

Walk the Lioness 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 (2024) 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:
“Ready Money” fountain, The Regent’s Park

Walk the Overground Lioness Line

Start	Euston station — NW1 2RT
Finish	Watford Junction station — WD17 1EU
Distance	35.1km
Duration	7 hours 24 minutes
Ascent	230m

*Euston station —
the Poisoners' Piazza*





London Euston to Watford Junction

34.4km; 7hr 15min
239m ascent

Introduction

1 Euston station was opened in 1837 as the London terminus of the London and Birmingham Railway, and was expanded in 1849. The Victorian station was demolished in the 1960s (along with the Euston Arch) and the station was rebuilt in contemporary style. It is one of the busiest mainline termini in London. Recently, parts of the station have been given a makeover, and more modernisation is promised.

Much of the coming change is connected with the arrival of HS2: there are extensive works on the south-western side of the station building, and construction work for the line's approach to the station may be seen to the west of the current tracks (on the left if you are leaving Euston for points north).

Euston contains all the facilities one expects to find at a major railway station, including shops, cafés, restaurants, and pubs, some of which are outside the main concourse on a “piazza” which is usually awash with the toxic stench of tobacco smoke. There are toilets near Platform 1; ATMs are to be found outside the ticket office.

As well as being the terminus of this line of the Overground, the station is served by the Charing Cross branch and the Bank branch of the Northern Line, by the Victoria Line, and (of course) by mainline train services. Euston is the London terminus of sleeper services to and from Scotland.

In 2024, the line, for a long time known to all as the Watford DC Line, was renamed the *Lioness Line* — a name which is of no geographical help (particularly for visitors who might try to locate the line), and which taunts the hubris

*Euston station —
entrance to the concourse*



of its ephemeral nature. Of the intermediate stations between the two termini, the only connection with other mainline services is at Harrow and Wealdstone station.

Route

London Euston to South Hampstead 5.0km

2 Exit the station concourse by the ticket office (that is, ahead on the right if you have your back to the platforms). Advance towards the lodge building (which is now a pub), and make your way round to the right, keeping inside the railway estate through a small park. Cross Melton Street by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and follow the right-hand footway of Euston Road to Euston Square station, which is on the Circle, Hammersmith and City, and Metropolitan Lines of the Underground.

The Underground (the world's first underground railway) runs beneath Euston Road and Marylebone Road between King's Cross St Pancras stations and Baker Street. As with many early underground railways, construction was by the cut-and-cover method.

Euston Road forms part of the New Road, whose construction began in 1756: it was London's first by-pass, running between Edgware Road and Angel. A few years later, City Road was built to extend the by-pass to the City at Old Street. The New Road was incorporated into the (Inner) Ring Road in the *County of London Plan* of 1943.

Cross North Gower Street at the (sort of) refuge, and continue to the junction with Hampstead Road. Cross Hampstead Road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and continue ahead

There are cafés and other opportunities for food and drink in Regent's Place on your right.

Continue along Euston Road, still on the right-hand footway. Cross Triton Street by its divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing and continue ahead. Cross Albany Street by its light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

You will pass International Students' House on the other side of the road, over on your left. You will see the plinth for the memorial to President John F Kennedy in a little alcove (the bust is now within the precincts of International Students' House "for its own safety")

Continue past Peto Place to reach and cross Park Square East.

3 Turn right to follow the left-hand footway of Park Square East into The Regent's Park.

The Regent's Park should always be named to include the definite article. Transport for London seems to be rather careless with the definite article in its nomenclature.

Cross the Outer Circle road to enter the parkland, keeping to the left-hand path which runs parallel to the Outer Circle. Cross over the Broad Walk, and at the next path, turn right. Follow the path (which is quieter than the Broad Walk) past the splendid Griffin Tazza, until the path comes to an end. At this point, turn right, then turn left onto the Broad Walk and cross Chester Road by the pedestrian crossing.

There is a café on the left at Chester Road.

Follow the Broad Walk all the way to the "Readymoney" fountain.

The name may be redolent of some recent sponsorship deal with an unsavoury money-lending outfit, but this is not so. The fountain was donated to the park in 1869 by Sir Cowasjee Jehangir, whose nickname was Readymoney. He was a Parsee industrialist: the donation was in gratitude for the protection of Parsees during British rule in India.

Bear off left from the fountain, then follow the path as it bends to the right, then bends to the left, to keep the Zoo close on your right.

It is probably this path which features in the chase at the end of *The Man who was Thursday*, by GK Chesterton.

Follow this path to the Outer Circle, and cross the road by the refuge. Continue ahead on a path which crosses the Regent's Canal and leads out onto Prince Albert Road.

4 Cross Prince Albert Road by the pedestrian crossing and entre Primrose Hill Park. Keep the houses close on your left and continue ahead, passing a covered reservoir on the left. Keep to the left-hand option at a fork, and continue ahead in a north-westerly direction to exit the park onto Elsworth Terrace.

Follow the left-hand footway out to Elsworth Road, where turn left. Take the first street on the right, Lower Merton Rise, and follow its left-hand footway to King Henry's Road at a mini-roundabout. Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of King Henry's Road to



The Regent's Park

Above — the Griffin Tazza

*Below — the Readymoney
Drinking Fountain*



its end. Cross over Harley Road and continue ahead to a junction, where bear round to the left to take the left-hand footway of Adelaide Road.

Cross Avenue Road by a tripartite light-controlled pedestrian crossing, then cross St John's Wood Park by a refuge. Pass to the left of a ventilation shaft (for the Jubilee Line) to regain the left-hand footway of Adelaide Road. Cross Finchley Road by another tripartite light-controlled pedestrian crossing to reach Hillgrove Road.

Follow the left-hand footway of Hillgrove Road to the junction with Alexandra Road. Cross the road ahead by the refuge and turn right to follow the left-hand footway of Hillgrove Road round its left-hand bend to reach a roundabout. Turn left onto Loudoun Road and follow its left-hand footway to reach the entrance to South Hampstead station.

South Hampstead to Kilburn High Road

1.1km

5 Continue along Loudoun Road (turning left if exiting the station) and, just before the junction with Alexandra Road, turn right to cross Loudoun Road by the refuge, Take the pedestrian Rowley Way ahead, to the right of Alexandra Place. and follow the pathway onto the Alexandra Road estate.

The striking Alexandra Road Estate was designed for Camden Council by Neave Brown (1929-2018) and was built between 1972 and 1978 to replicate the high-density urban terrace (in this instance an unbroken 500m block) in the then prevalent Brutalist style. The entire estate was listed Grade II* in 1993, the first such

Alexandra Road estate



modern estate to be so designated.. The ziggurat design of the flats which back onto the railway minimises the penetration of railway noise into the interiors of the flats, and the buildings are placed on rubber shock absorbers, using an earlier version of the technology used on Symphony Hall in Birmingham, in both cases to reduce railway-induced vibration within the buildings.

There are similar estates (not all of which were designed by Brown) in Gospel Oak and Dartmouth Park, and the same influence may be seen in the residential units of the Brunswick Centre, near Russell Square.

Follow the paved walkway, keeping to the same level to pass a chimney close by on your left, to reach the far left-hand corner of a small square. Take the set of steps leading down to the right to reach the next level of walkway below. Turn left to keep Alexandra Road Park, with its tree-sheltered playgrounds, on your left and exit the estate onto Abbey Road.

Turn right and follow the right-hand footway of Abbey Road to the junction with Belsize Road, where turn left to cross Abbey Road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

There is a small supermarket on this junction.

6 Continue along Belsize Road, following the left-hand footway. Follow the road through a mild left-and-right pair of bends, out onto Kilburn High Road. Turn left to reach the entrance to Kilburn High Road station on your left.

There is a wide spectrum of cafés, shops and pubs on and around Kilburn High Road.

Kilburn High Road to Queen's Park

1.2km

7 Cross Kilburn High Road at the station entrance by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and turn left. Cross over Coventry Close and turn right to follow the right-hand footway of Cambridge Avenue.

Soon, you will see on the left a building with a relief above the doorway: this is the RSPCA War Memorial Dispensary.

Next to the dispensary is a corrugated iron ex-church of the kind usually called a tin tabernacle. It was the forerunner to the high Victorian, Garde I



*War Memorial Dispensary,
Cambridge Avenue*



*Tin tabernacle,
Cambridge Avenue*

listed St Augustine's church nearby, but the vicar insisted on the temporary structure's being called an "iron church", probably because the usual name was considered too nonconformist. The building is now occupied by the Willesden Sea Scouts.

The need for new churches came with the urbanisation of the later part of the Industrial Revolution, as towns and cities expanded very quickly. At the same time, there was a drive to inculcate church attendance in rural areas among people who had no transport, or who would be likely to use the lack of transport as an excuse to their employers for non-attendance at the employers' choice of religious flavour.

The formation in 1844 of the Free Church of England, splitting Methodists off in schism from the Church of England, and the increasing identification (at the same time) of many parishioners with a range of nonconformist denominations and sects, brought the need for yet more church buildings (apocryphally explained in Wales as "so that I have a chapel I don't go to").

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the Church of Scotland had identified the need for over forty new churches, and Thomas Telford was commissioned to produce a standard architectural design for use throughout Scotland — though even this had to be modified at Port Charlotte on the island of Islay: the church was to be shared with the Free Church, and the Free Kirkers (these are not the "Wee Frees" — they came out of a later holier-than-thou schism) demanded a separate door. However, these cheap-and-not-very-cheerful kirks (this is Scotland, remember) were still too expensive and would have taken too long to build in the rush for churches and chapels in the second half of the century.

Several ironworking companies in London, Liverpool, Glasgow and elsewhere built flat-pack prefabricated churches (St Ikea, anyone?) in corrugated iron, offering them by mail order via catalogues. A number of these companies segmented the market and concentrated on serving one type of purchaser (gentry, railway companies, and so on).

Some of these churches are still in ecclesiastical use, others have changed use (there are youth organisations' halls and discotheques),



Kilburn Park station

while others exist as no more than barns or iron shells in hedges. Yet others have, of course, returned to dust — or possibly to the great scrapyard of Time.

Continue along the right-hand footway of Cambridge Avenue to reach Kilburn Park station on the Bakerloo Line on your right.

Kilburn Park station was designed by Stanley Heaps (1880-1962), adapting the earlier style of the underground stations of Leslie Green (1875-1908), his predecessor at the Underground Electric Railways Company of London. The amendments to Green's original style which were made by Heaps included the flattening of the exterior to single-storey level (this change being made possible by the fitting of escalators between street and platform levels, rather than lifts. The exterior is faced in ox-blood faience tilework, and there are interesting original features inside the station.

8 Continue ahead, now walking on the right-hand footway of Chichester Road, to reach and cross Canterbury Road, which goes off at a sharp angle to the right.

In the triangle defined by the Carlton Tavern, Kilburn Park station and Queen's Park station, 1960s flats and tower blocks are being razed, with modern flats (no higher than medium-rise) being built to take their place. Curiously, much of the housing built during the second quarter of the twentieth century survives this process of renewal.

Cross over Canterbury Road and bear left onto its right-hand footway. Almost immediately, turn right onto Canterbury Terrace and follow its right-hand footway to its end at a railway fence. Turn left to follow the right-hand footway of Albert Road to its end. Use two pedestrian crossings to cross Salusbury Road and turn right to rise to a bridge over the West Coast Main Line, where the entrance to Queen's Park station is situated.

At Queen's Park, the Bakerloo Line meets up with this line as the Underground emerges out of the tunnel from Elephant and Castle.

There are many shops, cafés, restaurants and pubs on and around Salusbury Road, and these cover a good range of styles. On Sundays (between 1000 and 1400), these are supplemented by an established farmers' market at the school. You will not have any excuse to go hungry in this area.

Harvist Road

*Below — terraced houses
backing onto the railway*

*Bottom — original gateway
into Queen's Park*

Queen's Park to Kensal Green 1.1km

9 Descend on the left-hand footway of Salusbury Road from the entrance to Queen's Park station (turning left if exiting the station) and turn left onto Harvist Road. Follow the left-hand footway of Harvist Road past Queen's Park on the right to the park gate at the corner of Milman Road.

This public park is managed by the Corporation of the City of London and has been open to the public since 1887. Only a few years before that, the Royal Agricultural Society had tried to set up a permanent site for its annual Show at this location, but it was not a profitable venture. Following the dropping of the Show from the plans, there were some attempts by local residents to secure the entire Showground area as a public park, but in the end, only a central portion was retained for the purpose.

There are toilets on the left just after the park entrance. In the centre of the park, there is a park café.

Continue along the left-hand footway of Harvist Road to reach the junction with Chamberlayne Road.



Kensal Rise station, on the Overground's Mildmay Line between Willesden Junction and Stratford, is to be found up Chamberlayne Road to the right. There are shops and cafés near the station, and a few such places at this junction.

10 Cross Chamberlayne Road by means of the light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Continue ahead, now on the left-hand footway of Mortimer Road. Pass a brickbarn church (one of the suburbs' many Victorian-era churches which were built in this rather uncompromising and bombastic style) on the right, and at the end of the road bear left to pass the traffic barriers and reach the entrance to Kensal Green station on your left.

In contrast to the older station buildings on the line, Kensal Green's modern functionality makes it look more like a community health centre than a station.

Incidentally, since Kensal is derived from "King's Holt", it follows that the "s" in the word should be pronounced as a "z".

Kensal Green to Willesden Junction 0.5km

11 Cross College Road at the entrance to Kensal Green station. Turn left and immediately turn right to enter Hazel Road Open Space. Follow the pathway through the park, thus mitigating the traffic pollution on Harrow Road. Pass a play area on your right. The path comes out onto Harrow Road opposite the western entrance to Kensal Green Cemetery.

Kensal Green was the first of the Magnificent Seven suburban cemeteries which were opened during the nineteenth century to relieve the pressure on London's city churchyards. It was modelled on the *Père Lachaise* cemetery in Paris, and was opened in 1833.

Among the 56000 people whose bodies were interred in Kensal Green cemetery, there is the usual broad range of people. Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the



Kensal Green station

*Kensal Green Cemetery,
western gate*





*Parish boundary stone,
Harrow Road*

famous engineer, is here with his parents, as are Charles Babbage (pioneer of computing), the authors Wilkie Collins and Anthony Trollope, Charles Blondin (tightrope-walker), and two of the children of King George III (which is in itself moderately surprising), along with one of his grandsons. There is a cenotaph to the Reformers' Movement of Robert Owen, Elizabeth Fry, and their peers. Mary Seacole, the Scots-Jamaican nurse of the Crimean War era whose work was praised by none other than Florence Nightingale, and whose pension fund was boosted by a significant donation from the Duke of Edinburgh), is buried in the adjoining Roman Catholic cemetery.

Along with Highgate (which has Karl Marx's grave as its signature), it is probably the best-known of the Magnificent Seven, in part because it is referenced in the closing couplet of *The Rolling English Road* by GK Chesterton, intended as a witness statement of his Roman Catholic faith.

*For there is good news yet to hear,
and fine things to be seen,
Before we go to Paradise
by way of Kensal Green.*

Turn right onto Harrow Road, and immediately cross the road by a refuge to take up the left-hand footway, and follow it to the junction with Scrubs Lane.

Note, set into the brickwork of the houses on the left, the sight of an old parish boundary marker. This is the summit of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.

There is a concentration of Brazilian and Portuguese shops and restaurants on Harrow Road.

12 Cross Scrubs Lane by the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing and continue ahead on the left-hand footway to reach the northern entrance (not the main entrance) to Willesden Junction station.

Willesden Junction to Harlesden

1.5km

13 If you are exiting Willesden Junction station, turn left on exit from the station building and follow the path to Harrow Road, where turn left. Follow the left-hand footway to the junction with Tubbs Road and follow the left-hand footway all the way to its end at Station Road.

Turn left onto Station Road if you need to reach the main entrance to Willesden Junction station.

In *The Prime Minister*, the fifth of his six Palliser novels, Anthony Trollope (who is buried in Kensal Green Cemetery nearby) sets a suicide scene at what he calls the “Tenway Junction”. This location was based on Willesden Junction, where many railway lines converge.

There is a convenience shop and cafés in the vicinity, some catering to the local Portuguese and Brazilian population.

Cross Station Road using the traffic-light sequence to time your move, and turn right onto the left-hand footway. Take the first street on your left, Harley Road, and follow its left-hand footway to the junction with Fairlight Avenue on your right.

By this point, you will see the large railway freight depot on your left.

14 Continue along the left-hand footway of Harley Road to its end, with the sweet smell of chocolate in the air — across the railway, more than a million chocolate digestive biscuits are baked every day.

Take a dog-leg to the right near the end of Harley Road, and turn left onto Minet Avenue. Follow the left-hand footway to the junction with Acton Lane, where turn left to pass beneath a railway. Pass the end of Mordaunt Road and turn right to cross Acton Lane by a light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Harlesden station is up to the left.

There are shops nearby, and buses link this point with areas of north and west London.

Harlesden to Stonebridge Park

1.8km

15 Follow the left-hand footway of Mordaunt Road as far as the junction with Shelley Road. Turn left, and at the end of Shelley Road, turn right along the left-hand footway of Milton Avenue. Continue to the end of the road.

16 Take a path ahead with a sports facility on your right. At the end of the sportsfields, turn right on the path, then turn left onto First Drive.

At the junction, turn right to follow the left-hand footway out to the A404 again, here carrying the name Brentfield. Turn left and follow



*Northern (Harrow Road)
entrance to
Willesden Junction station*



*Terraced houses,
Milton Avenue*

the left-hand footway to reach the slip-road onto the North Circular Road below.

Cross the filter lane, the slip-road and its twin beyond the road bridge, and the filter lane by their respective light-controlled pedestrian crossings, and turn left to follow the right-hand footway of the North Circular Road to Stonebridge Park station.

For a brief period in the 1980s, Stonebridge Park was the northern terminus of the Bakerloo Line, until Harrow and Wealdstone wrested back

its status as terminus. Some northbound services still terminate here. Despite widespread on-board announcements, trains and buses do not terminate, but go on to serve their next groups of customers on their following journeys.

There is a small convenience shop in a hut on the right.

Stonebridge Park to Wembley Central 2.6km

17 Continue beneath the railway bridges to reach the junction with Beresford Avenue, with the Ace Café ahead.

*The arch of Wembley
Stadium looms over
Tokington near
Stonebridge Park*



When the North Circular Road was built in 1938, the Ace Café was established as a transport café. The building suffered from aerial bombing in 1940, and was rebuilt in 1949. The business survived until its closure in 1969, by which time the dual carriageway was by-passing the café, causing the loss of the lorry-drivers' trade, and the clientele had become, in the majority of cases, motorcyclists.

Partial re-opening was achieved in 1999, with full re-opening in 2001, with the clear emphasis on the culture of the owners of noisy two-wheeled vehicles.

The first spin-off business opened in Lahti (Finland) in 2011, and has been followed by similar establishments in China, Switzerland, Malaysia and the United States of America. The menu is standard (possibly anachronistically standard) transport-café fare, but the prevailing atmosphere of the place, and of its target demographic, remains strictly leathered and soaked in petrol.

Turn right onto Beresford Avenue, and keep to the right-hand footway onto Heather Park Drive. Follow its right-hand footway to its end at Heather Park Parade.

There are convenience shops among the businesses at Heather Park Parade.

18 Turn right to follow the right-hand footway of Lyon Park Avenue. Just beyond 33 Lyon Park Avenue, turn right along a path which leads to Station Grove (who are they trying to impress? There are no leafy arbours here!). Turn left to follow the right-hand footway of Station Grove to its end at a flight of steps.

Ascend the steps to reach Wembley High Road, where turn right to reach the entrance to Wembley Central station, set back on your right.

All facilities are available on Wembley High Road. There are frequent buses, and Wembley Stadium station on the Chiltern Line is not far away.

Wembley Central to North Wembley

1.4km

19 Cross High Road at Wembley Central station and turn right along the left-hand footway. Take the first turning on the left onto St John's Road.

For Wembley Stadium station on the Chiltern line, continue along High Road to Park Lane, where turn left. The station is reached via White Horse Bridge on your right.

Follow the left-hand footway of St John's Road, passing beneath the railway to reach the gateway into King Edward VII Park on the right.

20 Continue ahead, still on the left-hand footway, onto Llanover Road, following it to the end of the road. Take a path on the left, then turn right and ascend a flight of steps to reach East Lane, where turn left and follow the left-hand footway to reach the entrance to North Wembley station.

There is a cluster of other businesses on East Lane to the west of the station, though at the time of writing, it seems that there are a few ex-businesses among them.

North Wembley to South Kenton

1.0km

21 Continue along the left-hand footway of East Lane (turning left if exiting North Wembley station) to the junction with Peel Road at an ex-pub which has, like so many, been turned into a small supermarket. Cross to the left-hand footway of Peel Road using two light-controlled pedestrian crossings, and follow the left-hand footway of Peel Road to its utmost end.

This may prove more challenging than it ought to be, given that so many self-centred residents insist on commandeering the footway for the parking of cars — it would be impossible for a wheelchair to pass between the cars and the garden walls.

Turn left at the end of Peel Road to take a short alleyway through to Byron Road. Turn right and take the right-hand footway of Byron Road through a left bend and then a right bend to its end at a turning circle. Continue straight ahead on a path to reach Nathans Road, where follow the right-hand footway to the junction with Carlton Avenue West.

22 Continue to follow the right-hand footway of Nathans Road to the junction on the right with The Link.

South Kenton station is accessed along The Link on your right. The ticketing gates are on the right of the underpass, thus giving free access to Windermere Avenue on the far side of the tracks, where there are shops and a pub.

South Kenton to Kenton

1.8km

23 From the end of The Link (turning left in the tunnel and then turning right if exiting South Kenton station), continue northwards to reach the southern tip of Northwick Park. Turn left and follow the path along the edge of the grass, turning right to pass a sports pavilion. Continue ahead beneath the railway at Northwick Park station.

Northwick Park is a major centre for rugby and cricket.

In dry conditions, it may look as if you could save a few metres by making a bee-line for the left-hand rugby post. The longish mown grass means that you may save metres, but you will save neither minutes nor energy expenditure. Just follow the perimeter path.

Nathans Road descends towards South Kenton station and Northwick Park





The station, on the Metropolitan Line, hosts a kiosk which sells hot and cold drinks, snacks and confectionery.

*Wind in the willows,
Northwick Park*

24 Turn right onto Northwick Avenue, then turn left onto the right-hand footway of Rushout Avenue. At the end, turn right onto Kenton Road and follow the right-hand footway to reach the entrance to Kenton station on the right.

There are shops, cafés and restaurants on Kenton Road, and a large supermarket which is accessible from the road opposite Carlton Avenue ahead.

Buses ply the route, running between Harrow (from the side of the road with the station) and Kingsbury (from the hotel side).

Kenton to Harrow and Wealdstone 2.3km

25 Continue along the right-hand footway of Kenton Road to the junction with Carlton Avenue. Turn left to cross Kenton Road by a tripartite light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and continue on the left-hand footway of Carlton Avenue. At the far end, continue ahead into Kenton Recreation Ground on a tarmac path.

Kenton Recreation Ground

Follow the path ahead, passing a cycle track on the left, to come out onto Kenmore Avenue. Turn right and follow the left-hand footway,



passing a parking area for Harrow Council's minibuses (among other municipal vehicles) on your right to reach the junction with Christchurch Avenue.

26 Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of Christchurch Avenue to its junction with The Hollies, where you will see a path leave the other side of the road — it is signposted as the Belmont Trail.

The 1.7km Belmont Trail follows the southern half of the route taken by the former single-track railway line from Harrow and Wealdstone to Stanmore Village. The line was never a real success, and (as with many other branch lines in London) many of its passengers defected with the opening of Tube services. In this instance, the catalyst for defection was the opening, in 1932, of the electrified line from Stanmore to Wembley Park and on to central London.

According to old maps (see <https://maps.nls.uk>), the modern brick building on your left just beyond The Hollies is on the site of a coffin factory, though today's smell of burning is not crematorial, but emanates from the pizza factory ahead. The line of The Hollies is basically the line of the railway.

Remain on the left-hand footway, passing to the left of two mini-roundabouts to remain on the left-hand footway of Forward Drive. The street-name soon changes to Masons Avenue, a street with terraced houses on each side,

These terraced houses have an interesting micro-feature: there is generally a bit more attention to detailing on the frontages of the

*House detailing,
west side of Masons Avenue*



houses on the south side of the street (to your left) than those across the street. This may have been an attempt by the developer to even out the popularity of the two sides (and thereby the prices he could charge for the houses): those on the south side were closer to the railway, with its attendant smoke and noise.

Pass beneath the road bridge and continue ahead to the end of Masons Avenue. Swing sharply left through almost 180°, then cross The Bridge (the name of the street beside the station) by the pedestrian crossing to arrive at the main entrance to Harrow and Wealdstone station.

Harrow and Wealdstone station, which is immortalised by the Anagram Tube map as *Swearword and Ethanol*, forms the current northern terminus of the Bakerloo Line. The station is firmly within Wealdstone town centre, though the earliest name of the station was simply “Harrow”.

The station is served by the Bakerloo Line (which has its northern terminus here), by Southern trains to and from Clapham Junction and East Croydon, and by London and Northwestern Railway trains to and from Birmingham, as well as by the Overground.

The London and Birmingham Railway arrived in 1837, stopping here in the midst of rurality. As the area became built up, the station became incapable of serving the increased traffic, and was extended twice. The current station building dates from 1912, and was built by the London and North Western Railway (not the company of that name today) in red brick with “streaky bacon” lines — you may notice the company’s initials picked out in the stonework above the entrance.

The Bakerloo Line arrived in 1917 as it was extended to Watford Junction (sharing the lines with the local LNWR trains), and since 1984 it has served as the northern terminus of that Underground line.

To the north of the station, on High Street, the commercial centre of Wealdstone offers a wide range of facilities, with shops, cafés, and all the other facilities of a middle-ranking suburban centre. Buses connect with central Harrow and other local centres.



*Station entrance,
Harrow and Wealdstone*

Harrow and Wealdstone to Headstone Lane **2.2km**

27 With your back to the entrance to Harrow and Wealdstone station (or when exiting the station), advance onto the left-hand footway of The Bridge and bear left onto Ellen Webb Drive. Follow the left-hand footway to the mouth of the railway bridge. Do not pass beneath the railway, but cross Headstone Drive with care and continue along the left-hand footway of Cecil Road.

Continue ahead where the street-name changes to Tudor Road, to reach the junction with Carmelite Road. Turn left, and follow the left-hand footway of Carmelite Road through its right-hand bend. Continue along the left-hand footway until you reach 172A Carmelite Road.

Just beyond this house, turn left onto a tarmac path (whose location is indicated at the kerbside by a short metal barrier fence) to cross the railway by a footbridge. At the end of the path, where you are faced with Courtenay Avenue up above, take a path on the right which hairpins up to road level. Cross Courtenay Avenue by the refuge, and turn left to reach the junction of Courtenay Avenue with Pinner Park Gardens.

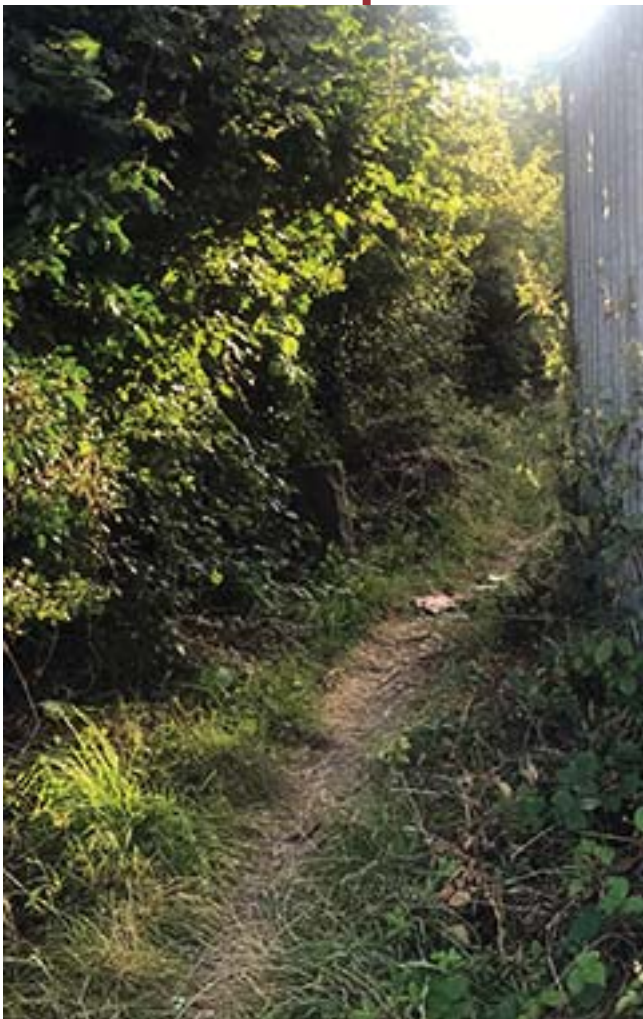
28 Turn right through almost 180° to take a path (signposted to Headstone Lane) which leads down to the end of Parkfield Avenue, and follow its right-hand footway to its end at Headstone Lane.

There is a convenience shop in the row of businesses on the right as you enter Headstone Lane.

Follow the right-hand footway of Headstone Lane to a junction at the station building, where the road swings to the right to cross the railway.

On the ascent from Parkfield Avenue, there is a direct entrance onto the Watford-bound platform of the station. There is no bus stop outside the main entrance to the station (it would be dangerous) but there are stops on Headstone Lane on the approach to the station, and on Long Elmes just to the north of the railway, for local services.

Path alongside the cricket ground to the railway west of Headstone Lane station



Headstone Lane to Hatch End 2.6km

29 Cross Headstone Lane with care, and take a bridleway opposite, with Parkfield House on your left. Follow the bridleway for almost 300m to reach the point where a path comes in from the left. Turn sharp right here, not into the cricket ground but on a path to its right.

Cross the railway by a footbridge to reach Chantry Place. Turn left onto Letchford Terrace and follow its left-hand footway, merging onto the left-hand footway of Headstone Lane to reach a roundabout.

On the left, you will pass Letchford House, a Grade II listed building built in 1670. It was named after a Dr Letchford, who had been buried in the church at Pinner, in 1665.

30 Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of Uxbridge Road. Cross the access road to a supermarket and an arts centre (which latter was in former days the assembly hall of the Royal Commercial Travellers' School)

using the pedestrian crossing, and continue ahead. Full meetings of Harrow Council are held in the Arts Centre.

Rise to the railway bridge and cross Uxbridge Road using the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Continue along the right-hand footway to reach the access road to Hatch End station on the right.

If you intend to break the journey here and take a train, you may use the steps at the end of the bridge to reach the station forecourt. Today, the station is served by the Overground only.

Hatch End station was opened in the mid-1840s (as “Pinner”, and was rebuilt in 1911 by the London and North Western Railway company, clearly during one of its more prosperous periods.



Hatch End station

Hatch End to Carpenders Park

3.1km

31 Continue along the right-hand footway of Uxbridge Road as far as the junction with Grimsdyke Road.

There are shops, cafés and restaurants on Uxbridge Road, and stops for local buses.

Turn right onto Grimsdyke Road and follow the right-hand footway round its left-hand bend. Just beyond 98 Grimsdyke Road, turn right onto a footpath which leads out into a field. Follow the right-hand side of the field into the corner, where turn left.

You may spot a signpost for the London Loop pointing to a stile deep in the corner of the field. This leads to a very overgrown path, whereon your blood pressure will rise with the stress, but may fall as you lose some of the red stuff to scratches and punctures. Just follow the local dog-walkers’ lead (no pun intended) and stay in the field. If you should be following the route in reverse, remember to turn right after crossing the stile, then turn left to follow the left-hand edge of the field to Grimsdyke Road.

Continue ahead to the far right-hand corner of the field. Turn right, then turn left to cross a stile. Continue ahead on a path which crosses the next field to its far right-hand corner. Go through a kissing-gate to follow a lane parallel to the railway (which is on your right in a cutting) which leads out onto Little Oxhey Lane.

32 Cross over Little Oxhey Lane with care, using the pattern of traffic flow across the single-lane bridge to time your crossing. Take a path ahead, still parallel to the railway, to reach Woodhall Lane.



Woodhall Lane

Woodhall Lane is in South Oxhey; Carpenders Park is the area of housing on the far side of the railway.

Follow the right-hand footway of Woodhall Lane to its end at Prestwick Road, and turn right to follow the right-hand footway of Prestwick Road to Station Approach

There is a café on Station Approach, and there are other shops nearby, including a petrol station with a mini-supermarket just before you reach Station Approach. There are bus stops on the route between Watford and Northwood on Prestwick Road.

Keep to the right-hand side of Station Approach to reach a path which descends to the left, taking you beneath track level. Turn right to reach the entrance to Carpenders Park station beneath the tracks.

Carpenders Park to Bushey **2.2km**

33 Emerge from the tunnel (turning right if exiting Carpenders Park station) to reach Gibbs Couch (a street-name which ought really to be a rare species of grass). Take the left-hand footway to the junction with Delta Gain (the name reeks of electrical engineering), passing the end of a business centre. Turn left and

The path from Delta Gain



follow the left-hand footway past the business centre and on to the point where the road bends to the right.

Having taken the right-hand bend, turn left onto a descending tarmac path, taking the right-hand option at a fork (to avoid passing beneath the railway), at first keeping housebacks on your right. Continue parallel to the railway on your left, ignoring a path to the left, and climbing to track level. Continue to climb, again ignoring a path to your left which crosses the railway by a footbridge, until you reach the houses of Watford Heath. Continue, with houses on your left, to reach and cross Watford Heath (the road).

34 Continue ahead onto Oxhey Avenue, and follow the left-hand footway to Pinner Road. Continue on the left-hand footway to reach the forecourt of Bushey station on your left.

The London and Birmingham Railway arrived in 1837, but the station was not built until early in the twentieth century (note the non-working clock and weathervane on the station building). It is at Bushey station that the Overground line departs from the West Coast Main Line to serve Watford High Street station before rejoining the main line at Watford Junction station.

Bushey station is actually in Oxhey — the centre of Bushey is almost 2km away to the east. To the north of the station, both lines must (separately) cross the valley of the River Colne on viaducts while the road network below must accommodate them —this produces the locally notorious “Bushey Arches” with their traffic congestion.



Bushey station

Bushey to Watford High Street 1.1km

35 Descend from the forecourt of Bushey station on the left-hand footway of Pinner Road to reach Bushey Arches. Bear left to pass beneath the West Coast Main Line. Turn right to cross Eastbury Road using the refuge, then turn right to take the left-hand footway round to the left. Turn left to enter Oxhey Park.

Follow the path ahead beneath the Overground lines, and immediately turn right onto a path parallel to the railway to reach the bank of the River Colne. Turn left to follow a riverside path with the water on your right to reach a footbridge on your right.

36 Cross the footbridge and turn right to follow a path out onto Thomas Sawyer Way. This does not refer to Mark Twain’s creation, though — the road is named after a local lad killed on duty in Afghanistan.

Cross Thomas Sawyer Way using the refuge, and advance onto the left-hand footway of Dalton Way. Pass beneath the Overground again, and then cross the access road to ... what is the collective noun? ... a trolley-load



Oxhey Park



Watford High Street station

of superstores. Just beyond a bus stop, take a path on the left which leads, with the PumpHouse Arts Centre on your right, to the splendidly bathetic Local Board Street. Turn right to follow the street out to Lower High Street (is there an Upper Low Street to balance?). Follow the left-hand footway of Lower High Street past Watford Fire Station on the right, then past Watford Museum on the left to reach Watford High Street station on the left.

The architecture of Watford High Street station is different from the design of other stations on the line. It was built in 1862 by the Watford and Rickmansworth Railway Company as a single-track line. It was a business venture founded by Lord Ebury (1801-93), who tried to benefit from the railway mania of the time, by capturing the commuter market between Rickmansworth and London via the line to Euston, and by offering a route between Watford and Paddington via Uxbridge and West Drayton.

The company did not fare well, and in 1881 was taken over by the London and North Western Railway (which had operated the services from the outset). The line itself was never a great commercial success, for as soon as the Metropolitan Railway reached Rickmansworth in 1887, the Ebury Line lost passengers to the newcomer. The siphoning off of passenger traffic was magnified in 1925 when electric trains began running on the Metropolitan Line, and the line was closed in 1952.

The extension of the line to Uxbridge was never built.

Watford High Street to Watford Junction

1.4km

37 From the northern end of Watford High Street station, take four light-controlled pedestrian crossings to cross Lower High Street and arrive onto the right-hand footway of Beechen Grove.

Continue ahead, and use a pair of light-controlled pedestrian crossings to cross Water Lane. Turn to your left to follow, round to your right, the right-hand footway of Beechen Grove to reach and cross another divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing over the southern spur of Beechen Grove (with a large triangular area in the middle).

Continue ahead on a path to reach and cross Derby Road. Turn right to follow the left-hand footway round the corner onto Gladstone Road, and follow the right-hand footway of Gladstone Road all the way to its end at Queen's Place.

38 Cross Queen's Place and turn left to reach the junction with Queen's Road. Turn right and follow the right-hand footway of Queen's Road to the junction with Orphanage Road. Cross Orphanage Road by the refuge, and continue ahead along the right-hand footway of Queen's Road. Pass the bus station on your right to reach the entrance to Watford Junction station.

The railway came to Watford in 1836, and the station location was moved to the present site in 1858. The current station dates from the 1980s.

The first line through Watford was built by the London and Birmingham Railway Company, whose initial northern terminus was Hemel Hempstead. The branch line to St Albans Abbey joined the main line to the south of Watford station, and the station was moved to its present site to accommodate services on the new branch.



Gladstone Road



Watford Junction station

The line to Rickmansworth (as discussed above in the commentary on Watford High Street station) was added in 1862. In the early years of the twentieth century, a parallel suburban line (for use by stopping trains) was built between Euston and Watford, diverting from the main line between Bushey and Watford Junction to serve Watford High Street station on the Rickmansworth line — this is today the Overground line.

Another branch off the Rickmansworth line to Croxley Green was added in a Metro-land-style attempt to generate a commuter market from the householders of a new-build estate — as with the Rickmansworth branch, this line's commuters fled to the more convenient Metropolitan Line when its station opened at Croxley. The suburban lines to Euston and Croxley Green were subsequently electrified under the direct-current third-rail system. Only the DC line via Watford High Street (the Overground) remains today.

Between 1917 and 1984, Bakerloo Line trains ran on the DC tracks to Watford Junction. Watford station at the end of the Metropolitan Line is some distance away in the south-west of the town, and there have been several attempts to connect the Metropolitan Line with Watford Junction. Some have failed because of opposition to tunnelling under the town, while the most recent attempt (1996-2017) foundered over municipal breast-beating about local London/not-London politics.

There are cafés and shops near the station: the commercial centre of Watford is some distance away.

Watford Metropolitan station is half an hour (on foot) away on the far side of the town centre. Watford bus station (adjacent to Watford Junction station) is an important local transport hub.