

Walk the Metropolitan 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:
Heritage signal box, Chesham

Walk the Underground

Metropolitan Line

Start	Uxbridge station – UB8 1JZ
Finish	Aldgate station – EC3N 1AH
Distance	40.3km
Duration	8 hours 22 minutes
Ascent	195m

Start	Amersham station – HP6 5EZ
Finish	Harrow-on-the-Hill station – HA1 1BB
Distance	43.6m
Duration	9 hours 31 minutes
Ascent	499m

Introduction

The Metropolitan Railway was formed in 1863 as the world's first underground railway, running, for almost all its length, beneath Marylebone Road and Euston Road, between Paddington and Farringdon. The line was soon extended eastwards through the City to Aldgate, but it was the extensions to the north-west of Baker Street which were much more influential, starting a housing boom along the line which was intensified when the Metropolitan Railway Company bought up land and built their own housing estates, selling the houses to commuters. Soon after the Great War, this business was branded *Metro-land*. The concept of a housing boom in the vicinity of railway development has been echoed more recently in the springing up of refurbished properties and new-build on both greenfield and brownfield sites along the route of the Elizabeth Line.

Harrow-on-the-Hill was reached in 1880, Chesham in 1889, Amersham in 1892, Uxbridge in 1904, and Watford in 1925. The branch to Stanmore was completed in 1932, but in 1939, that branch north of Baker Street was turned over to the Bakerloo Line, and the intervening stations between Baker Street and Finchley Road were opened to supplant the stations at Lord's and Marlborough Road

in the old tunnels. In 1979, the Bakerloo Line turned over the line between Baker Street and Stanmore to the Jubilee Line.

The north-western branches of the Metropolitan Line are described in a single route beginning on page 43.

*An early start from
Uxbridge station*



Uxbridge to Aldgate

40.3km; 8hr 22 min

195m ascent

Introduction

1 The Uxbridge line was one of the later additions to the Metropolitan Railway network, arriving in 1904. When the line opened, the only station between Uxbridge and Harrow-on-the-Hill was at Ruislip, since there was no appreciable population elsewhere, but infill of housing in the Metro-land style soon created the need for the stations we know today.

It is worth noting that a tram service had been instituted in 1901 on the route between Shepherd's Bush and Uxbridge, along the main road (and former coach road): this demonstrates the pattern of settlement at the end of the Victorian era. These trams were replaced by trolleybuses in 1936, and then by buses in 1960.

Although the sparse population between Harrow and Uxbridge promised fewer passenger prospects until the Edwardian boom, and then the post-war acceleration, the Metropolitan Railway Company was never likely to allow the trams to cream off Uxbridge's business for long, especially when the company's property section got to work on replacing farmland with lucrative housing.

One of the first railway commuters to and from Uxbridge was the actor Dame Ellen Terry, who had a property in The Lynch (now approximated by Cross Street just to the west of the bottom of Windsor Street). She found it to be a convenient distance from the London theatres — far enough away, but still within comfortable commuting distance.

In 1910 the District Railway was extended from its terminus at South Harrow to Rayners Lane, allowing for through District services to Uxbridge. These services were transferred to the Piccadilly Line in 1933.

Uxbridge station (once it was established on its second site) forms the fulcrum of the town's High Street, which had many stable yards for the coaching trade (some still in the street-plan, but without the stables), as well as engineering businesses, some of which also supported the coach services, and is now the town's principal

*Former coaching inn,
Uxbridge High Street*



shopping street. Some coaching inns survive on the coach route, notably the Three Tuns on High Street almost opposite the station, but also locally the Red Lion in Hillingdon — both of these inns have Grade II listing.

The current station was completed in 1938: the semicircular frontage was constructed to accommodate a turning circle for the trolleybuses which ran between Uxbridge station and Shepherd's Bush (the route now taken by the SL8 — formerly the 607, the latter route number having been carried over from the trolleybuses — limited-stop bus). This station, which was designed by Charles Holden (1875-1960), supersedes the first terminus in Uxbridge on Belmont Road, the site of which is now occupied by the Sainsbury's supermarket.

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 company village on the Wirral peninsula, Merseyside. He was responsible for important works in Bristol too, but his best-known work is in London, particularly his Underground stations. He contributed greatly to the Piccadilly and Northern Lines when these lines were extended north and south/west during the 1930s.

The design of the new station was intended to be an echo of Cockfosters station at the other end of the Piccadilly Line. Both stations have concrete “naves”. However, Uxbridge does put one over on Cockfosters in the “Tube cathedral” stakes, and that is the vivid stained glass by Ervin Bossányi, a Hungarian whose works may be found in Germany, Washington DC (in the National Cathedral), York Minster, and Canterbury Cathedral, as well as in several London locations.

The three coats of arms in the Uxbridge window are (from the left) those of the long-deceased county of Middlesex, the local Bassett family, and the Desborough swan, of Buckinghamshire.

Route

Uxbridge to Hillingdon 3.0km

2 The route starts by entering the main station concourse. When you are in front of the ticketing gates, turn round and look back, and upwards, to see the Bossányi glass. Turn round again to face the gates, and take the few steps up to the left to reach

*Bossányi glass,
Uxbridge station*



Uxbridge bus station. Continue ahead on the left-hand footway past bus stop N, then cross to the right-hand footway. At the end of a line of shops, turn right onto a “restricted access” road. At a metal sculpture, continue ahead to reach York Road, passing on your left a simple Quaker Meeting House.

This building was erected in 1817, and is the third meeting house in Uxbridge, replacing buildings of 1691 and 1755, and is virtually unaltered since its construction. The meeting House is listed Grade II.

Turn right and cross the entrance to a car park. Use the pedestrian crossing to reach the left-hand footway of York Road: ahead is the supermarket which stands on the site of Uxbridge’s original Metropolitan Railway station.

Turn right and walk along York Road to the traffic lights (principally controlling access to and egress from the car park attached to the Chimes shopping mall, whose entrance is in High Street). Turn left onto Montague Road and follow it to its end on Park Road.

Cross Park Road using the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing and proceed along the left-hand footway of Honeycroft Hill. Descend to the junction with North Way, where turn left.

Follow North Way beneath the railway, taking note of the traffic-light sequence on the single-lane part of the road, and at the bend where the street-name changes to Morris Avenue, continue ahead onto a path, with trees on your right. This brings you onto the Hillingdon House Farm open land. At the end of the trees, turn right, the trees still on your right. You will see playing fields off to your left. Continue ahead at the corner of the field, bearing right to cross the River Pinn and a tributary, using two footbridges.

3 Turn right and pass beneath the railway and come out onto Sweetcroft Lane, and follow it ahead, out



*Quaker Meeting House,
Uxbridge*



Hillingdon House Farm



Hillingdon station

onto Hercies Road. Turn left and follow the left-hand footway of Hercies Road almost to its end, using the pedestrian crossing to reach and follow the right-hand footway of the slip-road for the westbound A40 to the junction with Long Lane.

There are shops and other facilities on Long Lane to the right.

Turn left to cross the dual carriageway by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and continue ahead on the left-hand footway of Long Lane to reach the entrance to Hillingdon station, passing across the frontage of a pub just before you reach the station.

In dry weather (and if you are wearing boots), you may continue on the north side of the railway, from the footbridges, on the right-hand edge of the field, taking care to avoid the deepest areas of standing water, to pass beneath the A40 slip-road. The path then curls left to reach the slip-road: turn left to follow the left-hand

footway to the junction, and then turn left to reach the station by the left-hand footway as above.

Hillingdon to Ickenham

1.5km

4 Turn left at the entrance to Hillingdon station to cross the footbridge into the station, and turn right at the end of the bridge (but before you reach the ticket machines) to take a path signposted for *The Chase*. This path drops to rail level by a staircase (outside the station building) and then crosses the A40.

If you would rather avoid the stairs, just continue along the left-hand footway of Long Lane across the A40.

Hillingdon station was rebuilt to the south of its original position when the A40 by-pass was pushed through; it was re-opened in 1992. The design has won architectural awards and has locally (but not nationally) listed building status.

There is a coffee hatch in the station, just beyond the turn-off onto the path to *The Chase*.

Beyond the A40, do not take the path to the left, which leads to *The Chase*, but bear right then turn left to rise to Long Lane. Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of Long Lane and cross over both Halford Road and Swakeleys Drive.

There is a fine Dutch-inspired building at the end of Swakeleys Drive. Swakeleys House (to the west) is a seventeenth-century

manor house which was built for Sir Edmund Wright, who would subsequently become Lord Mayor of London. Samuel Pepys visited Swakeleys on at least two occasions. The building is Grade I listed. It is open to the public on one day per year in September, as part of the London Open House weekend.

Continue along the left-hand footway of Long Lane, passing the Cardinal Hume campus of the Douay Martyrs school

on your left, then cross to the right-hand footway using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

5 A few metres ahead, turn sharp right onto a lane, with more buildings of the Douay Martyrs school on your left. Cross the railway by a bridge, then follow the lane half-right to descend. Turn left into a field and turn left again to follow its left-hand side.

Go through a gap and turn left to go into the corner of the next field. Turn right through about 120° to cross the field on the diagonal, easing out to the right just before the far right-hand corner by a metal stile.

Take the path between houses onto Burnham Avenue, where turn left onto its left-hand footway. At the end of Burnham Avenue, cross Glebe Avenue ahead and turn left to follow its right-hand footway



Lodge, Swakeleys Drive



Left — looking back to the railway embankment on the approach to Ickenham

Right — Ickenham pump

uphill to reach the railway bridge, with the entrance to Ickenham station on the other side of the road.

Ickenham to Ruislip

2.3km

6 Continue along the right-hand footway of Glebe Avenue (that is to say, turning left if exiting the station building onto the road and crossing to the right-hand footway at a safe location). Cross over the end of Willowtree Close, then take a path on the right. At the end of the path, bear left across a field, then bear left onto Community Close, passing a car park and library on your left. Follow Community Close out to Long Lane, where turn right to follow the right-hand footway to the village pump and pond.

The commercial centre of Ickenham lies on the other side of Long Lane, with shops, pubs (one of which is immediately on your right as you pass the pump), cafés and restaurants among the businesses.

Pass to the right of the pump and the pond, and follow the ascent of Ickenham High Road on the right-hand footway to reach the entrance to West Ruislip station on the bridge.

West Ruislip is the western terminus of the Central Line. A journey from West Ruislip to Epping is the longest journey which may be made on the Tube without changing trains: the distance is 54.9km. Chiltern Railways also operate from this station on their line between Birmingham, High Wycombe and London Marylebone. The current station was completed during the 1960s.

There are welcome benches outside the station entrance.

Continue downhill on the right-hand footway after passing the station to reach a petrol station on the right, opposite Clack Lane.

7 Continue ahead up the hill on the right-hand footway to reach a small roundabout (but not a “dustbin-lid” mini-roundabout).

There are two pubs on the roundabout, the Orchard and the White Bear. The Orchard across to your left was a favourite watering-hole for the Polish Air Force during the Second World War — many Polish servicemen were attached to RAF Northolt nearby.

Do not take Wood Lane (to the right at the White Bear), but continue ahead along Kingsend, following the right-hand footway all the way to the junction at the foot of Ruislip High Street.

*The Orchard Inn
Zajazd Sad Owocowy*



At the summit of Kingsend, you will have your first view of Harrow Hill, with its church spire, ahead.

The centre of Ruislip, with all facilities, may be found up High Street to the left.

Ruislip is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, and in the old village centre at the north end of High Street, there are still buildings from the Middle Ages: the church is of thirteenth-century foundation and contains elements from that period. It is a far cry from the bustling suburban centre we see today.



Ruislip station

Cross High Street to join Pembroke Road. Ruislip station is on the right, beyond the bus stops.

Ruislip to Ruislip Manor 0.7km

When the railway was built between Harrow-on-the-Hill and Uxbridge in 1904, Ruislip was the only intermediate station and the only established settlement of any note. However, as the Metropolitan Railway and rival spec-builders got to work, the entire route became bounded by infill housing, and each local builder wanted a station on his patch to entice new residents. Ruislip station is listed Grade II.

In recent years, several commercial buildings near the station have been converted for residential use, while others have been demolished to make way for new-build dwellings.

8 Continue along the right-hand footway of Pembroke Road (that is to say, turning right if you have come out of the station) to reach Green Walk over on your left.

9 Continue along Pembroke Road, still walking on the right-hand footway, to the junction with Victoria Road.

At first on the left, but then on both sides of the road, Pembroke Road epitomises the Metro-land of the railway company and of the poetry of Sir John Betjeman. However, the established houses (in particular, the bungalows) are being demolished one by one, with no overall plan, to make way for larger, more modern dwellings to suit the more expansive aspirations of today's Metrolanders, compared to those of a century ago.

Cross over Victoria Road by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and turn right along its left-hand footway to reach the entrance to Ruislip Manor station.

Ruislip Manor to Eastcote

1.4km

10 Continue along the left-hand footway of Victoria Road (that is to say, turning left if exiting the station), and take the first road on your left, Linden Avenue. After about 430m walking along the right-hand footway, having passed a library on your right, the road bends slightly to the right. At this point, turn right onto a public footpath which crosses the road, and follow the path to reach the end of Beech Avenue, where turn left.

The narrow footpath which runs between the houses is part of an ancient route, possibly linking Watford with Ealing. Within the built-up area near the railway, it survives between Eastcote Road and Yeading Brook.

11 Follow the left-hand footway of Beech Avenue to its end at a park, by which point the street-name has changed to Columbia Avenue. Bear left to cross the park (named Columbia Avenue Field) on the diagonal (or, if the ground is wet, follow Columbia Avenue and turn left past the frontages of the houses). Turn half-right to follow the path out as it squeezes between buildings. At the end, turn left and follow a ramp up to Field End Road. Cross over Field End Road by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing at Eastcote station.

There is a well-established small commercial centre on Field End Road with many cafés among the businesses.

Eastcote to Rayners Lane

2.3km

Columbia Avenue Field



The composer Sir Michael Tippett was born in Eastcote, as were several actors on stage and television. An outpost of Bletchley Park in Eastcote contributed to the wartime codebreaking effort, and the site became the precursor centre to GCHQ, which moved its base to Cheltenham in 1952. Eastcote station, constructed in the “box of light” style by Charles Holden (1875-1960), is Grade II listed. Information

about Holden's life and his work for the Underground, may be found on page 6.

12 Turn left (or turn right if you are exiting the station) and follow the right-hand footway of Field End Road down to its junction with North View, where turn right. Follow the right-hand footway of North View (the street-name becomes Eastern Avenue at the borough boundary) to the junction with Cannon Lane.

13 Cross Cannon lane using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and turn right to follow the left-hand footway over the

railway (where pedestrians have their own bridge separated from the vehicular traffic). Descend on the far side of the railway to reach the western entrance, on the left, to Roxbourne Park.

Roxbourne Park is predominately made over to football and cricket pitches, but there is an outbreak of fitness torture machines as you enter the park, and there is a children's playground in its north-eastern corner. There are benches for resting, and at any time, you are likely to see people going round the perimeter of the pitches.

Follow the path eastwards across the park, passing the play area on your left. Exit the park by descending to cross Yeading Brook by a bridge.



Eastcote station



Roxbourne Park

There is a path alongside the brook to your right. It is called the River Crane Walk, and that route follows the course of Yeading Brook, which becomes the River Crane farther downstream, to its end at Town Wharf in Old Isleworth at the confluence of the River Crane with the River Thames.

Continue ahead onto the street named Old Worple, and follow its left-hand footway to its end.

There are many instances of *Worple* as a toponym throughout the south-east of England. The word indicates a bridleway which (generally speaking) connected up villages — in this case, probably Ruislip and Harrow.

Turn left onto the left-hand footway of Alexandra Avenue to reach a refuge on the ascent to the bridge, with the entrance to Rayners Lane station on the left.

The area around the station has many shops, and a wide range of possibilities for a bite to eat or a drink. There is a coffee station within the Tube station building.

Rayners Lane station was opened by the Metropolitan Railway as an unstaffed halt in 1906. In 1910, the District Railway was extended from its South Harrow terminus to join the Metropolitan Line at Rayners Lane, allowing District services to run through to Uxbridge. The little station at the junction was in a desolate area until the development of the surrounding houses in what was originally known as Harrow Garden Village. In 1933, the branch of the District Line between Acton Town and Uxbridge was transferred to the Piccadilly Line, with stations being upgraded to the designs of Charles Holden. Information about Holden may be found on page 6.

Rayners Lane station



Rayners Lane to West Harrow 1.7km

14 Cross Alexandra Avenue using the refuge — if you have arrived by train to start a walk here, turn right out of the station to reach the refuge. Pass to the right of a tree, and cross the narrow Rayners Lane to the right of a pedestrian barrier railing. Take an enclosed footpath opposite the barrier with the railway fence immediately on your left. This path soon descends

to parallel the Piccadilly Line, and then rises again to cross the tracks by a footbridge. Pass an electricity substation on your right as you enter Apple Grove. Continue ahead along Apple Grove's right-hand footway: at the end, descend a flight of steps ahead to reach Strongbridge Close.

At the foot of Strongbridge Close, cross Twyford Road. Turn right, then turn left along a path to reach Welbeck Road. Turn left and follow the right-hand footway of Welbeck Road out to its end, at a triangle. Cross onto the right-hand side of the triangle and follow the left-hand footway out onto Shaftesbury Avenue where it morphs into The Ridgeway ahead.

15 Turn right and cross the road using the pedestrian crossing to enter West Harrow recreation ground. Keep straight ahead on the path to exit the park onto Wilson Gardens.

There is a café and pizzeria at the east end of the park.

Follow Wilson Gardens ahead to the junction with Vaughan Road. West Harrow station is over to the left.

Take the entrance before the bridge for trains towards Uxbridge; for Harrow and points south, pass beneath the bridge to the other entrance.

The pedestrian route which follows the north-western branches of the Metropolitan Line joins from beneath the railway bridge at West Harrow station.

West Harrow to Harrow-on-the-Hill

1.1km

16 From the junction with Wilson Gardens, with West Harrow station over to your left, turn right onto Vaughan Road and follow its right-hand footway to its end.

Just before the end of the street, on the right, is a real rarity — a surviving “tin tabernacle” from Victorian times which still remains in regular religious use, albeit no longer by the same sect as that which originally had it constructed.

The need for new churches came with the rapid and widespread urbanisation of the latter 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 of their own, or who would be likely to use the lack of transport as an



Vaughan Road, Harrow



*Tin tabernacle.
Vaughan Road, Harrow*

excuse to their employers for non-attendance.

The formation in 1844 of the Free Church of England, splitting the Methodists from the Church of England, and the increasing identification (at the same time) of many parishioners with other, at least now partly emancipated, nonconformist denominations and sects, brought a pressing need for more church buildings (apocryphally explained away 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, who demanded a separate door from the established Church of Scotland parishioners’ entrance. 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 companies in London, Liverpool, Glasgow and elsewhere built prefabricated churches in corrugated iron, offering them by mail order via printed catalogues (perhaps today, such a company might try to trade under the name of St Ikea). A number of these companies segmented the market and concentrated on serving one type of purchaser (gentry, railway companies, and so on): this reduced design costs and (allegedly) reduced costs to the purchasing congregation.

Some of these churches are still in ecclesiastical use, others have changed use (there are scout halls and discotheques), while others exist as no more than barns or iron shells in hedges. Yet others — probably the majority — have, of course, returned to dust ... or to the great scrapyard of Time.

17 Cross Bessborough Road with care — you may need to turn right, cross over Butler Avenue, cross Bessborough Road by the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing, then turn left to return downhill on the right-hand footway. Pass the petrol station and turn left onto Lowlands Road. Follow the right-hand footway of Lowlands Road, passing a light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Turn left to enter Harrow-on-the-Hill station, where you will find the ticketing gates on your right.

The commercial centre of Harrow lies on the other side of the station on College Road, and to the right. All facilities are available in the immediate area.

There are toilets on the station concourse, but they have frequent and impromptu periods of closure as a result of their generally dilapidated state. There are more modern facilities across College Road in the shopping mall — on the left as you reach the indoor courtyard.

Harrow-on-the-Hill to Northwick Park

1.7km

18 Pass through the concourse above the tracks to reach the north side of Harrow-on-the-Hill station (turning right if exiting the ticketing gates) to reach College Road. Turn right and follow the right-hand footway to its end at Station Road.

Cross Station Road by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and turn right to follow the left-hand footway to the junction with Gayton Road, where turn left. Follow the right-hand footway of Gayton Road to the junction with Sheepcote Road. Cross over the main road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

19 Continue along the right-hand footway of Gayton Road, crossing to the left-hand footway by the refuge at the junction, on the left, with Flambard Road, to its end at the junction with busy Kenton Road.

Turn left onto Kenton Road and follow its left-hand footway to a light-controlled pedestrian crossing, where cross the road and turn right.

Turn left onto Northwick Avenue and follow its right-hand footway as far as the entrance to Northwick Park station. Turn right to cross the station forecourt and pass beneath the tracks, with the ticketing gates on your left half-way through the tunnel.

There is a small kiosk in the station underpass which sells soft drinks, confectionery, and simple snacks.

For those who might like a little ascent to the top of Harrow Hill (which has been on the horizon at times since the roundabout at the Orchard Inn in Ruislip, there is an alternative route between Harrow-on-the-Hill station and Northwick Park, which is described below. It

*The placid suburbia of
Northwick Avenue*





Westward panorama from Harrow Hill

adds 800m and some extra time to the route, but adds variety to the day's activity.

Harrow-on-the-Hill to Northwick Park via Harrow Hill

2.5km

18a From Lowlands Road at the entrance to the station, turn right onto Lansdowne Road opposite Station Approach. At the end of the road, continue upwards in the same direction, with housebacks on your right. At the top of the houses, where paths meet, turn right to reach the street called Roxborough Park. Turn left here, and ascend to the top of Harrow Hill at the church, but before you turn left to reach the church, be sure to enjoy the westbound panorama on your right.

Pass the south door of the church on your left and descend through the churchyard to the lychgate.

For over 900 years, the church has been the focus of the area recorded in 767 as *Gumeninga hergae*, and in 1398 as *Harrowe atte Hille*. King Charles I, during his flight from Oxford, watered his horses on the shoulder of Harrow Hill, and took one final glimpse of London.

The church may have been founded in the eleventh century, but the only part remaining from that era is the foot of the tower. Much building was undertaken during the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, but the most extensive remodelling came, hardly surprisingly, at the hands of Victorian restorers, and hardly less surprising for an area steeped in the good and the great (even if only in their schooldays), this work was led by Sir George Gilbert Scott, the architect of (amongst many other commissions) St Pancras station. In 1950, 27 people lost their lives when a Glasgow-bound flight out of Northolt veered to avoid a steep — most probably

that of St Mary's — and crashed on Highwood Hill, west of Barnet. The steeple now carries a warning light against a similar event.

The churchyard was a favourite retreat of Lord Byron, whose illegitimate daughter Allegra (who died at five of typhus or malaria) is buried in an unmarked grave near the south porch.

Bear right at the lychgate and descend to Peterborough Road, in the centre of the area of Harrow Hill dominated by Harrow School; turn left to reach the top of Football Lane on the right.

Harrow School, founded in 1572 (on a site which had housed a school since 1243, about 150 years after the foundation of the nearby St Mary's church), is one of the world's most famous schools.

Prime ministers and Nobel laureates (of which Sir Winston Churchill counts on each of these two criteria), royalty and many other famous (male) personages have had a Harrovian education. Among many writers, Anthony Trollope endured the school, being ostracised for being a local day-boy whose clothes, appearance, and social standing did not come up to boarders' self-appointed standards — a steep lane on school property is named Obadiah Slope (a character in *Barchester Towers*).

In fiction, the school has been the *alma mater* of such diverse characters as Colonel Pickering in *Pygmalion*, the drama by George Bernard Shaw which was transmuted in 1956 into *My Fair Lady* by Lerner and Loewe, and Sir Percy Blakeney in *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, by Emma Magdolna Rozália Mária Jozefa Borbála Orczy de Orci (who is almost certainly better known by her by-line of Baroness Orczy).

19a Descend (steeply) Football Lane, which becomes Music Hill half-way down, to reach some tennis courts ahead. Turn left, and follow a path to the left (it is the Capital Ring, so the waymarks may be of assistance). Pass a car park on the left, then continue ahead at a three-way fingerpost alongside sportsfields (here leaving the Capital Ring). Follow a path out onto Watford Road.

There are bus stops off to the left, with services to various local destinations, and also to points farther afield.

Cross Watford Road and turn left. Turn right to pass between the University of Westminster (on your left) and Northwick Park Hospital (on your right). At the far end of this straight path, turn left and follow the path out through the university buildings onto



Lychgate of Harrow church



Westward panorama of Harrow Hill from across Northwick Park — the route follows the far side of the grass from right to left

the edge of the playing field. Northwick Park station is over to your left.

Northwick Park to Preston Road 1.5km

20 Exit the station on the south side of the railway (that is to say, turning left if exiting the ticketing gates) and enter Northwick Park. Follow a path on the right-hand side of the playing fields (do not enter the university campus), eventually passing a pavilion.

By this point, you will be following the Capital Ring on its clockwise course.

At the far end of the park, turn left to follow its southern border, then turn right to reach Nathans Road, and follow its left-hand footway for a short distance. Turn left onto The Link to reach the tunnel entrance to South Kenton station (on the Bakerloo Line and the Lioness Line of the Overground between Euston and Watford Junction), passing beneath the tracks. The ticketing gates to gain access to the platforms are on your right.

21 Exit South Kenton station (turning right if exiting the ticketing gates) and follow your way out onto Windermere Avenue.

There are shops to the left as you reach Windermere Avenue, and a large pub, almost unchanged in close on a hundred years, on the right.

A lone cyclist passes through the shadows of Preston Park



Cross the road and turn right to follow the left-hand footway of Windermere Avenue, then turn left to follow the length of Allonby Gardens, continuing along a path at the far end to reach Montpelier Rise. Turn right, then turn left to enter Preston Park.

Cross Preston Park by the metalled footpath, passing

some fitness equipment near the far end, to emerge onto College Road, where cross the road and turn right.

Take the first street on the left, Glendale Gardens, and follow its left-hand footway its far end, where turn left onto Longridge Avenue, again using the left-hand footway. At the far end, turn right onto Grasmere Avenue and follow its left-hand footway out to its end on Preston Road. For Preston Road station, turn left and follow the left-hand footway to the station entrance, otherwise turn right.

There are many shops and cafés in the vicinity of-the station, offering a range of ethnic specialities.

Preston Road to Wembley Park

1.6km

22 If you are exiting Preston Road station, turn right and follow the right-hand footway down to treach and cross Grasmere Avenue. Follow the right-hand footway of Preston Road as far as a pedestrian crossing. Cross the road by the crossing, then double back to turn right onto Elmstead Avenue. Follow the left-hand footway of Elmstead Avenue all the way to its end at Forty Avenue.

23 Make your way across Forty Avenue by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and turn left, then immediately turn right onto Brook Avenue. Follow its right-hand footway to its end at Wembley Park Drive, crossing to the left-hand footway at the final right-hand bend.

Turn left and ascend Bridge Road to reach Wembley Park station, on the left on the bridge (naturally, given the street-name) which crosses the railway.

The stadium, with its tubular arch, is over to your right, the clean lines of its architecture becoming progressively mired in amongst sterile tower blocks of flats and equally sterile "shopping destination opportunities".

Between Wembley Park and Baker Street, the only station on the Metropolitan Line is Finchley Road. The Jubilee Line runs parallel to the Metropolitan Line and has, in part, a different walking route which meets all the intermediate stations on that line.

Clearly, the Jubilee Line pedestrian route is an equally valid transit along the Metropolitan Line — for some walkers, a salient point might be that the Jubilee Line route involves less ascent and more shops.

*Early spring blossom,
Elmstead Avenue*





*The east frontage (1893-94)
of Wembley Park station*

Wembley Park to Finchley Road 8.8km

24 Cross to the right-hand footway of Bridge Road by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing at Wembley Park station, and continue northbound the short distance to the junction with Chalkhill Road, where turn right. Follow the right-hand footway of Chalkhill Road past a large supermarket, hidden up to your left.

When you reach Chalkhill Park on the right, you may follow the path within the park, keeping close to the road on your left, or you may simply follow Chalkhill Road to Bowater Road, where turn right. This keeps you relatively close to the railway on your right.

Follow Bowater Road, which soon becomes Barnhill Road, passing a school on the right in a pedestrianised section of the road. Just beyond the school, turn right onto a path (signposted to *Welsh Harp*). Follow the tarmac path round to your left to reach St David's Close. Cross the road and pick up a path on the other side, taking the first path on the left (still signposted to *Welsh Harp*).

At the end of that path, turn right onto Waterside Close, but where the road turns left (north), continue on a path which leads to a bridge over the River Brent.

25 Cross the bridge and turn right (leaving the route to *Welsh Harp*, which goes off to the left), with the water flowing on your right. Turn left onto a path to reach Cambridge Close, then turn right and immediately turn left onto the left-hand footway of Lawrence Way.

*Stone sculpture
in Chalkhill Park*



After crossing a minor brook, and with the tall fence of the Underground depot directly ahead, cross Quainton Street and turn left along the right-hand footway, then take the first turning on your right onto the right-hand footway of Chesham Street.

These streets form part of land built up by the Great Central Railway Company to house their employees in an area convenient for the company. Other streets (Woodhey Road, for example) were similarly built up on the other side of the railway, but those were intended for lower classes of employees and were a little downmarket in terms of amenities (and cheaper in price).

However, workers higher up the company's pecking order could choose to live either in the Woodhey Road area (probably maintaining neighbourliness with close colleagues or with relatives in the "railway family"), or in the slightly more upmarket company houses around Quainton Road and Chesham Road.

Follow the right-hand footway of Chesham Street and then of Village Way to its end at the North Circular Road, where turn right. Follow the right-hand footway of the thundering North Circular Road (using the immediate crescent next to the houses) almost to the railway bridge before descending to cross the busy road by an underpass. On the other side of the road, turn left onto Brendon Avenue, and follow the right-hand footway to reach Dog Lane.

The North Circular Road was a child of the 1920s; by the 1960s it was planned to become part of "Ringway 2" (how Orwellian



Top — River Brent

Above — Houses built by the Great Central Railway Company, Quainton Street

Below — the North Circular Road crosses the railways



a name!). It has been improved in many places, and is a major traffic artery (the A406) between Chiswick and Silvertown, though a lot of the housing actually on the roadside is rather blighted. By contrast, its companion, the A205 South Circular Road, is still really no more than a string of suburban streets linked by a road number.

There is a convenience shop at the junction of Brendon Avenue and Dog Lane.

Turn right onto Dog Lane and follow its right-hand footway across Neasden Lane onto Bermans Way (just to the left of straight across). At the far end, turn right onto Dudden Hill Lane.

26 Follow the right-hand footway of Dudden Hill Lane downhill past a bus stop, then use the refuge to cross to the left-hand footway. Turn left onto Lennox Gardens, and follow its right-hand footway to the point where the road turns left. Follow a path ahead (just to the left of 31 Lennox Gardens) to reach Gladstone Park.

The 35ha of Gladstone Park in the Dollis Hill neighbourhood was created following public protest at the loss of sports facilities in Neasden as a result of the Great Central Railway's being pushed through the area. Its creation caused its own protests, chiefly from the editor of the local newspaper, who lived, untrammelled by the proposals, at the far end of his paper's coverage area in South Kilburn.

Turn right, then left, to follow the southern edge of the park. The path runs parallel to the railway (currently a freight line, but planned to be used for a new service between Hounslow and Brent Cross West) to the far end of the park, where turn right to cross the railway by a bridge.

Dudding Hill Junction



As you cross the railway, you may see the old signal box for Dudding Hill Junction (note the variant spelling), with the junction just beyond, over to your left: it is the track on the left which will be used by the Hounslow service.

Follow the path out through the south-eastern expanse of the park. Do not continue ahead onto Park Avenue North, but cross Kendal Road to the left of that junction using the refuge, and turn left along the right-hand footway to reach Melrose Avenue on your right with a mini-roundabout over to your left.

27 Turn right onto Melrose Avenue and follow the tree-lined street all the way along its gradations of suburban housing to its junction with Walm Lane. Either footway may be used, but the left-hand footway has the advantage of being unbroken by entries.

Note the building on the right at the junction with Cranhurst Road, which is much more ornate than the surrounding properties. Was it perhaps intended for occupation by the developer himself?

To the right along Walm Lane is the station at Willesden Green, with a lively commercial centre surrounding the Jubilee Line station.

28 Continue ahead (eastbound) on the right-hand footway of Walm Lane, which takes the turn at the junction — it is similarly tree-lined and similarly suburban — to the junction with Exeter Road, where turn half-right. Follow the left-hand footway of Exeter Road uphill, then down to the railway, crossing to the right-hand footway at the bend to the left which leads to Shoot-up Hill at Kilburn station.

At the foot of Exeter Road, just where it bends to run parallel with the railway, there is a fine collection of blocks of Edwardian mansion flats, conveniently situated (as they were built to be) near the railway station.

Shoot-up Hill's etymology is duller than some might imagine — it has no connection with criminal activity, but is merely the point where the Roman road (Watling Street) and its successors suddenly had to contend with a gradient on the northbound journey.

There is a café next to the station: other shops are available in the vicinity.

*Left — Melrose Avenue at
Cranhurst Road*

Right — Exeter Mansions





Kilburn railway bridge

29 Cross Shoot-up Hill by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and turn right, then turn left onto Maygrove Road. Follow through the canyon of curtain-wall terraces along the left-hand footway of Maygrove Road to Iverson Road, where bear left. Ascend Iverson Road, still on the left-hand footway, to reach West End Lane at West Hampstead Thameslink station.

The Thameslink station is the most northerly of the chain of three West Hampstead

stations. By turning right onto West End Lane, you will meet the Overground station on your right, and then the Jubilee Line station on your left.

There are plenty of opportunities for refreshment at West End Lane: there is even a farmers' market in front of the Thameslink station on a Saturday (1000-1400).

30 Turn right, and take West End Lane to West Hampstead Overground station (on the Lioness Line between Euston and Watford) on your right, where cross to the left-hand footway using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Pass the end of Billy Fury Way, a narrow path between the railway fence and a high brick wall.

Billy Fury was a rock singer who did little or nothing to stem the chorus of suggestions that he was to be "the British Elvis". Fury made many recordings at the local Decca studios on Broadhurst Gardens (ahead).

It may seem from the map that one could take Billy Fury Way to Finchley Road, perhaps to take in a visit to the O₂ Centre, but this cannot be recommended for use by walkers. The path is narrow and hemmed in, and could well be dangerous.

Continue along West End Lane past West Hampstead Tube station, then turn left along Broadhurst Gardens.

The aforementioned Decca studios were in number 165 on the right almost immediately after turning off West End Lane — the building is currently used by English National Opera and has been renamed Lilian Baylis House.



Lilian Baylis House

Lilian Baylis (1874-1937) was a director and producer who managed Sadler's Wells and the Old Vic during her career in London.

Recordings were also made at these studios by Lonnie Donegan, whose fame in the 1950s and early 1960s was based on the (thankfully short-lived) fad of making music with improvised instruments.

A short distance south on West End Lane is Bohemia House. It was a gathering-place for Czechs and Slovaks during the Second World War, and retains its heritage in the food and drink offered.

Follow the left-hand footway of Broadhurst Gardens to its junction with Canfield Gardens at a huddle of pedestrian crossings. Turn left and follow Canfield Gardens up to the entrance to Finchley Road Tube station.

There are many shops, cafés, restaurants and pubs in the vicinity of Finchley Road Tube station.

Finchley Road to Baker Street

3.6km

31 Cross Canfield Gardens onto the right-hand footway of Finchley Road, and follow it (separated from the road by a barrier) as far as Fairfax Road, where turn right.

Just before you reach Fairfax Road, over on the left, is the imposing North Star building, with a pub on the ground floor.

Follow Fairfax Road to its end at a roundabout, using the left-hand footway unless you are interested by the retail opportunities on the right-hand side of the road.

On the right as you approach the roundabout, there is a parade of shops with a convenience shop and cafés among the offers.

Keeping the roundabout on your right, cross Belsize Road by the refuge, then cross Hilgrove Road by the pedestrian crossing. Press ahead over the railway (at South Hampstead station) and continue along the left-hand footway of Loudoun Road to reach and cross Boundary Road (where you will enter the City of Westminster).

On the right, you will see the striking Alexandra Road Estate. It 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 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.



Loudoun Road

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.

Continue along the left-hand footway of Loudoun Road, passing a large school on your left, to its end at Grove End Road.

The brick barrel-vaulted building on your right at the junction with Grove End Road is a synagogue.

32 Turn left on Grove End Road to reach Wellington Road at St John's Wood station. Turn right and descend Wellington Road on its right-hand footway. Pass Lord's Cricket Ground on your right to reach the junction with St John's Wood Road.

On the corner of the cricket ground, there is a bas-relief sculpture, created in 1934 by Gilbert Bayes, RA. It has no connection with the cricket club, but was a gift to the then Borough

of St Marylebone by Alderman David Isaacs, who commissioned it from Bayes. The Grade II listed relief portrays a procession of sportsmen and sportswomen, depicting tennis players, golfers, cricketers, swimmers, oarsmen and footballers.

Cross to the large hotel opposite (with the Metropolitan Line directly underneath) and turn left across the hotel frontage to reach the junction with Park Road.

*Bayes relief,
St John's Wood Road*

The statue of St George and the Dragon ahead on the junction is, in fact, the local war memorial, and is Grade II listed.



Follow Park Road round to the right to reach and cross the Regent's Canal.

Note the plaque on the wall next to the canal access identifying the site of Thomas Lord's second cricket ground. The present stadium is the third of his cricket grounds, the first being in Dorset Square, between Marylebone and Baker Street stations.

Continue along the right-hand footway of Park Road, passing the London Central Mosque

over on the left-hand side of the road. At the junction with Gloucester Place, cross Rossmore Road (which rises to the right to cross over the tracks at Marylebone station) then turn left to cross Gloucester Place, finally, turn right to continue along the right-hand footway of Park Road.

Cross over Ivor Place, and advance to the bifurcation of Park Road and Baker Street. Take the latter (that is, the right fork) to follow the right-hand footway of Baker Street, taking the opportunity to cross to the left-hand footway at the traffic lights.

Pass the end of Melcombe Street on your right (the site of Thomas Lord's first cricket ground is situated along this street in Dorset Square) to reach an entrance to Baker Street station (this probably the more civilised one). Continue to Marylebone Road, where turn left and take the service road to reach the main entrance to the station.

The huge block of flats which sits above the station has been home to various celebrities. On the west side of the building, there are plaques commemorating the authors HG Wells and Arnold Bennett, and the composer Eric Coates, while at the east end of the building, a plaque commemorates Kenneth Williams. The cartoonist David Low lived in the building, and three flats became the headquarters of the Norwegian section of the Special Operations Executive, whose headquarters' location was at 64 Baker Street, to the south of Marylebone Road.

The service road across the front of Chiltern Court is often blocked by a mass of people, relatively few of whom are attempting to make their way to or from the station. The two prime suspects are the huge statue of the fictional Sherlock Holmes (for some reason, very many people feel the need to pose with the ugly lump of metal), and the city tour buses (for some reason, very many people would rather spend a fortune on these tours rather than get out and live London on the normal buses, Tubes and footways at far less cost). If



*St John's Wood
war memorial*

*Baker Street station —
the huge frontage of the
station, built to contain
administrative, commercial
and residential premises*



biped gridlock has been attained, simply walk along the left-hand footway of Marylebone Road.

Baker Street to Great Portland Street 0.9km

33 Follow the left-hand footway of Marylebone Road past Madame Tussaud's (more piles of people queueing, this time to see the wax dummies inside).

Madame Tussauds (the apostrophe has been lost rather carelessly along the way) began life in 1835 in Baker Street by Marie Tussaud, whose initial stock-in-trade was alleged likenesses of Voltaire, followed by figures of Robespierre and other luminaries of the French Revolution. Its expansion necessitated a move to the current location in 1884. The London Planetarium within the building closed in 2010. There are now no fewer than 25 branches of Madame Tussauds Wax Galleries around the world.

Continue along the left-hand footway of Marylebone Road with less crowd-induced tension to reach York Gate, one of the principal carriage entries to The Regent's Park (yes, the definite article is part of the name and should not be omitted).

Marylebone Road was constructed in 1756 as part of the New Road, which ran as a toll road along the northern fringe of London (shades of a *boulevard périphérique* to come in Paris). The route is now made up of Marylebone Road, Euston Road, Pentonville Road, City Road and Moorgate.

*Baker Street station,
bathed in the light of
an early morning in winter*



34 Continue ahead on Marylebone Road, still on the left-hand footway, passing the Royal Academy of Music on your left to reach the point (at West Gate, Park Square) where The Regent's Park comes into contact with Marylebone Road. Pass Regent's Park Tube station on the far side of the road.

Alas, it seems that Transport for London is as careless with the definite article as the successors to Marie Tussaud have been with the apostrophe.

Advance to the junction with Albany Street, with Great Portland Street station on the other side of the road.

Also on the opposite side of Euston Road is the International Students' House. A bust of John F Kennedy was in the past placed facing the road, but it has been moved inside the building "for reasons of security".

Great Portland Street to Euston Square

0.6km

35 Cross over Albany Street using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and continue ahead past a redundant church which is now an event venue. Cross over Osnaburgh Street using the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing. At this point, the New Road changes its local name, with Euston Road replacing Marylebone Road.

Continue ahead onto Euston Road, keeping to its left-hand footway, passing the Regent's Place development on the left. On the right, there are views of the iconic BT Tower (first glanced on the Metropolitan Line as far back as Northwick Park station) along the various side streets.

The building is to be converted into a hotel, but it is unlikely that Kitten Kong (from *The Goodies*, 1971) will feature — at least on the exterior.

You will then arrive at the major junction with Hampstead Road, with the main thoroughfare of Euston Road in an underpass beneath the junction.

Warren Street Tube station (Northern and Victoria Lines) is across Euston Road to your right.

There are many cafés, restaurants, pubs and shops in the vicinity, most of them on Tottenham Court Road to the south of Warren Street station, and others in the Regent's Place development and on Hampstead Road beyond.

36 Press on along the left-hand footway of Euston Road, with University College Hospital across the chasm of the underpass. Cross over North Gower Street to reach the northern entrance to Euston Square station.

The Metropolitan Line (in company with the Hammersmith and City Line and the Circle Line) runs beneath Marylebone Road and Euston Road between Baker Street and King's Cross St Pancras stations. As with many early underground railways (indeed, this was the first of them all), construction was by the cut-and-cover method.

Euston Square to King's Cross St Pancras

0.9km

37 From the northern entrance of Euston Square station (if you are exiting the station, turn right after passing through the ticketing gates and turn left at the top of the stairs), continue along the left-hand footway of Euston Road, following it eastwards. Cross over the end of Melton Street using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing.



Above — Euston station: West Lodge (left) and the London and North Western Railway Company's war memorial (right)

Below — the former Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital for Women, now accommodating the offices of a trade union



On the right, the Wellcome Institute is followed by Friends House, the headquarters of the Quaker movement in Britain. On the left, Euston bus station sits in front of the mainline station, along with significant disruption as the HS2 part of the station is built and furnished with its railway.

There is a pub in one of the lodges to the station on Euston Road, and the usual station facilities on the concourse of the mainline station.

Euston Road now descends gradually to the valley of the (now culverted) River Fleet at Broad Ford. The area was known for centuries as Battle Bridge, with yet another claim to be the site of Boudicca's Last Stand against the Romans in 61CE, but it is now generally known as King's Cross..

38 Beyond Euston Square Gardens (which lie between the bus station and Euston Road), continue along the left-hand footway of Euston Road, crossing over Eversholt Street and Churchway, each by its respective light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

After you have crossed Churchway, you will pass on your left the former Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital (she was the first woman to qualify as a surgeon and the first woman to become a mayor, in Aldburgh, Suffolk) — the building is now occupied by trade union offices.

Cross over Chalton Street without the aid of a pedestrian crossing, then continue ahead to reach Ossulston Street,

crossing it by its light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Pass the brick bulk of the British Library on your left, then cross over Midland Road, again by its light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and pass the older brick edifice of St Pancras station, also on your left. Cross over Pancras Way by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing to reach King's Cross Square, with the entrance to the Underground station on your left.

St Pancras station opened in 1868, having been constructed by the Midland Railway Company (with William Barlow as the architect) as their own London terminus (having experienced congestion problems while sharing Euston station with the London and North Western Railway. Soon afterwards, the Midland Grand Hotel was built onto the Euston Road façade. The hotel was designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott in a flamboyant neo-Gothic style to impress customers and to cement the Midland railway's reputation. The tracks were built at first-floor level so that the Regent's Canal could be bridged (rather than tunnelled, as at King's Cross station next door).

By the 1960s, St Pancras had become dark and dowdy, with Barlow's roof blackened by a century's accumulation of soot, and there were plans to demolish the building. After a long campaign, in which John Betjeman (later Poet Laureate) played a major part, the station was saved. There is a statue of Betjeman looking upwards within the station today. The station was saved, but the hotel, which had been used as offices, was stagnant and was closed.

With the advent of Eurostar services in 1997, the entire station was refurbished, returning the Barlow roof to its pale blue original colour, and the hotel was refurbished in suitably grand style.

Freight had always been as important to the Midland Railway as passenger traffic, with beer from Burton-on-Trent a mainstay. The ground-floor undercroft of the station was built deliberately with pillars to maximise the capability for storage of beer and other goods, and there was an extensive goods yard to the west of the station. The British Library now covers much of the land occupied by the goods yard.

Today, the ground floor is given over to retail establishments with little or no connection to the immediate needs of railway passengers, so much so that St Pancras is often lampooned as "a nice shopping



*St Pancras station —
Midland Grand Hotel
in the morning light*



*St Pancras station,
Eurostar platforms
under the Barlow roof*

*King's Cross station:
the western extension*



mall with a station attached". However, it is not much more extreme than some of the other London termini.

Among the shops, there are cafés, a pub, and two small supermarkets. On the first floor, there is a convenience shop, restaurants and a pub.

King's Cross station was opened in 1852 in a classical style which was much more restrained than the flamboyant "noisy neighbour", St Pancras, which came along ten years later. The jewel in the King's Cross crown was the fast service to Edinburgh Waverley, with services such as the *Flying Scotsman* and iconic locomotives such as *Mallard*,

for many years the holder of the speed record for a steam locomotive. The area to the west of the trainshed became the focal point of the station with its refurbishment in 2012. The original design of the station was a family affair, with Lewis Cubitt as architect and his brother William as chief consulting engineer.

The western concourse was designed by George McAslan. On the concourse, there is a statue of Sir Nigel Gresley (1876-1941), the engineer who designed, amongst other locomotives, the famed *Mallard*. In the original version of the statue, two mallard ducks were placed beside Gresley (in punning reference to the locomotive), but there were humourless objections from Gresley's family that the birds lowered the tone of the statue, and were disrespectful of the engineer's technical prowess.

Unlike St Pancras, the platforms at King's Cross are at street level. The Midland railway was always on the lookout to

reduce gradients (think, for example, of all the bridges and tunnels between Settle and Carlisle), so decided to take the tracks over the canal to the north of the station, while the tracks from King's Cross must burrow underneath the canal before climbing towards Finsbury Park.

The country's largest station pub is situated in the former Parcel Yard (and bears its name). On the main concourse, there are restaurants, sandwicheries, fast-food outlets and a small supermarket.



*King's Cross station
from Pancras Way*

The Underground station plays host to six lines: the Circle, Hammersmith and City, Metropolitan, Northern, Piccadilly and Victoria Lines. As well as the terminal rail services from the two stations, through Thameslink trains stop in St Pancras station.

King's Cross St Pancras to Farringdon 2.1km

39 Walk to the eastern end of King's Cross Square at the junction with York Way on the left, and turn right to cross Euston Road using the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Turn left and follow the right-hand footway of Gray's Inn Road, with the "lighthouse" across the road on your left. Turn right to continue on Gray's Inn Road, crossing to the left-hand footway at a suitable location.

A statue of King George IV stood at the point which is now the junction of Euston Road and Gray's Inn Road (whence the name "King's Cross"). However, the statue proved to be as popular as the king, and was pulled down in 1845 without a hint of respectful ceremony.

From King's Cross to Farringdon, it is possible to follow the direct route via King's Cross Road, the summit of Mount Pleasant, and Farringdon Road, but the route described below offers at least some respite from busy roads — though the bus stops on King's Cross Road and Farringdon Road are always close at hand.

Follow the right-hand footway of Gray's Inn Road as far as the junction with Sidmouth Street (on your right). Here, turn left and cross Gray's Inn Road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and pass into Ampton Street opposite, following the right-hand footway. At the end of the street, continue ahead, descending with



Phoenix Place, post-Dickens

Rosebery Avenue crossing



the footpath, to reach Cubitt Street. Turn right and follow the right-hand footway of Cubitt Street to its three-way junction with Pakenham Street. Bear right to follow the right-hand footway of Pakenham Street to the junction with Calthorpe Street, just beyond your crossing of Wren Street.

40 Cross Calthorpe Street using the pedestrian crossing, and follow the narrow street called Phoenix Place ahead.

With all the new buildings which are springing up in this area, it is hard to think of it as the warren of slums described by Charles Dickens in *Oliver Twist*.

Follow Phoenix Place, taking the left-hand footway, and crossing over Mount Pleasant (the street).

To the left, Mount Pleasant ascends to the summit of Farringdon Road: the crossroads there is dominated by the huge Post Office building.

Pass beneath Rosebery Avenue — by this point, the street-name has changed to Warner Street. At the point where Warner Street bears left to become Ray Street, cross the road ahead. Do not take Back Hill ahead, but turn left along the right-hand footway. Turn right onto Herbal Hill to rise on its right-hand footway to Clerkenwell Road.

Cross over Clerkenwell Road using the lighth-controlled pedestrian crossing and continue ahead onto Saffron Hill. Follow the left-hand footway of this street to its junction with Greville Road, where turn left to descend to Farringdon Road. Cross the road ahead using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing to reach the piazza at the twin entrances to Farringdon station.

Farringdon station is much busier than it was fifty years ago. The growth of Thameslink services and the coming of the Elizabeth Line have boosted the footfall considerably, and an entire station building has been constructed across the street from the Metropolitan Railway's building. The station opened in 1863, the eastern terminus of the world's first underground railway. The building which now gives the main access to the Metropolitan Line was built in 1922.

In 1846, though, there were plans to build a vast London Central station at Farringdon, with trains arriving from all over the country, It would have meant the demolition of half of Clerkenwell, and the plans were shelved. The coming of the Underground, which was able to link up existing termini, brought the project to a quiet end.

Farringdon to Barbican

0.6km

41 From the entrance to Farringdon station, reach the junction with Turnmill Street (that is to say, turning left if exiting the station from the Tube, or turning right if exiting from National Rail or the Elizabeth Line). Continue ahead onto the right-hand footway of Cowcross Street and ascend the road, its winding route easing the gradient, firstly for cattle, then for horse-drawn vehicles, and now for pedestrians.

Turnmill, Cowcross — the echoes of the now-culverted river continue to call its name. Turnmill Street had a mill on the River Fleet — note how the street follows the bends in the river's course — and Cowcross Street identifies the ford on the river which was used by cattle on their final walk to Smithfield Market.

At the top, the street takes a right-hand bend to give you a view of the Grand Avenue of Smithfield Market ahead. Cross to the covered avenue using the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and pass through to the other side of the market on Long Lane at West Smithfield.

There are many opportunities to catch a bite to eat and something to drink in the vicinity of the market.

*Central Avenue
Smithfield Market*



Smithfield has had a market here since 1137, on a “smooth field”. The area was once surrounded by several important religious institutions: the nunnery of St Mary, the priory of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem, the Carthusian charterhouse, and the Augustinian priory and hospital which was dedicated to St Bartholomew, and is now known colloquially as Barts.

Of course, originally it was a livestock market, but when buildings grew up around the religious houses, the market became the cause of noise and stench which became intolerable. The livestock market only moved out in 1855, by which time Dickens had featured the market and its chaos in *Oliver Twist*.

The main meat market seen today is the result of a new build in 1860, supplemented by rebuilding after wartime bomb damage and later fire damage, and by upgrades to meet stringent modern regulations which have been enforced for safer meat-handling. The building is listed Grade II.

Over the years, Smithfield has been a place of execution for humans as well as livestock. William Wallace, the fighter for Scottish independence at the turn of the fourteenth century, was hanged, drawn and quartered here: his head was then placed on a pike above London Bridge, and one of his limbs was displayed in each of four towns which were of particular political importance at that time — Stirling, Perth, Berwick-upon-Tweed and Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Later, Wat Tyler, the leader of the 1381 Peasant’s Revolt, was also executed at Smithfield, with King Richard II (it is said) looking on. Tyler’s head was also piked on London Bridge.

The priory of St Bartholomew the Great was founded in Smithfield in 1123: it is so called to distinguish it from the church of St Bartholomew the Less within the adjoining hospital, which was built as part of the same foundation. The hospital has survived many shocks around it, including the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the Great Fire of London, and the Blitz. It is the oldest hospital in Britain providing all medical services from its original location.

There are plans to move Smithfield Market to Dagenham Dock, and for the current market area to be colonised by the Museum of London, which has already closed its London Wall premises in preparation for the move. However, legal matters of a mediaeval nature (Dagenham Dock’s closeness to Romford Market would breach the terms of the royal decree which created Romford Market in 1247) may cause delay to, or even abandonment of, that move.

42 Turn left along the right-hand footway of Long Lane, passing the eastern Elizabeth Line entrance of Farringdon station, to reach the junction with Aldersgate Street. The entrance to Barbican station is over to your left.

Barbican station was originally called Aldersgate (and has had permutations which included “Street” and “Barbican” in its name),

but was renamed as Barbican in 1968 after the construction of the Barbican Estate, with its major arts venue.

Barbican to Moorgate

0.9km

43 Turn right onto Aldersgate Street, using a pedestrian crossing part-way along the street to cross to the left-hand footway. Turn left onto the street called London Wall (so named for the obvious reason).

The building which overhangs part of the junction is the closed site of the Museum of London.

Follow the left-hand footway of London Wall — there is a section of the Roman wall on your left. Pass through a short tunnel to come out at some medieval ruins: this is St Elsyng Spittal.

The remains of St Elsyng Spittal, which was a medieval hospice, was partly built into the wall which encircled Londinium. There is no St Elsyng, the name is only “Holy Mr Elsing”.

44 Follow the left-hand footway of London Wall to its junction with Moorgate. Cross over Moorgate using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and turn left onto the right-hand footway to reach, on the right, the access to Finsbury Circus. The nearest entrance to Moorgate station is just ahead: there are other entrances nearby.

This is the easternmost part of the New Road of 1756, as described on page 30.

As well as Tube services, Moorgate has direct access to the Elizabeth Line platforms of Liverpool Street station, and has National Rail services to Stevenage.

Moorgate to Liverpool Street

0.4km

45 Turn right off Moorgate to reach the oval of Finsbury Circus ahead. Go round or through the gardens (wherein there are benches for rest or for *al fresco* eating) and continue out ahead on the other side.

46 Turn left onto Blomfield Street and then turn right onto Liverpool Street, passing the modern Elizabeth Line entrance



St Elsyng Spittal



Moorgate station



*Kindertransport memorial,
Liverpool Street*

to the station, to reach the main entrance to Liverpool Street station.

Just before you turn into Liverpool Street, look ahead. The modern Broadgate development, with *Fulcrum*, by the late Richard Serra (1938-2024), at the entrance, stands on the site of Broad Street station, which was the terminus of the North London Line, carrying trains from Watford Junction via Camden Road.

The line now carries Overground trains on the Windrush Line, branching from the original route to serve Shoreditch High Street and points south: it is truly a mystery why these Overground trains cannot replicate the direct services between Watford and the City.

Outside the entrance to Liverpool Street is a statue commemorating the *Kindertransport* evacuation of unaccompanied children from Germany during the Second World War — Liverpool Street was their London point of arrival. There is another memorial on the concourse of the mainline station, and more in Harwich, where the children disembarked from the ferry.

Liverpool Street to Aldgate 0.7km

47 Continue along the left-hand footway of Liverpool Street to its end at the junction with Bishopsgate.

If you have visited the main concourse of Liverpool Street station, leave the concourse by the stairs at the east end (with the platforms on your left) and turn right along the right-hand footway of Bishopsgate to reach the junction with Liverpool Street and turn left





Cross over Bishopsgate by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and continue ahead onto the exceedingly narrow Devonshire Row. Continue to the end to reach Devonshire Square.

*Liverpool Street station —
main concourse*

Note the modern statue of a knight on a horse: this commemorates the *Cnihtesgild*, the company of knights who guarded London at the end of the first millennium CE.

Cnihtesgild statue

48 Continue ahead along the right-hand footway to the end of the street (which changes its name to Cutler Street and then to White Kennett Street) and then cross the piazza ahead to reach St Botolph Street, with the roof of Aldgate station ahead.

Cross St Botolph Street by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and take Blue Boar Passage ahead, with the station building on your right, to reach Aldgate High Street. The entrance to Aldgate station, the city terminus of the Metropolitan Line is to your right.

Aldgate station was opened in 1876, and the frontage on Aldgate High Street was constructed in 1926 — this means that the original trainshed is only seen at street level from the north. The Metropolitan Line's terminal platforms are numbered 2 and 3, while the Circle Line takes the outer through platforms. Prior to the



establishment of Aldgate as the terminus for the Metropolitan Line in 1941, trains continued via Aldgate East and the East London Line to New Cross and New Cross Gate.

Aldgate station



Amersham to West Harrow via Chesham and Watford 43.6km; 9hr 31min 499m ascent

Introduction

1 This section covers the line between Amersham station and West Harrow station (the route between North Harrow and Harrow-on-the-Hill passes West Harrow station, so this is the point of conjunction of the two branches of the walking route), taking in Chesham station *en route* to Chalfont and Latimer, and picking up the stations on the Watford branch after leaving Rickmansworth and before reaching Moor Park.

Rural paths take the majority of the route as far as Chorleywood. Beyond Chorleywood, greenery is represented by parks and golf courses.

Route

Amersham to Chesham 4.3km

Amersham station, at 150m above sea level, is the highest point on the Underground network. This section is quintessential

Amersham station



Metro-land, with many houses spec-built by the Metropolitan Railway Company and destined to be occupied by the railway's commuters and their neatly nuclear families.

There are two Underground trains per hour to and from Amersham, and these are supplemented by Chiltern Railways trains to and from Marylebone, calling at Chalfont and Latimer, Chorleywood, Rickmansworth and Harrow-on-the-Hill.

Amersham-on-the-Hill may provide all facilities, including bus services to Uxbridge, High Wycombe, and Hemel Hempstead *via* Chesham.

2 With your back to the station entrance, cross Chiltern Avenue using the pedestrian crossing and turn left. Turn right to walk up Hill Avenue (the commercial heart of Amersham) using the right-hand footway. Pass to the right of the double mini-roundabout, crossing over Sycamore Road at the second one. Continue ahead, now on Chesham Road. There is one final row of shops on the right, and flats behind a wall on the left, and then there is housing on each side of the road. Cross Rickmansworth Road using the refuge, and pass the front of a pub on your right to take up Chesham Road again.

Advance to reach and cross over South Road, and take a track into the woods to the right of what has become Amersham Road ahead. Bear left before the track comes out onto Chesham Bois cricket ground, keeping within the woodland. Cross North Road and continue ahead on a track. At a fork, take the left-hand option to keep to higher ground, gradually making for Amersham Road, which you will reach near a pair of bus stops and opposite Mayhall Lane. Cross the road at the bus stop on the far side of the road (to optimise your line of sight at the bend in the road) and turn right along the left-hand footway to reach the junction with Mayhall Lane.

There is a frequent bus service here between Amersham and Chesham, with an hourly service (not on Sundays, nor on Bank Holidays) to Uxbridge via Amersham, the Chalfonts, and Gerrards

Cross. The main service connects Hemel Hempstead with High Wycombe: it is very frequent, except on Sundays and Bank Holidays, when it drops to one bus per hour.

3 Turn left onto Mayhall Lane. Follow the lane until it turns right at the end of the housing, then, having taken the bend, follow the footpath along the house-backs for 400m. Where a thin path continues

*The start of the descent
from Mayhall Lane*



to border the housing, and a broader one descends half-left, choose the broader path as it crosses the field. This descends through a copse to come out at the corner of a second field. The route, on a diagonal across the field, is made more obvious by a clear gap in the ground-level vegetation on the far side of the field.

Continue to descend, now on a clear path through woodland, marked on old maps as Howlets Wood, then as Beech Wood farther north. The path eventually comes out at the head of a large field which takes the gentle U-valley.

Follow the right-hand edge of this field until the boundary with the trees on your right leaves the path's side. Here, there is an obvious diagonal path which descends to the bottom of the field. Take this path: at the bottom, it is joined by a path coming down from the left. Go through into the next field, and keep to its left-hand side to reach a road.

4 The road is Fuller's Close, and across the road is a residential complex operated by Scope, where cross the road and turn left along the right-hand footway. The road soon bends to the right and descends to its outlet onto Fuller's Hill.

Descend Fuller's Hill on its right-hand footway, passing some very old cottages on the way, all the way down to an old bridge (called, in fact, the Town Bridge) which carries the road over the River Chess.

Reference to old maps (<https://maps.nls.uk> has the content) confirms that Fuller's Hill was in the past the main route between Chesham and High Wycombe, so this little bridge was an important structure.

Cross the bridge, and turn right immediately to follow the Chess Valley Way (also known as Duck Alley — that name appears on a map of 1883 and is still in use), with the river on your right. Ignore an exit which goes off to the left towards a car park, keeping to the water's edge.

You will emerge into a small park: turn left to pass a park bench and take the path out to the busy Red Lion Street, with a stolid brickbarn church of the nineteenth century across the



*Diagonal field path
to Howlets Wood*



Duck Alley, Chesham



Above — Jacob's Ladder

Below — former signal box, Chesham station



road. Cross the road (without the benefit of a pedestrian crossing or a refuge) to reach the foot of the cobblestoned Punch Bowl Lane, with the church on your left.

If the traffic on Red Lion Street (the main southbound exit from the centre of Chesham) is unending, use a pedestrian crossing off to the left and return to the brickbarn church.

There has been a nonconformist church on this site for three centuries: the Victorian building was remodelled in the early part of the twenty-first century to accord with more modern conventions of use and access.

Climb to the top of Punch Bowl Lane and turn left along a lane which runs with some old railings on your left. This path runs parallel to the railway on your right; you will soon see on your left an old staircase known as Jacob's Ladder. Before the coming of the railway, this was the start of an ascent to Dungrove Farm, and the right of way still exists today. Continue along the path to reach the entrance to Chesham Station on your right.

It is curious to think that Chesham station should pre-date the station at Amersham. The Metropolitan Railway Company, pushing north-west, decided to build towards a link with the London and North-Western Railway at their station to the east of Tring (today's Tring station). The railway company bought up land for the line and for speculative housing, but by the time they had reached Chesham, the company's eyes had shifted their focus onto Aylesbury, *via* Amersham (and eventually farther out, as far as Verney Junction). The line beyond Chesham was never built.

There are two trains per hour from Chesham towards Baker Street and Aldgate. Buses for Hemel Hempstead, Amersham, High Wycombe and Uxbridge may be found at Broadway (go down Station Road on your left, then turn right).

All facilities may be found around Broadway. If you are breaking your journey here, and are travelling towards London, you may take a path across the station car park and up the steps to reach the station. There are shops and places where you may consume food and drink

and other facilities to the right on Amersham Road. There is also a large supermarket just north of the station.

Walkers should note that, once Chesham is left behind, the route is almost entirely without refreshment facilities until those found on the south side of Chalfont and Latimer station, or (on the route itself) in Chorleywood, more than 13km ahead.

The Metropolitan Railway's signal box at the station fell out of use during the 1960s, but the box has been preserved and restored in its original livery. The restoration work was completed in 2016.

Chesham to Chalfont and Latimer 8.1km

5 From Chesham station, follow The Backs, taking the right-hand footway when it appears, the road contouring the side of the hill. Do not descend Station Road (except to visit shops, bank, etc.), but continue between a supermarket on the left and its car park on the right. At the end of the car park, take a path (which starts with some steps) on the right. This ascends, and crosses the entry to the White Hill Centre before veering to the left, climbing all the time.

Just before a summit is reached on the path, turn right to pass through the first of many kissing-gates, and ascend the field. At a further kissing-gate, continue ahead across another field.

Follow the waymark to turn right; at the end of the field, go deep into the corner to find another path leading off to your left. At the end of that field, turn right to head downhill, with a hedge on your right. Pass through a gap in the hedge to continue your descent in a green lane (which is often muddy). At the bottom, with houses

*View over Chesham from
west of Dungrove Farm*





Chess Valley Walk



*Approach path to
Blackwell Farm Cottages*



ahead, take a kissing-gate to squeeze between the houses and descend to the road along the Chess Valley, here called Waterside.

6 Cross the road, and turn left to follow its right-hand footway past a former pub, until a footbridge on the right takes you across the River Chess. Bear left to pass a leisure centre, and cross Bois Moor Road onto Chesham Moor. Follow the Chess Valley Walk signs, keeping close to the river on your left, through woodland (but with the sound of the valley road very audible to your left).

At a weir, turn left and right to continue with the river on your right, still following the Chess Valley Walk. After another 350m, turn left on a path to reach Latimer Road, where turn right.

7 Follow the footway where there is one, and stay on the right where there is none. This road-walk lasts for 500m. About 50m before you leave the road, just past Milk Hall Barns, there is a footpath sign on the left which may tempt you to think that it is indicating your way forward — ignore it and its accompanying hectoring notices.

Instead, carry on along the road until it bends to the right at Broadwater Bridge — before the road reaches the bridge, turn left onto a lane, then immediately turn right onto a path.

8 There are several more hectoring notices, but ignore these unedifying attempts at deterrence and continue along the valley to reach Blackwell Farm Cottages. Follow the clear and friendly signage (such a contrast to the churlish language you have just encountered) through a right-and-left zigzag to pass the cottages and reach a road.

Continue ahead along the road and, where it bends left, continue ahead, still following the waymarks for the Chess Valley Walk. The clear path ahead leads to the corner of Frith Wood.

9 Enter the wood, and soon take a stile over two strands of barbed wire into the field on the right. The vertical structure of the stile has been discarded, so take care. This is an occasion when the solo walker is disadvantaged.

Continue uphill on the left side of the field, ignoring any invitation to re-enter the wood, and continue up to the summit, where the map promises Cave Dell in the wood.

Continue ahead until you run into a path with a fence on each side. Latimer House rears up on the left. Down below on your right, you will see the buildings of Latimer Park, with its Great Water in the front.

Latimer House was built in 1838, a previous house having been gutted by fire. Today, it is a conference centre and a “prestige wedding location” (ah, the narcissism!).

Continue along the path, which runs beneath the parterre of Latimer House, to reach Church Lane.

10 Turn right, and descend the driveway to reach the river, which falls at a weir to your right — this is the weir which holds back the Great Water which you saw from above. Cross the bridge and take the path ahead which bisects the field to the valley road. Cross the road, and take the right-hand (fainter) of the two

*Latimer Park buildings
and Great Water*





*Crossing the River Chess
at Latimer Park*

paths ahead. When you reach the woodland, turn right onto a path, then take a path which climbs diagonally through the wood to the top. You should see a small crater on your left just below the top. Turn right and follow the path to your exit onto Beechwood Avenue on your left.

Follow the left-hand footway of the spur of Beechwood Avenue ahead onto Chenies Avenue, and continue to descend all

the way to the railway, where turn left onto Bedford Avenue. After 175m, turn right to cross the station car park (with steps between the levels) to the station.

If you are not stopping at Chalfont and Latimer station, turn left at the car park and follow it out to Amersham Road.

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

Chalfont and Latimer to Chorleywood

5.2km

11 From the main entrance to Chalfont and Latimer station (that is, from the platform served by trains coming from London), cross Station Approach and descend some steps to reach Amersham Road. Turn left and follow the left-hand footway of Amersham Road beneath the railway and across the entrance to the station car park.

Continue along the left-hand footway of Amersham Road — there is a service road on the left for much of the way — by using it, you will be left less exposed to the traffic. Continue across the end of Elizabeth Avenue, then turn left onto a street called Chessfield Park. Follow the left-hand footway of the street ahead. Where the street bends to the right, continue ahead on a path (there is a gable-ended house on your left, 27 Chessfield Park) which leads out to the corner of a recreation ground.

Continue ahead along the right-hand side of the recreation ground to the far end. Here, you will see a fenced path to the right which will take you to Stony Lane. However, the path through West Wood is much more pleasant. Continue ahead into West Wood, bearing right to keep to the edge of the wood, to reach Stony Lane.

Cross the road, using your eyes and ears to detect traffic, and take up a permissive path on the other side. This path turns right to run parallel to the road, and comes out opposite a small car park on

Stony Lane. At the top end of the car park, you will see the end of the fenced path.

12 Turn left away from Stony Lane to follow a path eastward through Walk Wood. At the end of the wood, continue ahead with views of the Chess valley on your left. When you come to a kissing-gate, do not go through it, but bear right onto a track to pass a house on the left. About 130m after ignoring the kissing-gate, bear off to the right along a path (there is a waymark on a stump post). This leads out onto the avenue of Chenies Manor House. Turn right (south) and follow the avenue to reach a crossing path.

The village of Chenies lies off to the left, along the avenue of trees. There are two pubs in the village.

13 Continue south to reach Amersham Road. Turn left and immediately pick up a footpath to the left of the road, then turn right on a road to reach Amersham Road again.

There is a large garden centre off to the left, with a café.

Cross Amersham Road and follow an old earthen track, which is a holloway, downhill, passing beneath the railway. Immediately beyond the railway, take a path on the left (south-eastwards) into Carpenter's Wood, gradually putting more distance from the railway on your left, to reach the right-hand corner of some house-backs.

14 Keep to the path on the left-hand edge of Carpenter's Wood with the housebacks on your left until you reach the end of the path, where turn left and descend onto Whitelands Avenue. Turn right and follow the left-hand footway of Whitelands Avenue to its end at the junction with Shire Lane.

There is a convenience shop and a café on the parade of shops at this point.

Cross Shire Lane beyond the shops ahead using the pedestrian crossing, and turn left to pass beneath the railway. Turn right to ascend Station Approach to reach Chorleywood station.



Walk Wood

Ancient track from Chenies towards the Chalfonts



Chorleywood to Rickmansworth

4.4km

15 Continue the ascent along the road from Chorleywood station on the right-hand footway. Where the footway ends at a junction, continue ahead on a lane to reach a small car park on Chorleywood Common, next to a bridge over the railway. Cross the bridge, and descend to take a single-track road (Common Gate Road) to the left. Follow Common Gate Road to its end, where turn left onto Berry Lane. Follow the road until it passes beneath the railway, then swing right with Berry Lane to follow it beneath the M25 to its junction with Valley Road.

There is a refuge path on the left-hand side of Berry Lane. However, taking this path involves several sets of steps (with no handrail) down and up again to negotiate driveways.

16 Do not turn left onto Valley Road, but bear round to the right to pass once more beneath the railway. Continue for 90m and, just where the road makes a slight bend to the right, take a path on the left onto woodland, noting the ban on motorcycling or golfing as stated on the by-law notice.

There is a refuge path of sorts on the left as the road rises from the railway, but it is on a narrow berm (Chorleywood's homage to Striding Edge, perhaps) and it would be very easy to slip onto the roadway below.

The path starts off by coming close to the railway, but then moves away again. Just follow the main path. It bends right where there are housebacks ahead, and brings you out to a cross-path. Turn left to exit the wood here to come out onto Highfield Way. Turn left onto Highfield Way and follow its left-hand footway round to the junction with Beacon Way.

17 Continue along the left-hand footway of Highfield Way to its end, where cross Meadow Way and turn left onto the right-hand footway. Just before you reach the railway bridge, turn right along a path parallel to the railway which comes out onto Nightingale Road. Turn left to follow the right-hand footway to the junction with The Drive.

Turn right to follow the right-hand footway, still on Nightingale Road. At the junction with Nightingale Lane ahead, follow Nightingale Road round to the left. Just before you reach the main

Houses on the southern edge of Chorleywood Common





Chorleywood Road, turn right onto Victoria Close (a *cul-de-sac*). When you reach the end of Victoria Close, take an underpass beneath the main town by-pass road. At the other end of the underpass, turn right to ascend to street level, and cross the road to reach Rickmansworth station.

*Ancient track from Chenies
towards the Chalfonts*

The commercial centre of Rickmansworth is on the other side of the railway at the bottom of a hill: there is a large supermarket at the station car park.

Rickmansworth to Croxley 3.0km

18 Turn right on exiting Rickmansworth station, and descend, turning right to pass beneath the railway on Station Road. Turn left immediately to follow a path parallel to the railway, starting with some steps. At High Street, cross the road and continue onto Caravan Lane, between the railway and some flats.

At the end of Caravan Lane, where there is another block of flats on your right, continue ahead onto a path which runs parallel to the railway on your left.

Cross over the River Chess (for the final time on this journey), and continue ahead along the path. Pass beneath power lines to reach Croxleyhall Farm on the right, where turn left

*Crossing the River Chess
east of Rickmansworth*





Long Valley Wood

to cross the railway (this is the line between Rickmansworth and Moor Park).

19 Once across the railway, the track bears right. Where you reach a T-junction, take the bridleway to the right. Follow this bridleway to reach and cross the railway (this is the Watford branch, between Croxley and Moor Park).

Where the bridleway forks at a fingerpost, take the right-hand option (signposted towards Long Valley Woods) to descend to another T-junction of paths. Turn left to continue on the bridleway through Long Valley Wood, staying close to the canal towpath on your right (but remaining above canal level)

As the path begins to rise, with an area of open land ahead, turn left to stay on the bridleway. At a higher level, turn right, again following the blue arrows of the bridleway signage, and follow the track out onto Mill Lane.

Turn left to ascend Mill Lane to the junction with Watford Road. Use the small refuge area ahead to cross Watford Road, then turn left to follow the right-hand footway to reach the entrance to Croxley station.

Note the architecture, so typical of the Metropolitan Line's buildings during the 1920s and 1930s. It was designed by the Metropolitan Railway Company's architect Charles Walter Clark in an Arts and Crafts vernacular style. Other such stations may be found at Watford, Preston Road, and Kingsbury (which, during the 1930s, was a Metropolitan Line station).

There are shops on Watford Road, including a traditional breakfast café, just to the west of the station on the other side of the road.

There are bus stops near the station which are served by the 724 service which links Harlow, Hertford, Hatfield, St Albans and Watford with Heathrow Airport.

Croxley station



Croxley to Watford 2.5km

20 With Croxley station on your right (that is to say, having turned right if exiting the station), advance to Winton Drive, where turn right. Follow the right-hand footway

of Winton Drive through a left bend to the junction with Springfield Close, where bear right to continue, still on the right-hand footway of Winton Drive, all the way to its end, culminating in a steep descent to the junction with Baldwins Lane, where turn right.

There is a traditional breakfast/lunch café here, and a convenience shop just beyond on the parade of shops.

Cross Baldwins Lane by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and continue along the left-hand footway to pass a school. Pass beneath the railway and reach a roundabout. Keep to the left of the roundabout and cross the Two Bridges (after which this area is named) — the first bridge spans the Grand Union Canal and the second the River Gade.

21 Pass another roundabout on your right, and bear slightly left to pick up a footpath across a green area. This leads to Gade Avenue, where turn left.

Cross the road and turn left to take the right-hand footway of Gade Avenue. Pass beneath the railway and then pass the squeeze-point, where vehicular progress is controlled by traffic lights) and take the bend to the right.

Continue ahead to reach the junction with Swiss Avenue, where turn right to follow its right-hand footway, climbing the hill to its summit at the junction with Cassiobury Park Avenue.

Turn right to follow the right-hand footway for 120m to reach the entrance to the Metropolitan Line station, which is always known locally as “Watford Met” to differentiate it from Watford Junction and Watford High Street stations, on your right.

Note again the cottage-style station building (as we have already seen at Croxley) which was typical of the work of Charles Walter Clark, the architect of the Metropolitan Railway Company during the 1920s and 1930s.

Watford to Moor Park

5.8km

Let us be clear of one thing right from the start, this is not Watford Junction mainline station, but Watford Metropolitan station, out to the west of the town centre. Several plans have been made and



*Grand Union Canal
at Two Bridges*



Watford Met station

broken to take the Metropolitan Line to Watford Junction, or at least to the centre of the town, but nothing has come of the ideas. The most recent suggestion fell apart because the entire area under consideration (Croxley to Watford Junction — the route would have been substantially the former line between Croxley Green and Watford Junction) lies outwith the boundary of Greater London, and Transport for London refused to foot the entire bill, while Watford Borough Council sat on their hands and made sucking noises with their collective gums.

22 With the station on your right (that is to say, having turned right if exiting the station), turn right to descend the steps to Metropolitan Station Approach, and follow it to its end at Rickmansworth Road, ensuring that you are on the right-hand footway by the time you are approaching the main road. Bear round to the right, and cross Rickmasworth Road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

Continue along the left-hand footway, passing a bus stop. Look out for the driveway entrance to 137 Rickmansworth Road, then immediately after passing the driveway, turn left onto a narrow footpath. At the far end, at King George's Avenue (we shall adopt the necessary apostrophe which is missing from some references to the street), bear slightly left to follow King George's Avenue out to Whippendell Road. Turn right to follow the right-hand footway for about 200m to the junction, on the left, with Sydney Road.

Cross over Whippendell Road to follow Sydney Road. Turn right through an arch beneath some flats to reach The Gateway. Follow its left-hand footway past Omega Court, and take a tarmac footpath on the left. This leads to the railbed of the former line between Watford and Croxley Green: turn right and follow the path to Ascot Road. Turn left to pass modern tower blocks (such a change from the old dusty Royal Mail depot which used to occupy the site) as you follow the left-hand footway of Ascot Road to a large supermarket.

23 Continue ahead on a path which runs to the right of the supermarket. At the back corner of the building, there is a four-way path junction. Take the path half-right ahead, signposted towards Ebury Way. Follow this path with Croxley View on your left.

Where the road swings away to your left, continue ahead, following the path to right and left through a thicket of new-build blocks of flats on Epsom Road to reach the junction with Tolpits Lane. Cross the road ahead by means of the light-controlled pedestrian crossing just over to your left.

Take a footpath straight ahead to reach the railbed of the former line between Rickmansworth and Watford, now the Ebury Way footpath and cycleway which links the two towns.

The railway line between Watford and Rickmansworth was opened in 1862 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 loss of passenger traffic was magnified in 1925 when electric trains began running on the Metropolitan Line between Rickmansworth and London, and the line was closed in 1952. The extension of the line to Uxbridge was never built.

Turn left onto the Ebury Way and follow the trackbed for 750m (towards Watford) until

Ebury Way





Hamper Mill

it rises to reach a crossing lane, where there are traffic barriers across the railbed.

24 Turn right and follow the lane past Brightwells Farm. Continue to descend along the right-hand edge of two fields until you reach Hamper Mill on the River Colne.

Among the past residents of Hamper Mill House (which is Grade II listed) was Dennis Lennon, who created the interior design for the *Queen Elizabeth II* liner.

25 Keep ahead, then rise to meet the road. Turn right, then turn right again onto Sandy Lodge Lane.

There is a petrol station at the junction, with the usual style of mini-supermarket.

Follow Sandy Lodge Lane to its end at the railway. Moor Park station is on the other side of the tunnel. If you are continuing past Moor Park, turn left just before the railway.

There is a parade of shops at the bottom of Main Avenue opposite the station forecourt: there is a convenience shop and post office in amongst the other businesses.

Moor Park was developed as an upscale estate during the 1930s, and its social ascent has continued ever since.

Moor Park to Northwood

2.3km

26 If you are beginning the day's walk at Moor Park station, pass beneath the railway to the left of the ticketing gates (if coming from the platform, go through the ticketing gates and turn right through 180°) and turn right to reach the route.

Follow a woodland path parallel to the railway as far as Westbury Road. Do not pass beneath the railway, but turn left and follow Westbury Road (carefully — there is no footway) to its junction with Bourne End Road. Turn right and follow the right-hand footway of Bourne End Road to the junction with Batchworth Lane.

27 Cross Batchworth Lane to take St Mary's Avenue ahead, using its right-hand footway. After 51 St Mary's Avenue, turn right onto a narrow path between suburban privet hedges. The path turns left to run parallel to the railway. You will soon come to a crossing path which uses a footbridge to cross the railway.

At this point, there is a structure on the right which looks like a rusty barbecue gone to seed. It is, in fact, one of over 200 Coal Tax markers which surround London (most of them small cast-iron

posts painted white and emblazoned with the arms of the City of London. The crossing path runs along the line of the boundary between Hertfordshire and Hillingdon, and this was a point on the boundary of the area in which the Coal Tax was levied on coal or wine being brought into London. This marker is for the boundary on the railway (and is in typical design for such, though the others are made of stone). The lineside path was never a major coal-trading route, except by train, and each of the railway companies had a pay-as-you-go deal with the Corporation, with of course no levy on the coals for the locomotives, so the rationale for its very existence is called into question. There is a recycled junction box (1907) across the bridge

See <https://lwalks.london/routes/personal/coaltax/> for more details on the Coal Tax, and the description of a Coal Tax Circuit walking route from Purfleet to Erith *via* Potters Bar, Staines-upon-Thames, and Colley Hill (above Reigate).

Continue southbound along the lineside path, which eases out onto Eastbury Road. Turn right to follow the right-hand footway of Eastbury Road to reach Northwood station, crossing Green Lane by a light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

Note, on your left at the junction, the carved wooden sign marking the central area of Northwood.

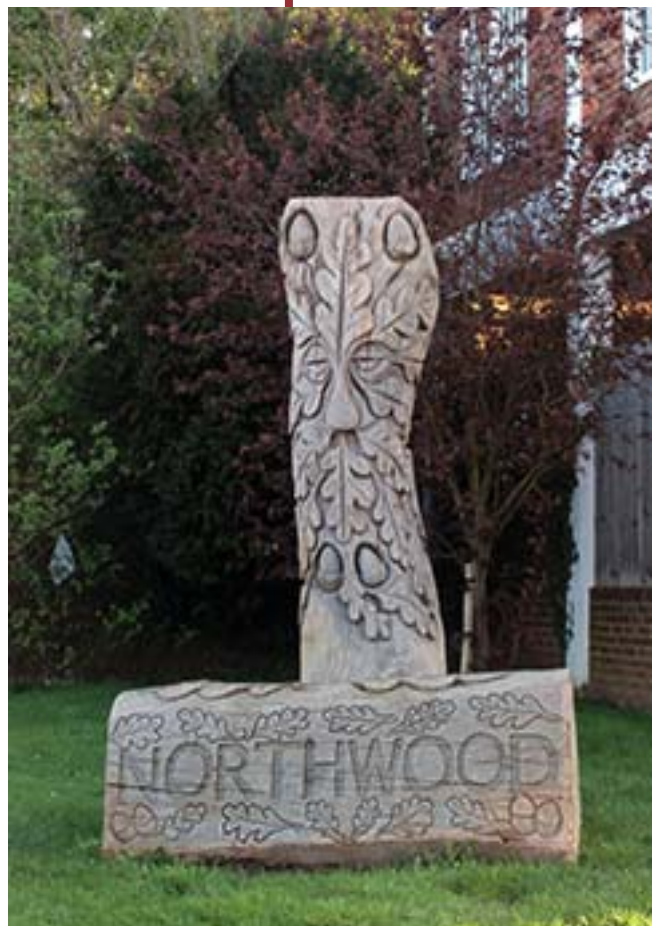
The main part of Northwood's commercial centre lies downhill to the right: there are shops, cafés, restaurants and a pub on and around Green Lane.

Buses run from outside the station to Ruisliup and Uxbridge, and from stops to your left to Harrow, Northolt and Ealing Hospital.

Northwood to Northwood Hills 1.8km

28 Pass Northwood station entrance and descend the left-hand footway of Top — Coal Tax marker 52, Northwood

Bottom — Green Man



Station Approach towards the station car park. At the end of the buildings on the left, turn left onto a footpath. Ascend to Hallowell Road and turn right. Follow the right-hand footway of Hallowell Road to its end at High Street, where turn right. Cross to the left-hand footway using the pedestrian crossing to reach Rickmansworth Road.

The position of High Street may seem unusual to today's observers, but its junction with Rickmansworth Road was the centre of gravity of the tiny population of Northwood until the coming of the railway in 1887, with all the attendant residential development of Metro-land which came in its wake.

The area has been home to many actors, and to many retired actors who lived at Denville Hall retirement home. Author Julian Barnes and director Derek Jarman are among the leading lights of those born in Northwood.

29 Turn left onto Rickmansworth Road, immediately crossing to the right-hand footway using another pedestrian crossing. Turn right onto Chestnut Avenue and follow its left-hand footway to an entrance driveway on the left, with allotment gardens on its sides. Turn left and follow the driveway to a large pavilion ahead. Pass to the right of the pavilion and cross the greensward, bearing slightly right, to reach an exit access on the far side — a black litter bin and a red dog-waste bin should settle your direction.

If the field is filled with sporting endeavours, turn right and follow the edge of the field round three sides to reach the exit access point. This alternative route is to be recommended after rain, when boat racing may be almost possible.

Follow the exit access path out to Highland Road. Turn left to follow the left-hand footway through two right-hand turn, by which time you are on York Road. Turn left along a footpath (with the destination indicated on the footway as well as with the usual fingerpost) to reach Joel Street, where turn left along the left-hand footway. Cross the street by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing to reach the entrance to Northwood Hills station.

Highland Road



There is a cluster of shops and restaurants on Joel Street.

There are bus services to Mount Vernon Hospital, Northwood, northolt, Ealing Hospital and Ruislip from outside the station.

The area of Northwood Hills was no more than a few houses clustered around the junction of Joel Street (part of an old route between Ealing and

Watford, which is crossed on the Uxbridge branch of the Metropolitan Line between Ruislip Manor and Eastcote) and Rickmansworth Road until the boom in housing started after the coming of the railway in 1887.

The large restaurant diagonally across the bridge from the station is said, in its earlier life as a suburban “roadhouse” pub, to have hosted the first professional engagement of Sir Elton John.



Northwood Hills station

Northwood Hills to Pinner 2.9km

30 Turn right (or turn left if exiting Northwood Hills station) and follow the left-hand footway of Joel Street as far as its junction with Tolcarne Drive, where turn left. There is a petrol station on your right. Follow the right-hand footway of Tolcarne Drive as far as the junction with Harlyn Drive, where bear right onto the latter. Follow the left-hand footway of Harlyn Drive to its end, where cross the road ahead and turn left onto the right-hand footway of Chamberlain Way.

Take the next road on the right, Catlins Lane. Follow the left-hand footway of Catlins Lane to reach a recreation ground behind the hedge on your left. At a gate, turn left to take a footpath across Cuckoo Hill Recreation Ground. Cross the ground directly to reach Cuckoo Hill.

31 Turn right, and follow the right-hand footway of Cuckoo Hill to a pedestrian crossing. Cross the road there, and take a path ahead, just to the left of the crossing.

If you reach The Circuits, you must turn back to find the narrow path along the house-backs of this modern development.

Follow the narrow path to reach and cross North Way. Continue ahead on a path to reach West End Lane, where turn right along the right-hand footway. At the mini-roundabout, turn left onto Chapel Lane and follow the left-hand footway, crossing West End Lane



Narrow path to North Way



High Street, Pinner

by the refuge. Follow Chapel Lane down to the railway, and pass beneath the tracks. Cross to the right-hand footway at a suitable location.

Pinner's commercial centre is clustered around the junction of Bridge Street with High Street. There is a wide range of shops, cafés, restaurants and pubs, and other facilities, in central Pinner, including a large supermarket next to the station.

High Street, which is one of the oldest streets in Pinner, has some fine buildings.

Cross Bridge Street ahead at the junction by the pedestrian crossing, turn right, and cross High Street, using another pedestrian crossing. Continue ahead onto the left-hand footway of Marsh Road to reach the bottom of Station Approach. Pinner station (which opened in 1885) is at the top of the hill.

Pinner to North Harrow 2.1km

32 Continue ahead along the left-hand footway of Marsh Road (that is to say, turning left if you have descended from the station) as far as the junction with Cecil Park. Turn left and follow the left-hand footway of Cecil Park round its right-hand bend and on to its end on Marsh Road. Turn left to follow the left-hand footway across the railway. Immediately beyond the railway bridge, cross the road by a pedestrian crossing and continue ahead onto a path.

Follow the path to the end of Melrose Road (on your left).

33 Continue ahead with a school on your right, and pass some allotment gardens to reach Woodlands Open Space. Follow the path to reach a car park at the far end. Bear right (making a 60° turn) across the car park to reach an exit leading to Cambridge Road. Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of Cambridge Road to its end

Woodlands Open Space, North Harrow, on a frosty winter's morning



at Imperial Drive, where turn right to cross Cambridge Road by the refuge and advance to the entrance to North Harrow station on your right.

North Harrow to Harrow-on-the-Hill via West Harrow

2.3km

34 Cross Station Road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing at the entrance to North Harrow station and turn right to follow the left-hand footway to the junction with Argyle Road (opposite Northumberland Road). Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of Argyle Road for its full length (round a right-hand corner near its end), to its junction with Blenheim Road, where cross the road ahead and turn left. Follow the right-hand footway of Blenheim Road to its end at The Gardens (with a view of a railway bridge over to your left) and turn right onto The Gardens.

Follow the right-hand footway of The Gardens to pass beneath the railway (the Uxbridge branch of the Metropolitan Line) at West Harrow station.

The pedestrian route between West Harrow station and Harrow-on-the-Hill station is coincident with the route following the Uxbridge branch, but the directions are repeated below to make it easier for the reader to follow the north-western line to Harrow-on-the-Hill station.

35 From the junction with Wilson Gardens, with West Harrow station over to your left, turn right onto Vaughan Road and follow its right-hand footway to its end.

Just before the end of the street, on the right, is a real rarity — a surviving “tin tabernacle” from Victorian times which still remains in regular religious use, albeit no longer by the same sect as that which originally had it constructed. There is a discussion of tin tabernacles on page 15.

Vaughan Road, Harrow

Top — houses

Above — tin tabernacle



Cross Bessborough Road with care — you may need to turn right, cross over Butler Avenue, cross Bessborough Road by the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing, then turn left to return downhill on the right-hand footway. Pass the petrol station and turn left onto Lowlands Road. Follow the right-hand footway of Lowlands Road, passing a light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Turn left to enter Harrow-on-the-Hill station, where you will find the ticketing gates on your right.

The commercial centre of Harrow lies on the other side of the station on College Road, and to the right. All facilities are available in the immediate area.

There are toilets on the station concourse, but they have frequent and impromptu periods of closure as a result of their generally dilapidated state. There are more modern facilities across College Road in the shopping mall — on the left as you reach the indoor courtyard.