street is one of the most important community facilities in the area — POSK, the Polish Social and Cultural Association and a key hub for the Polish community in London for more than fifty years. Their Café Maja is open between 0900 and 2100; there is also the Łowiczanka Restaurant for more formal Polish food.

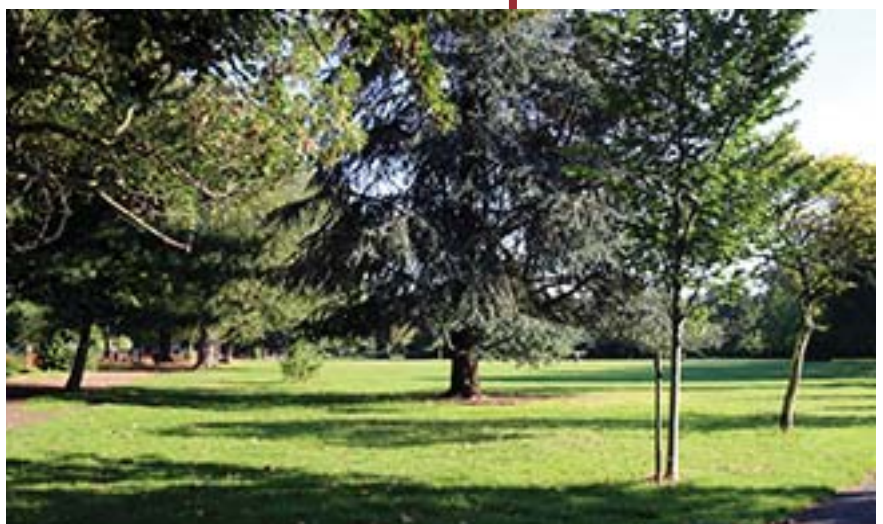
Ravenscourt Park to Stamford Brook

0.6km

75 Pass beneath the railway (that is to say, turning right if exiting Ravenscourt Park station) and immediately turn left along a path parallel to the tracks. Pass some tennis courts on your right to reach the entrance to Ravenscourt Park from Ravenscourt Avenue (the street arrives from beneath the railway to your left).

Keep on ahead, but take a path which eases away from the railway, making sure that you keep a children's paddling pool over on your left. At the far end, exit the park through a gateway opposite the end of Ravenscourt Gardens.

76 Continue ahead across Ravenscourt Park (the street of that name) onto Ravenscourt Gardens, using



Ravenscourt Park



Ravenscourt Gardens

its left-hand footway. After the left-and right zigzag, cross to the right-hand footway at a suitable location.

Where you arrive at Goldhawk Road, cross the road ahead using the refuge just to the right of the end of Ravenscourt Gardens. On the far side, turn left to reach the end of Vaughan Avenue.

Stamford Brook station is ahead on the right, with the station entrance on the other side of the bridge.

Stamford Brook to Turnham Green 0.9km

77 If exiting Stamford Brook station to pick up the route, turn left and pass beneath the railway, and turn left onto Vaughan Avenue.

Continue along the left-hand footway of Vaughan Avenue to the end, then turn right onto Prebend Gardens. Just before you reach the traffic lights, cut left on a diagonal path, and turn left onto Bath Road.

78 Follow the left-hand footway of Bath Road, passing the main building of the Arts Educational School on your left.

Turnham Green church



This building was formerly occupied by Chiswick Polytechnic, which later merged into the West London Institute of Higher Education, with the Polytechnic vacating the Turnham Green site in 1976. The West London Institute merged with Brunel University (to become known as Brunel University London following a 2006 change to its Charter) in 1996, and later to join the federal University of London, to be known henceforth as Brunel University of London.

At the end of the road, reach the junction with Turnham Green Terrace.

Turnham Green station, the junction station for the branches to Richmond and to Ealing Broadway, lies just off to the left on Turnham Green Terrace.

Across Bath Road stands the church of St Michael and All Angels, known to TfL simply as *Turnham Green church*. The church bears the air of a rather well-to-do cricket club's pavilion. Norman Shaw is said to have influenced the design.

There are many shops and refuelling opportunities on Turnham Green Terrace, and more may be found on Chiswick High Road at the end of Turnham Green Terrace.

Turnham Green to Gunnersbury

1.6km

79 Cross Turnham Green Terrace and follow a path ahead onto Acton Green, keeping close to the railway.

It would be easy to deduce that this piece of green space would be called Turnham Green, based on the Tube station name. However, this is the southern extremity of Acton, which may come as another surprise to those whose mental geography is based on the Harry Beck Tube map.

Cross over Fisher Lane using the pedestrian crossing, and continue ahead on a path, again close to the railway on the left. Bear left at a scissors junction of paths, away from a typically suburban brick-barn church (with a strange corrugated-iron sub-barn on its south side), to reach the corner of Hardwicke Road, where you will exit Acton Green.

Follow the left-hand footway of Hardwicke Road to its end at Acton Lane.

80 Turn left onto Acton Lane and pass beneath the railway to reach, on the right, the entrance to Chiswick Park station.

Chiswick Park station is on the Ealing Broadway branch of the District Line (see page 84).

Chiswick Park station was opened in 1887 and was rebuilt in 1932 when the Piccadilly Line arrived ... or at least, when Piccadilly Line trains began to pass through without stopping. The new station was designed by Charles Holden: the architecture was influenced by contemporary design in Germany and the Netherlands. Information

*Hardwicke Road,
Acton Green*





Chiswick Park station

about Charles Holden and his work for London Transport may be found on page 37.

Do not cross Acton Lane to reach the entrance to Chiswick Park station (unless, of course, you are breaking your journey to catch a train), but stay on the left-hand footway at the junction with Bollo Lane (which joins Acton Lane in front of the Tube station), then cross Acton Lane using the pedestrian crossing.

Turn left, and immediately turn right onto Chiswick Road. Follow the right-hand footway of Chiswick Road for its full length, bending to the left at its far end to come out onto Chiswick High Road.

Turn right and follow the right-hand footway of Chiswick High Road for 350m as far as the entrance to the Chiswick Park business estate, crossing over the railway in the process — the only hint of the tracks beneath you is the brick wall on the left-hand side of the road.

Turn left to cross Chiswick High Road by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, then turn right along the left-hand footway to pass Chiswick Tower on your left. Immediately after passing the tower, turn left onto Gunnersbury Mews to reach the entrance to Gunnersbury station.

Chiswick Business Park



There is a row of shops, which includes cafés, on Chiswick High Road just beyond Gunnersbury Mews, and there is a large supermarket on the north side of Chiswick High Road at the pedestrian crossing. As well as serving the local population, these facilities cater for office workers on the adjacent business park.

Just beyond the supermarket is the Gunnersbury pub — which, note, is closed on Sundays.

The building which houses the pub dates from 1830. Under its former name of the John Bull, hosted concerts by the likes of the Who and Thin Lizzy.

Chiswick Business Park was built on the site of a facility for the maintenance of London buses which had occupied the site between 1921 and 1990., replacing orchards. Before the Great War, “Thames Valley orchards” referred to Brentford rather than to Berkshire and Oxfordshire.

Gunnersbury to Kew Gardens

2.8km

81 Enter the station building and, unless you are catching a train, pass the ticketing gates on your right. Turn right onto a path which leads out onto Wellesley Road, where turn right. Cross to the left-hand footway at a refuge (outside a pub), and turn right along the left-hand footway.

Pass beneath a road flyover — this is the first few metres of the M4, in fact — and continue to the end of Wellesley Road. Turn left onto Chiswick High Road.

This is the western end of the South Circular Road, the A205, where it takes over (anticlockwise) from the North Circular Road, the A406.

Pass the shops on Stile Hall Parade. Continue onto Kew Bridge Road and over Kew Bridge, still using the left-hand footway.

There are shops, cafés and pubs on this stretch on the north side of Kew Bridge.

On the south side of Kew Bridge, follow the left-hand footway of the road as it crosses Kew Green.

Kew Green has a long history: it is mentioned in a Parliamentary Survey of 1649. Cricket is known to have been played on the Green since the 1730s, and the impressive buildings which surround the Green were built during the early part of the nineteenth century. In 1973, the Green was scheduled to host a match in the Women’s World Cup between Jamaica and New Zealand. It would have been the first ever Women’s One-Day International cricket match, but the weather intervened, and not a ball was bowled.

There are pubs, cafés and a convenience shop on Kew Green.

82 At the junction, bear left (with the ever-noisy South Circular Road) onto Mortlake Terrace. Pass beneath the railway, and use the light-controlled pedestrian crossing at the junction with Ruskin Avenue

Kew Green





*Kew Pagoda from
Old Deer Park*

to cross to the right-hand footway. Take the next road on the right, Burlington Avenue, and follow the right-hand footway for its full length. At the end, turn right onto West Park Road to reach the railway.

Take the 1930s concrete footbridge ahead to cross the railway and reach the forecourt of Kew Gardens station.

There is a selection of shops, cafés and restaurants in the vicinity, plus a pub in part of the station building on the west side of the railway.

Kew Gardens to Richmond 2.3km

83 Descend to the foot of Station Parade. Join High Park Road and then turn

left onto the right-hand footway of Sandycombe Road. Turn right onto Ennerdale Road, following the right-hand footway through the bend to the left, all the way to the point where Ennerdale Road morphs into Lion Gate Gardens. Continue ahead, and turn right onto Stanmore Road to follow its left-hand footway out onto Kew Road.

Turn left and follow the left-hand footway of Kew Road, crossing to the right-hand footway using the refuge just beyond the junction with Pagoda Avenue.

Richmond station



84 Continue along the right-hand footway of Kew Road towards Richmond.

There are shops and restaurants on each side of Kew Road before you reach the major roundabout.

Make your way past the roundabout using light-controlled pedestrian crossings on either the west or east side of the junction. Continue along Kew Road to reach the Art Deco entrance to Richmond station on your left-hand side.

The town name has come from drift: Sheen, to the east, was the site chosen by King Henry VII for a rebuilt royal palace (a fire had destroyed the previous palace on the site, and there had been a royal residence in Sheen since the turn of the fourteenth century at the latest), and he named it Richmond Palace, in honour of his ancestral home of Richmond Castle in North Yorkshire.

The housing development which grew up later to the west, between Sheen and the river, took the name Richmond from the palace.

The hunting park on the south side of the palace was enclosed by King Charles I and was called Richmond Park.

Richmond station lies at the south-western extremity of the London Underground network, and of the Overground (after the rather slow and rambling North London Line was ingested into the Overground network in 2007, and has subsequently been improved greatly). Richmond is a key outer London station on the South Western Railway between Waterloo and Reading, Windsor, Hounslow and Kingston.

All facilities are available in Richmond.



Edgware Road to Earl's Court

5.5km; 1hr 08min

12m ascent

Introduction

1 As well as being a terminus of the District Line, Edgware Road station is the clockwise terminus (and therefore is also the anticlockwise start) of the non-circular Circle Line. It is also served by Hammersmith and City Line trains.

Edgware Road station dates from 1863: it was one of the stations on the world's first underground railway between Paddington and Farringdon. Note that Bakerloo Line trains serve a different Edgware Road station on the north side of the A40 (Westway and Marylebone Road).

Route

Edgware Road to Paddington

0.7km

2 Exit the station and take the right-hand footway of Chapel Street ahead, passing the sculpture of a window-cleaner on your right, to reach and cross Edgware Road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Continue ahead onto Praed Street, and continue ahead at the junction with South Wharf Road.

There are many shops, cafés, restaurants and pubs on Praed Street, and on surrounding streets.

3 Cross over the end of South Wharf Road (at a restaurant whose history as a pub is preserved on the exterior) and continue along the right-hand footway of Praed Street, passing St Mary's Hospital on the right.

It was in his laboratory within St Mary's Hospital that Sir Alexander Fleming pursued his work on his discovery of

*Edgware Road station
and the window-cleaner*





*Paddington station hotel,
Praed Street*

penicillin. There is a blue plaque on the wall of the hospital to commemorate his work.

Continue along Praed Street to reach the carriageway entrance to Paddington station, with access to the District Line on Praed Street ahead, or from the station concourse.

On the concourse, as well as access to the mainline platforms, there is access to the Tube (Bakerloo and District Lines, plus the main loop of the Circle Line). Access to the western arm of the Circle Line and to the Hammersmith and City Line is on the right.

Of course, the main station concourse also boasts many opportunities to linger for rest and refreshment. There are toilets on Platform 1 and near Platform 12, the latter offering step-free access. ATMs may be found near the main ticket

office and at Platform 12. On the top level of the glazed shopping court opposite Platform 1, there is a large pub, the Mad Bishop and Bear.

Paddington station is famous for many things, but particularly for two somewhat diminutive celebrities.

The station was built as the grand London terminus of the Great Western Railway, the current structure opening in 1854. It is one of the most impressive designs of Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806-1859), whose short stature makes the famous photograph with the background of the chains of his *SS Great Eastern* all the more impressive. His statue is located between Platforms 8 and 9.

*Isambard Kingdom Brunel
at Paddington station*

The other diminutive celebrity is, of course, Paddington Bear, who appears all around the station as a statue and on a seat — both on Platform 1 — and (inevitably) in much derivative merchandise throughout.



Back to the pub name. The Church of England sold the land to the Great Western Railway Company for a pittance (not having practised due diligence on the prospective value) — that accounts for the Mad Bishop. And the Bear? Well, you don't have to have me spell out who that was, do you? There is only one option.

If you have found yourself on the station concourse, perhaps

having arrived at Paddington by train or by the Bakerloo or Hammersmith and City Line, or having used station facilities, leave by the exit beside Platform 1 (where you will find the entrance to the Elizabeth Line platforms) and turn left to reach Praed Street. Continue by turning right, crossing Eastbourne Terrace onto Craven Road ahead.

Paddington to Bayswater

1.4km

4 Continue along Praed Street from the District Line entrance to Paddington Tube station (turning left if exiting the station here) to the Eastbourne Terrace junction: if necessary, cross here to the right-hand footway of Craven Road (the street-name changing at Eastbourne Terrace), passing a sculpture of animals round a table. Follow Craven Road to its junction with Devonshire Terrace. Turn right onto Devonshire Terrace and follow the left-hand footway as far as the junction with Queen's Gardens on the left.

5 Turn left onto Queen's Gardens and follow the left-hand footway to its end, where cross the road and turn right onto Leinster Gardens. Follow the left-hand footway round to the left onto the left-hand footway of Leinster Place. On your right is the Hallfield Estate.

The Hallfield Estate was built by Westminster City Council during the years which followed the end of the Second World War. It is in Modernist style, designed in part by Sir Denys Lasdun, and a light and airy feel has been assured by setting the blocks of flats at 45° to the roads which surround the site, thus incorporating much green space around the houses. Seen from afar, the major faces of the buildings were designed to project abstract art designs. The entire estate has been listed Grade II.

Execute a quick left-and-right turn onto Porchester Gardens, and follow the left-hand footway. At the junction with Inverness Terrace, turn left and follow its right-hand footway to Inverness Place, first noting the memorial to Gjergj Kastrioti Skanderbeg, an Albanian patriot of the fifteenth century. Turn right and follow Inverness Place to Queensway, where turn right. Follow the right-hand footway, crossing the road at Bayswater station.



*Platform 1 and clock,
Paddington station*



*Hallfield Estate from
Bishop's Bridge Road, on the
north side of the estate*



*Moscow Road — pub
and Greek cathedral*

*Notting Hill Gate station,
and a man balancing on the
dome of the Coronet theatre*

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

Bayswater to Notting Hill Gate 1.0km

6 Turn right in front of Bayswater station entrance (or turn left if exiting the station) and follow Queensway to Moscow Road, where turn left. Follow Moscow Road, passing the Greek Orthodox cathedral on the right, to reach the junction with the narrow Ossington Street (on the left).

There is a small café just beyond the junction on the left.

7 Continue ahead on the left-hand footway of Moscow Road, continuing onto the left-hand footway of Pembridge Square. Pass the gardens of Pembridge Square on your right, and turn left onto Pembridge Gardens (the street).

Follow the left-hand footway of Pembridge Gardens to its end at Notting Hill Gate. Turn left, and descend into the underpass. Pass the ticketing gates for Notting Hill Gate station on your left, then turn right to ascend to street level.

Notting Hill Gate station is served by the Central Line as well as the Circle and District Lines.

All facilities are available in the vicinity of the station.



Notting Hill Gate to High Street Kensington 1.3km

8 Continue westwards to the junction with Hillgate Street, where turn left onto and, at the end of Hillgate Street, turn left onto Kensington Place. Follow this street out past the Queen Victoria Hall on your right to Kensington Church Street. Turn right, and descend the right-hand footway of Kensington Church Street to its junction (on the right) with Gloucester Walk, passing the exuberantly decorated Churchill Arms on your right.

9 Continue along the right-hand footway of Kensington Church Street, following it round a left-hand bend, then round a right-hand bend, and descend to the junction with Kensington High Street. Turn right, crossing to the left-hand footway, to reach High Street Kensington Tube station.

There are many shops, cafés, restaurants and pubs on Kensington Church Street and Kensington High Street.



*The Churchill Arms,
Kensington Church Street*

High Street Kensington to Earl's Court 1.1km

10 If you are arriving at High Street Kensington station to start your day's walk, turn left onto the street (if exiting the station). Follow the left-hand footway westwards as far as the junction with Wright's Lane, and turn left. Follow the right-hand footway to its end and turn right onto Cheniston Gardens. Take the main road round its left-hand bend, and continue ahead on the right-hand footway of Marloes Road to its end at the junction with Cromwell Road.

11 Cross over Cromwell Road using the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Turn left, then immediately turn right to take



*High Street Kensington
station: courtyard entrance*

a path through to Kenway Road. Continue ahead on the left-hand footway of Kenway Road, taking the path (Hogarth Place) to the left of the pub where Kenway Road passes to its right.

This path leads you onto Hogarth Road — continue ahead to reach Earl's Court Road. Turn left and then turn right to cross Earl's Court Road at the light-controlled pedestrian crossing to reach the main entrance to Earl's Court station.

All facilities may be found in the vicinity of Earl's Court station.

Earl's Court station is the gathering-ground for the District Line, with branches to and from Richmond, Wimbledon, and Kensington Olympia stations: it is also served by Piccadilly Line trains.

Earl's Court station was opened in 1878 by the District Railway, replacing the 1871 station which stood on the opposite side of Earl's Court Road until it was destroyed by fire. In 1911, Earl's Court became the first Underground station to be furnished with escalators. It is the primary gathering-ground for District Line branches to and from termini at Edgware Road, at Wimbledon and (on the odd occasions when TfL deigns to run a service) at Kensington Olympia.

Standardisation of the station name (with an apostrophe) came as late as 1951.

Earl's Court station



All facilities for retail, eating, drinking and other pursuits may be found in the vicinity of Earl's Court station.



Earl's Court to Wimbledon

11.3km 2hr 22min

64m ascent

Introduction

1 Earl's Court station is the fulcrum the District Line, with trains to each of the line's termini. It is also served by the deep-level Piccadilly Line.

All facilities may be found in the vicinity of Earl's Court station, most of them on the bustling Earl's Court Road just outside the station entrance.

Route

Earl's Court to West Brompton

0.7km

2 Turn right on exiting the station onto Earl's Court Road and follow the right-hand footway as far as Penywern Road, where turn right. Follow the left-hand footway of Penywern Road to its end at Warwick Road.

Alternatively, exit the station at its western end onto Warwick Road and turn left to reach the end of Penywern Road.

The Warwick Road entrance to the station is situated directly opposite the site of the doors to the Earl's Court Exhibition Centre, which operated between 1887 and 2014. The Modernist building was erected between 1935 and 1937. The site has been bulldozed in preparation for the creation of four urban villages.

3 Cross Warwick Road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and continue ahead along the right-hand footway of Eardley Crescent all the way to its end at the junction with Old Brompton Road.

Turn right and follow the right-hand footway of Old Brompton Road to reach a light-controlled pedestrian crossing, where cross the

*Penywern Road,
off Earl's Court Road*





West Brompton station

road and double back to West Brompton station.

West Brompton station opened in 1866 as a stop on the West London Extension Joint Railway between Kensington Olympia (then simply known as *Kensington*) and Clapham Junction. The rather austere architecture seems to complement that of the cemetery next door, which had been opened less than thirty years previously.

The platforms serving the Mildmay Line of the Overground were opened in 1999, renewing the link with Kensington Olympia and Clapham Junction.

In addition to hosting District

Line services, West Brompton station is served by Overground services between Clapham Junction and Willesden Junction, and Southern rail services between Clapham Junction and Watford Junction.

West Brompton to Fulham Broadway 1.7km

4 Continue along Old Brompton Road (turning right if exiting the station) to reach the grand gated northern entrance to Brompton Cemetery.

There is a café with toilets on the right as you pass through the cemetery gateway, and an information centre on the right.

Brompton Cemetery was opened in 1840 and is one of London's Magnificent Seven cemeteries of that age — the others are Highgate, Kensal Green, Nunhead, Tower Hamlets, West Norwood, and (for dissenters) Abney Park.

Brompton is unique amongst the Seven inasmuch as it is owned by the Crown and managed as a Royal Park (and has been since 1852). There are over 200000 people buried in the cemetery, which is laid out to resemble an open-air cathedral. Much of the outer area has been rewilded by default.

Amongst the graves are those of

- **Tomasz Arciszewski** (1877-1955), Polish Prime Minister in Exile



*Central aisle,
Brompton Cemetery*

- **George Borrow** (1803-81), author and vagabond
- **Fanny Brawne** (Frances Lindon) (1800-65), muse of John Keats
- **Henry Cole** (1808-82), founder of the Victoria and Albert Museum and inventor of the Christmas card
- **John Peake Knight** (1828-86), inventor of the traffic light
- **Constant Lambert** (1905-51), composer
- **(Henry) Bernard Levin** (1928-2004), author and broadcaster
- **Henry Augustus Mears** (1873-1912), founder of Chelsea FC
- **Emmeline Pankhurst** (1858-1928), suffragette
- **John Snow** (1813-58), identifier of infected water as the transmitter of cholera
- **Richard Tauber** (1891-1948), opera singer
- **(Walter) Brandon Thomas** (1850-1914), author of *Charley's Aunt*
- **Flight Sub-lieutenant Reginald Warneford, VC** (1891-1915)
- **John Wisden** (1826-84), cricketer

*Brompton Cemetery—
bluebells among the
gravestones*



It was generally expected that Sir Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900)



would be buried in Brompton Cemetery alongside members of his family, but Queen Victoria put a stop to that idea, as she insisted that the remains of one of her favoured composers should instead rest in St Paul's cathedral.

Between 1854 and 1939, Brompton stood as the London District's Military Cemetery (chosen in part with the nearby Royal Hospital, Chelsea in mind), and some military graves remain.

The cemetery suffered bomb damage during the Second World War, and there was a ban on new interments (except in family tombs) between 1952 and 1996.

The cemetery is laid out as a roofless church, with the chapel at the site of the "altar". It is Grade I listed (by English Heritage) in the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. The cemetery is a haven for nature, with bats and insects in profusion. Over 200 species of butterflies and moths have been recorded, and amphibians, including, it is claimed, a toad. The site's previous history as a market garden has bequeathed wild cabbage, garlic and asparagus, and there are many species of fungi to be found on the site.



Brompton Cemetery

Top — Leyland mausoleum

Above left — tomb of Emmeline Pankhurst

Above right — tomb of Reginald Warneford, VC

As noted above, the cemetery is listed Grade I, but a number of individual structures within the cemetery are also listed. The elaborate copper-coated mausoleum of Frederick Richards Leyland, a Liverpool shipowner, is the only funerary monument in the country which is listed Grade II*.

The southern gateway to the cemetery is more restrained than the northern gate. The presence of two red telephone boxes might suggest that the grave of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott (1880-1960) lies within the cemetery, but in fact he is buried outside the west door

of the Anglican cathedral in Liverpool. His grandfather, Sir George Gilbert Scott (1811-78), architect of the Albert Memorial and the Midland Grand Hotel (St Pancras station) is interred in Westminster Abbey.

Make your way through the cemetery to its southern end, bearing left off the central avenue just before the semicircular walls to reach the gate. Turn right onto Fulham Road.

5 Take the right-hand footway of Fulham Road to reach Fulham Broadway station on your right.

On Fulham Road between Brompton Cemetery and the less memorable entrance to Fulham Broadway station, there are two notable structures on the right-hand side of the road.

*Stoll Foundation house and
gatepost detail*

The first, which has been looming over the route since it was first seen from the cemetery's main aisle, is Stamford Bridge stadium, home of Chelsea FC. The stadium, with its hotel and other accoutrements, is in a mix of styles. The postmodern additions and renovations seem to be drowning out the rest.

To the west of the stadium is the large block of flats which was built for the Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation to house disabled veterans of the Great War. The gateposts list some of the campaigns in which the army and navy veterans served.

Sir Oswald Stoll (1866-1942) was one of the leading impresarios of the early twentieth century: he built up what became the Stoll-Moss group of theatres, and owned studios during the era of silent films. In 1912, he instituted the Royal Command Performance (now the Royal Variety Performance),

Beyond, the new entrance to Fulham Broadway station is largely notable for its bathos, being buried in a nondescript shopping centre.



The area around the station contains all facilities, including toilets within the shopping centre, on the left-hand side (and downstairs) before you reach the entrance to the station.

Fulham Broadway to Parsons Green 0.8km

6 Cross Fulham Road by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing at the entrance to the station and turn right along the left-hand footway. At the junction with Harwood Road on the left, note the red sandstone frontage of the original entrance to the Tube station on your right. Cross Fulham Road and then Harwood Road by the light-controlled pedestrian crossings.

Turn left onto the right-hand footway of Harwood Road, then immediately turn right onto Effie Road. Take the first street on your left, Erin Close, in front of a restaurant, and follow it to its end at a park — this is the northern end of Eel Brook Common. Take a path on the right, parallel to the railway, and follow it out onto Novello Street at a roofed shelter.

7 Continue ahead on Novello Street (the only footway is on the right-hand side) to come out onto Parsons Green Lane, just to the south of Parsons Green Tube station.

Parsons Green to Putney Bridge 1.2km

8 Turn left along the left-hand footway of Parsons Green Lane to reach the corner of a triangular expanse of grass ahead on the left — this is Parsons Green.

*The White Horse from
Parsons Green*



The well-known White Horse Inn sits at the north end of the green, and there are other shops, cafés and restaurants nearby.

Cross the road ahead at the pub to reach the expanse of grassland. Follow a path ahead, bisecting the angle on entering the Green. Follow this path to its far end, where cross New King's Road by a pedestrian crossing.

There is a pub on New King's Road here, and a traditional breakfast café lies beyond on Peterborough Road.

Continue with the shortest of left-and-right jigs to reach

Peterborough Road, and follow its right-hand footway. Beyond Marlin House, turn right onto Bells Alley, with a school on your left. This leads you out onto Hurlingham Road.

9 Follow the left-hand footway of Hurlingham Road, joined part-way along by the Thames Path National Trail (here in exile from the riverside by order of the Hurlingham Club), to the junction with Napier Avenue, where turn left, following the Thames Path signage.

Follow Napier Avenue to its end at Ranelagh Gardens, where turn right. Follow the left-hand footway of Ranelagh Gardens to pass beneath the railway. Putney Bridge Underground station is on your right.

There are shops and cafés clustered around the station entrance: the one named *River Café* is a traditional breakfast café, but it is not that RiveRuth Rogers' restaurant). which is upstream close to Hammersmith Bridge.

Buses link Putney Bridge with areas of south-west London (over the bridge) on four separate routes.

Putney Bridge to East Putney 1.2km

10 Immediately after passing beneath the railway (or having turned left on exit from Putney Bridge station), take a path which runs parallel to the railway, signposted as a footpath to Putney. The path soon turns left to pass beneath the railway, then turns right to rise to railway level, with the tracks now on your right, up a flight of steps.

Putney Bridge (the road bridge) is a viable alternative for those with an aversion to staircases. After crossing the river, turn left onto Oxford Road to rejoin the main route at the junction with Merivale Road.

Cross the river by the footbridge (officially named *Fulham Railway Bridge*, and completed in 1889) which runs alongside the railway, and descend to Deodar Road.

11 Turn right and pass beneath the railway to reach the junction with Merivale Road. Cross Deodar Road and follow Merivale Road to Putney Bridge Road (where the road bridge alternative rejoins the main route).

Turn left onto Putney Bridge Road, then turn right to follow the left-hand footway of Oxford

*The southern end of
Fulham Railway Bridge*





East Putney station

Road to its end at Upper Richmond Road. Turn left onto Upper Richmond Road, and follow its left-hand footway.

There are many and varied shops, cafés, restaurants and pubs on this section of Upper Richmond Road.

Cross to the right-hand footway by a light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and continue ahead to reach East Putney station, passing beneath the railway.

East Putney station was opened in 1889. A chord linking the

station to the main line out of Waterloo was used by passenger services until 1941, but is now used almost exclusively to move empty rolling stock between Waterloo and Wimbledon.

East Putney to Southfields

2.1km

12 Continue along the right-hand footway of Upper Richmond Road beyond East Putney station (that is to say, turning right if exiting the station), passing beneath the railway chord, to reach Keswick Road, where turn right. Follow (uphill) the right-hand footway of Keswick Road to the top.

Where the road bends left, turn right to follow a footpath. This path leads across the railway on a footbridge, coming out onto Clockhouse Place. Turn left and follow Clockhouse Place out to Lytton Grove, where turn left.

Continue ahead on the left-hand footway of Lytton Grove to its end at the junction with West Hill, where turn left to reach Sutherland Grove on the right.

There is a petrol station on the left which contains the usual mini-supermarket and coffee machine.

13 Cross over West Hill and follow the left-hand footway of Sutherland Grove, all the way to Augustus Road. Turn left on Augustus Road to reach the junction with Wimbledon Park Road at Southfields station, which is over on your left.



Southfields station

There are shops, cafés and restaurants in the streets around this junction.

In addition to Tube services, the area is well supplied by bus routes to several areas.

Southfields to Wimbledon Park

1.8km

14 Southfields station was built in 1889 by the London and South Western Railway, as indicated by the sandstone plaque above the entrance (and now behind the Underground roundel).

Using two light-controlled pedestrian crossings, cross Augustus Road at the station entrance, then cross Wimbledon Park Road. Turn right to follow the left-hand footway of Wimbledon Park Road past shops and houses, all the way to a gate on the left which gives access to Wimbledon Park.

Wimbledon Park is the remnant of a much larger park, the grounds of Wimbledon Manor. This was one of the homes of the Earls Spencer, and in 1846, the fourth earl sold off much of the land for housing. The grounds were landscaped by Capability Brown, the lake being created by damming a small tributary of the River Wandle. More recently, the land to the west side of the lake was sold (by Merton Council) to the All-England Tennis and Croquet Club, who are the landowners from the other side of Wimbledon Park Road. A major extension to the club's facilities is planned, with more courts and attendant facilities.

The area to the north of the lake contains open sportsfields (often taken over for commercial activities) and an athletics stadium; to the south, tennis courts and bowling greens vie with play areas to the west of the watersports centre.

Turn left onto the tarmac path within the park, then turn right to follow a path which drifts away from the road. Keep straight ahead, passing an athletics track on the left, and continue until you reach the lake on your right.

If the gates to the athletics track are closed, turn left to follow the stadium fence, and turn right to keep the fence on your right until you reach the lake.

Turn left, and follow the lakeside path to the watersports centre building. Continue round the lakeside, then follow the path as it leaves the lake.

Wimbledon Park Lake





Alexandra Road, Wimbledon

There is a toilet block (with somewhat penitential facilities) on the left at the foot of the slope.

15 Bear right to keep a splash pad on your right and tennis courts on your left. Turn right to climb the steps and exit the park onto Home Park Road. Turn left to follow the right-hand footway of Home Park Road. Cross over its junction with Arthur Road.

Wimbledon Park station (stylistically similar to, and contemporary with, Southfields station) is off to the left.

The shops situated beyond the station contain a convenience shop and a café.

Wimbledon Park to Wimbledon 1.8km

16 If you are arriving to start out on the route from Wimbledon Park station, turn left to reach the mini-roundabout and turn left again. Follow the left-hand footway of Home Park Road to its junction with Kenilworth Avenue. Continue ahead, now on Strathearn Road and still on the left-hand footway, all the way to Gap Road at a mini-roundabout.

Cross Gap Road (there is a railway bridge on the left and a district sign which bears undesirable full stops and spaces in what should be simply SW19, as laid out in Post Office rules for postcodes in 1961) and turn right, then turn left onto Alexandra Road at the second mini-roundabout.

There is a café on the right which faces onto the second mini-roundabout.

The side of Alexandra Road adjacent to the railway boasts an unbroken line of mature trees, providing for the reduction of railway noise pollution for the residents across the street.

17 Follow the left-hand footway of Alexandra Road, passing a supermarket and then passing Wimbledon Magistrates' Court on the left, to reach the junction with Wimbledon Hill Road. Turn left and follow the left-hand footway to reach the forecourt of Wimbledon station.

As well as hosting District Line services, Wimbledon station is on a main line out of Waterloo and is a terminus for tram services from Croydon.

The railway came to Wimbledon in 1838: the first station was on the opposite side of the road from the current forecourt. The station was rebuilt in its current position with the opening of the District

Railway in 1889, and was rebuilt once more on the same site in the late 1920s.

Today, London Trams run their services over the former railway line between Wimbledon and West Croydon.

Wimbledon was once the rural expanse of large manorial houses and their accompanying farms. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the manors were subdivided into landed homes, notably for those who had made their fortune in overseas trading, and a village clustered around the stables of the coach companies.

The arrival of the railway changed the face of Wimbledon, bringing a fifteenfold increase in population in only fifty years. A commercial centre grew around the station, with the first department store opening in 1876. In 1922, the new (and current) tennis centre was opened by King George V — and the rain immediately intervened to delay play. *Plus ça change!*

Wimbledon station





Earl's Court to Kensington Olympia 1.8km; 21min 1m ascent

Introduction

1 The short branch of the District Line between Earl's Court and Kensington Olympia, originally part of much more extensive services, has now been cut back to a weekend service: the two stations may be linked by using the District Line and the Overground, changing at West Brompton — indeed, that route is recommended by TfL over the public address system at Earl's Court.. It is not quite faster to walk, but there really isn't much in it, especially if you factor in the waiting time at West Brompton, and the time and effort in climbing to road level and descending again to make your connection.

There are no intermediate stations on this branch of the District Line.

Earl's Court station



Route

Earl's Court to Kensington Olympia

1.7km

2 Turn left on exit from Earl's Court station. Continue northwards on Earl's Court Road and turn left onto Trebovir Road. Follow its right-hand footway to Warwick Road, where turn right. Cross to the left-hand footway at a light-controlled pedestrian crossing (where there is a traffic light on a boom high above the middle of the road) and continue ahead to reach West Cromwell Road.

3 Cross West Cromwell Road by the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing and take Warwick Road ahead, with a large supermarket on the left. Follow the left-hand footway of Warwick Road to reach and cross (using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing) Kensington High Street.

Continue ahead on the left-hand footway of Holland Road. Turn left onto Fairfax Place, then turn right onto Russell Road. Turn left at the station sign to reach a footbridge over the railway to the main station entrance on Olympia Way.

For a step-free (though somewhat duller) alternative route between Kensington High Street and Kensington Olympia station, after crossing Kensington High Street, turn left, cross the railway, and turn right onto Olympia Way, passing the entrance to the event hall on the left.

*The ghost of Motorail,
Kensington Olympia*

Kensington Olympia station has had a chequered history. It opened briefly in 1844, then re-opened in 1862. For a time, there was a station to the north called Kensington, but it was renamed Addison Road to avoid confusion.

Olympia was designated a preparedness station during the Cold War to take government and their civil servants to the primary nuclear bunker at Corsham in Wiltshire, changing from rail to road at Warminster.

Motorail services began in 1955 with a summer-only service between London and Perth. In 1966, it became the London end of services to Cornwall, Fishguard, Carlisle, Stirling and Perth, but that service did not fare well for very long. This



was partly due to the logistics of offloading cars at intermediate stations, and partly due to the improvements to roads (particularly motorways) and to the increasing reliability of cars for journeys of such lengths. The service was wound down and finally closed in 1995.

For a short period, it was the London stop on services between the north and the south, with through trains between Glasgow/Edinburgh and Brighton via Birmingham New Street, Milton Keynes Central, and Gatwick Airport. However, that service withered after only a few years.

Overground services brought it back to fuller life, alongside the District Line services. The District Line services have now been cut back to a weekend-only service.

For some time during the twentieth century, one needed a platform ticket to use the footbridge, costing 2d (less than 1p). There was even a “return platform ticket” for those commuting across the bridge, offering one journey in each direction — the cost of this ticket was also 2d. Needless to say, the footbridge is available without charge today.

The Olympia exhibition centre has had a busy life, particularly after the closure of the Earl’s Court centre, but today’s exhibitors require the greater flexibility of use offered by centres such as ExCeL, in Docklands, and the Kensington venue is being rebuilt with a pronounced change-of-use leaning towards being an entertainment venue rather than an exhibition centre.



Turnham Green to Ealing Broadway

5.4km; 1hr 08min
30m ascent

Introduction

1 Turnham Green station is a junction station on the District Line's spinal route between Upminster and Richmond, and is at the eastern end of the Ealing Broadway branch, which opened in 1879.

The station hosts Piccadilly Line services in the early morning (before the rush hour starts). At other times, transfer between the lines must be made at Hammersmith or Acton Town to reach Turnham Green.

There are many shops and refuelling opportunities clustered around the station, on Turnham Green Terrace and on Chiswick High Road to the south.

Turnham Green to Chiswick Park

0.9km

2 Cross Turnham Green Terrace and follow a path ahead onto Acton Green, keeping close to the railway.

It would be easy to deduce that this piece of green space would be called Turnham Green, based on the Tube station name. However, this is the southern extremity of Acton, which may come as another surprise to those whose mental geography is based on the Harry Beck Tube map.

Cross over Fisher Lane using the pedestrian crossing, and continue ahead on a path, again close to the railway on the left. Bear left at a scissors junction of paths, away from a typically suburban brick-barn church (with a strange corrugated-iron sub-barn on its south side), to exit Acton Green at the corner of Hardwicke Road. Follow the left-hand footway of Hardwicke Road to its end at Acton Lane.

*Hardwicke Road,
Acton Green*





Chiswick Park station

3 Turn left onto Acton Lane and pass beneath the railway to reach, on the right, Chiswick Park station.

Chiswick Park station was opened in 1879, and was rebuilt in 1932 to accommodate the fast lines for the Piccadilly Line. The design, by Charles Holden, borrows from contemporary design in the Netherlands and Germany, as he did for other stations. Chiswick Park station is said to have been modelled on a design from Berlin.

There is more information to be found about Charles Holden on page 39.

Chiswick Park to Acton Town

1.8km

4 Start at the station entrance with your back to the building, with Acton Lane to the left and Bollo Lane to the right. Turn right at (or out of) the station to take the right-hand footway of Bollo Lane. Pass beneath the railway, and cross over Montgomery Road at a pub. Continue along Bollo Lane to Antrobus Road, where turn right. Follow Antrobus Road to its junction with Cunnington Street, where turn left.

There is a convenience shop on the corner.

Follow Cunnington Street across its junction with Rothschild Road onto Kingswood Road, and follow it all the way to its end at South Acton station.

Between 1907 and 1959, a shuttle service operated between South Acton and Acton Town, linking the North London Line (between Richmond and Broad Street) with the Tube network. Little or nothing remains of this line, save a bridge abutment on Bollo Lane at the entrance to the Acton Underground Works. South Acton station is now on the Overground line between Richmond and Willesden Junction.

5 Cross the railway by the footbridge, and continue northwards on Palmerston Road. Follow Palmerston Road to its end at Bollo Bridge Road.

There is a small supermarket on Bollo Bridge Road opposite the end of Palmerston Road.

This area has been redeveloped in recent years into a high-density area of flats, with only a few of the older buildings (principally the

school) remaining, all of this being driven under the marketing tag of Acton Gardens. The rail transport links at Acton Town and South Acton are dormitory portals to workplaces elsewhere in London, backed up by links using local bus services.

Apart from the small supermarket and a neighbouring coffee shop, little seems to have been done by the developers to provide a range of services. I am sure that the developers are not driven by the same ethos as, say, the Cadburys were when designing Bournville in Birmingham, but an online map-search for “pub” will evince a remarkably empty quarter which matches the Acton Gardens site footprint. Even the post-war New Towns built pubs, libraries and community halls into their planning — some of these have been retired or replaced, but after 100 years, the Admiral Vernon pub in Becontree (the world’s largest public housing development) has been listed Grade II.

Turn left along Bollo Bridge Road and, after 90m, turn right onto Corbet Gardens. On your left is Bollo Brook Park: follow a path which begins parallel with Corbet Gardens, passes to the right of some basketball courts, and eases to the left to reach Osborne Road at a traffic barrier.

Turn left and follow the right-hand footway of Osborne Road between school buildings, and past fragments of what went before, out to Bollo Lane, where turn right.

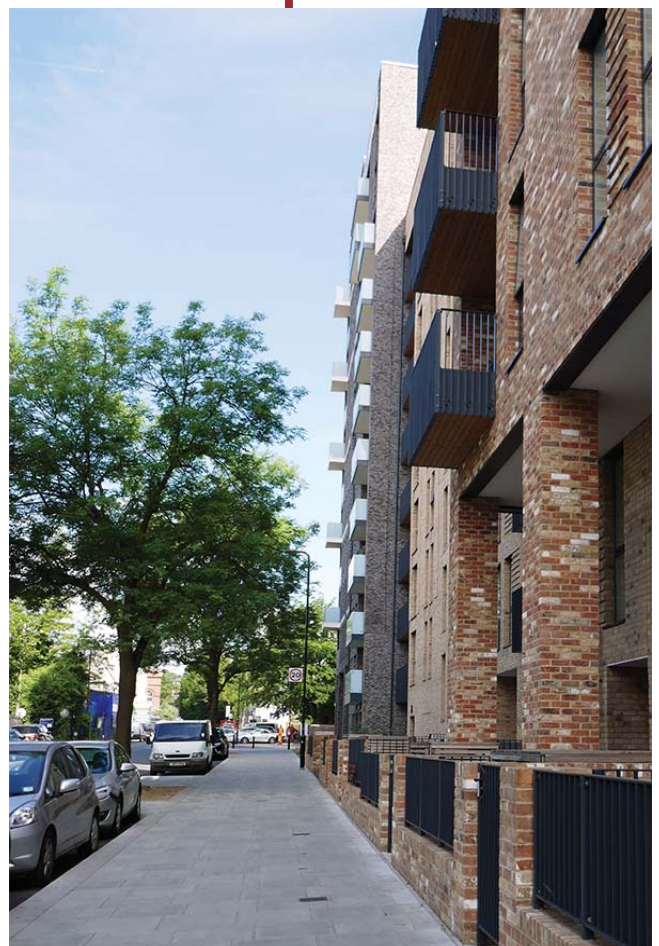
Bollo Lane is still small-scale industrial in composition on the side adjacent to the railway, but it must be questionable how long these businesses can hold out against the march of brownfield housing development.

Follow the right-hand footway of Bollo Lane to its end at the junction with Gunnersbury Lane at Acton Town station.

Clearly one may follow the right-hand footway of Bollo Lane all the way from Chiswick Park to Acton Town, but the 450m saved is outweighed by the greater interest on the present route.

Top — bar snacks and IPA are no longer provided from this ex-pub on Osborne Road

Bottom — the new-look Bollo Lane





Acton Town station

There are cafés and shops clustered around Acton Town station, some on Gunnersbury Lane beyond the station to the west.

Acton Town to Ealing Common

1.3km

The Piccadilly Line also runs, coincident with the District Line, between these two stations. The Piccadilly Line's route between Acton Town and Uxbridge was operated by District Line trains until 1932.

6 Turn right onto the right-hand footway of Gunnersbury Lane and, at the end of the parade of shops, cross to the left-hand footway using the refuge. Continue along Gunnersbury Lane, passing on your left a large school and a care centre.

Turn left to pass through a traffic barrier onto Hillcrest Road and follow its left-hand footway. After the road bends to the right, turn left onto King Edward's Gardens. Follow the left-hand footway, once again bending to the right with the road, to reach the busy thrum of Uxbridge Road.

Uxbridge Road is the original line of the A40 (before Western Avenue was built during the 1930s to by-pass Acton, Ealing, Southall and Uxbridge), and is the route of the coach road between London and Oxford.

There are shops and restaurants on Uxbridge Road.

7 Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of Uxbridge Road all the way to Ealing Common station.

On the approach to the station, both sides of Uxbridge Road are colonised by shops, cafés and restaurants.

Ealing Common station was opened in 1879 by the District Railway. The current station building, with a rare heptagonal entrance hall, dates from 1932 (and the changeover to Piccadilly Line trains on the Uxbridge branch), and was designed by Charles Holden (see page 39 for more information about Holden).



Ealing Common station entrance hall

Ealing Common to Ealing Broadway

1.4km

8 Continue along the left-hand footway of Uxbridge Road (that is to say, turning left if exiting the station). Cross over Leopold Road, and take a path to the left of some railings onto Ealing Common.

Ealing Common is an open space of 19ha which is registered as Metropolitan Common Land. The Common is managed by the London Borough of Ealing. It is bisected by the thunderous and pollution-forming channel of the North Circular Road.

Follow the tarmac path straight across the eastern part of the common to reach the North Circular Road and to cross it by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Bear slightly right and, making for the left-hand end of a line of trees, cross the grassy common on a faint trod to reach the road at its junction with The Grove.

The pillar box in the distance will help you (unless mist is clinging to the Common) to distinguish The Grove from Grange Road (just to the south): the latter has no pillar box.

9 Follow the right-hand footway of The Grove to its junction with Windsor Road, where turn right.

If the Common has been occupied for a commercial event, or if recent rains (or snowfall) have turned the surface of the Common to mud,



Ealing Common

turn left after crossing the North Circular Road, then turn half-right onto Warwick Road, continuing on its right-hand footway to Kenilworth Road. Turn right to reach the main route at the junction of The Grove and Windsor Street, continuing straight ahead onto Windsor Street.

Continue along the left-hand footway of Windsor Road to its end, at the eastern end of Ealing's commercial centre. Turn left and follow the left-hand footway for a few metres to the junction with Broadway.

Turn right and cross the road by the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing to reach the right-hand footway of Broadway, and follow it ahead to Ealing Broadway station on your right.

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

Ealing Broadway station was opened (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. The current station, serving all lines from a single entrance, was built in 1961 and was largely remodelled in 2021 with the coming of the Elizabeth Line.

*Ealing Broadway station
(2021 edition)*

