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Walk the orbital Superloop

The text in this book is merely an indication of what might be possible ... or what might have been possible at the time of researching (2023-25) 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:
Start/finish of the Superloop, North Finchley

Introduction

Superloop

In 2023, Transport for London (TfL) began the process of linking the mid-suburbs by creating (or re-numbering) express bus routes into what is almost a loop — the gap is between North Woolwich and Thamesmead. I can see the logic of not having the buses use the Woolwich Ferry, but surely the SL3 service could have started in Woolwich, offering an express link with Thamesmead, with the loop being closed by the Woolwich Foot Tunnel? TfL, in response to numerous questions on this specific point, performed an unnecessarily vague hand-waving exercise and mumbled about “operational reasons”, but without offering any specific rationale, which tends to suggest a simple lack of will on the part of some TfL employees. The current walking route described in this document provides the link (using the foot tunnel and the riverside path) to complete the loop).

As well as the seven orbital routes which make up the loop proper, there are three radial routes which intersect with the orbital loop, but which are still called Superloop services (presumably because they are limited-stop routes — they could have been called Superspoke or some such name). These are described in a separate document.

The routes

The hiatus at Woolwich mentioned above is not the only problem for walkers attempting the orbital Superloop. There is a problem for the Superloop walker at the western extremity. There is no pedestrian access to the centre of Heathrow Airport, so the walker’s handover between SL7 and SL9 takes place at Hatton Cross, where the walking route makes use (as part of the SL9 section) of an eastern route (following part of the London Loop) around the airport.

It should be stressed at the outset that the Superloop walking route makes no attempt to visit all the intermediate stops between the termini of each bus route. The route uses the termini (with the exception of Heathrow Central, as noted above) as nodes, and prefers paths and parks wherever feasible to link the termini and to pass close to key intermediate points.

The total walking distance for the orbital route is a little less than 150km, and the total ascent is a little over 900m, though the walker will inevitably cover more ground and increase the ascent total.

The seven orbital walking routes, matching where possible the termini of the bus routes, are

- **SL1 — North Finchley to Walthamstow**
17.0km — *see* page 13
- **SL2 — Walthamstow to Woolwich**
19.5km — *see* page 23
- **SL3 — Woolwich to Bromley**
26.7km — *see* page 41
- **SL5 — Bromley to West Croydon**
12.8km — *see* page 57
- **SL7 — West Croydon to Hatton Cross**
35.5km — *see* page 67
- **SL9 — Hatton Cross to Harrow**
17.9km — *see* page 83
- **SL10 — Harrow to North Finchley**
17.7km — *see* page 97

Times and distances

The walk corresponding to each of the seven bus routes carries a total time and distance, and each walk is broken down into two or more sections. Each section is headed by details of the section of the walk, with distance and duration.

The duration of a section is calculated with reference to Naismith's Rule, which takes account of slope. For the purposes of the calculation, standard walking pace is set at 5 kilometres per hour: individual readers may adjust expected timings according to their natural speed. If, for example, you walk at 4km per hour, you will need to increase the duration by a factor of 1.25 to obtain an approximate duration for your own needs.

Never assume, though, that you can manage a faster gait than is really comfortable just because you are not crossing Rannoch Moor, nor even just tackling the Cotswold Way — that will put you under the cosh on expectations, and will leave no time to stand and stare. Urban walking has its own accelerations and decelerations, separate from its rural counterpart (even traffic-lights may engender stop-time, especially on divided crossings). Key access points to public transport within sections are given at the appropriate points in the narrative.

Transport logistics

It is assumed that public transport will be used to get to and from the route (and that this walk will be tackled on a day-by-day basis, rather than as one continuous hike). In most cases, returning to a car after a day's walk would involve travelling inwards, then back out to the start, or at the very least retracing the walk route by bus,

and there is the constant problem of finding a convenient, safe and secure parking spot. Throughout the Superloop Walk, you are never far from a bus stop or a station, so let TfL be your chauffeur to and from your day's walk.

Transport for London (TfL) is generally best for transport information within Greater London, but there are other resources available. Weblinks for these resources are laid out at the end of this introduction.

It is always better to start out as early in the day as you can — after all, it doesn't matter to your day's walk whether your travel to the start-point is in the day or in the dark (and much of the to-and-from travel in preparing the route was indeed undertaken in the pitch-black of the pre-dawn and in the gathering dusk (and even, at times in the depth of winter, the darkness of post-dusk). At the beginning of the day, the crowds have not yet stirred themselves, and in winter, it is amazing how the heat from the sun just switches off at about 2pm (or even earlier if you are to the north of higher ground). Of course the later start of many TfL services on a Sunday (and the non-existence of some services on that day will affect scheduling a day's walk, as will the disruptions caused by engineering and similar infrastructural works.

If you are crossing London to reach your start-point for a day's walk, then (generally speaking) you will miss the inflow of commuters if you start with the morning's first bus or Tube journey from home, and when you have passed through central London, you will be travelling against the bulk of the commuter flow.

Route narrative

Within the narrative, the sixteen main compass directions are used for most instances of orientation. However, occasionally more accuracy is required, and a numerical compass bearing has to be given. It should be stressed that a compass is a very useful piece of equipment to have about your person, even on suburban streets, and many mobile telephones incorporate a compass.

In creating the route-notes, I try to keep out of the trap of "cross the stile, and make for the invisible barn over the skyline", a direction I found (and revised) within a set of route-notes to a long-distance path some forty years ago. Certain interjections (such as "keeping the water on your left") may seem superfluous when read while sitting in an armchair, but they provide confirmation that you are following the route in the right direction.

Readers should note the convention that an alternative to the main route will be described in **green**, while commentary is given in **blue**. Text regarding logistics regarding transport or refreshment is given in **maroon**. It is also clear that the boundaries between the categories are somewhat fuzzy, and indeed the colour code is

relaxed for very short observations (such as “turn left and pass a café”), which are simply incorporated into the main text,

It is hoped that you will see that these directions are sufficient to follow the route if you have a capable map in your hand.

Refreshment and replenishment

It might seem, at first glance, unnecessary to carry provisions while walking in the big city, but needing to hunt down victuals can be distracting and dispiriting. If a café or pub is not reached at the right time of day (or is found to be closed when you arrive), a period of gloom may set in. If it comes at the wrong point of the natural cycle of walking spirit, the need for a formal stop can disrupt the flow of the walk.

Each of these eventualities may lead to a mental off-switch being thrown — you will be walking *through* an area without experiencing being *in* the area. Indeed, if you stick rigidly to the Superloop Walk route as given in the notes, tackling the individual subsections as described without deviation, there will be some places where you will not encounter a shop, café or pub on the route itself for some time.

You should always carry a small water bottle and some emergency nibbles; on some stretches, it can be handy to have a sandwich or similar in reserve. You are encouraged to make use of local facilities in the areas passed through, but you should also make sure that you have a Plan B tucked away in your pocket or backpack — whether for yourself, or for someone you might meet who is in greater distress.

Maps of the route

The route is mapped and is made available on the *OS Maps Online* website and smartphone app — see <https://explore.osmaps.com/> to get you started. To be honest, I only use the smartphone app in emergencies (such as finding my map suddenly taking flight across the M25) or to check minor details of adjacent routes: see the note below regarding battery life.

To find the route while using the site, home in on the area of interest (making sure that the start of the section is covered by the displayed area). Select *Routes*, then *Discover routes*, and untick the *Premium routes* constraint (this filter restricts your view to corporate and similar walks). You should be able to scroll down alphabetically to find the *Superloop Walk* routes (or use the search facility).

If you are not a subscriber to *OS Maps Online* (and why not, when a year’s subscription costs less than a cup of coffee at the start of each day’s walk on this route alone?), you may need to transcribe

the route onto your own map — all the more reason to take out that subscription.

The link to the app on the web is <https://explore.osmaps.com/> Access to Ordnance Survey maps online, for desktop, laptop, tablet and smartphone. Printing maps is possible. Walkers are urged to take out a subscription: the cost will be repaid countless times over.

Of course, there are map applications on any smartphone, but watch out for waning battery levels: it's the constant locational polling which drains the power. It may not be as life-threatening as it was for the idiots who tried to cross the Lake District with nothing more navigational than an iPhone, but still, it is unwise to rely solely on a phone battery.

I print off the route on A4 paper (double-sided and in colour) and I use the Explorer map expanded to 1:12500 scale (for easier reading). I then fold each sheet into eight, to give me a map a little larger than a credit card. This makes it pocket-friendly, but don't put all the day's maps in your breast-pocket or you will have a soggy mess by the end of the walk. Of course, I also have my smartphone, but that is used with the map app as a last resort — for instance, when on one occasional gust of wind coaxed my map to take flight across the motorway in the cutting at my side.

Online resources: transport and logistics

There are some very useful resources which are provided by the major transport players, and from other interested parties (official and independent). A few of the most notable resources which are relevant to this route are listed below.

Transport

- **Transport for London**

<https://tfl.gov.uk/>

Full details of all TfL services (including rail, tram, bus, Overground and Underground), including timetables, route maps, status reports, live arrival data, and more. Also, resources for official walking routes (*e.g.*, Capital Ring) in London. Note, though, that the smartphone TfL Go app is explicitly designed to have location services switched on, and is thus a constant drain on the battery. If you need to consult it, switch on location services, make your search, close the app back to its homepage, and switch off location services. Better still, do your homework beforehand and jot down details for likely break-points: there is usually space in the outer margin on the pages with route descriptions below.

- **Traveline**

<http://www.traveline.info/>

Journey planning for all forms of public transport across the country. The TfL offering is generally more detailed and more accurate within London, but Traveline is needed when you stray beyond the TfL area, or when your journey to the walk starts beyond London. Note, though, that many “times to next bus” are theoretical (based on the timetable) rather than having been confirmed from on-board bus transponders.

- **National Rail**

<http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/>

Journey planning for rail services throughout Great Britain. Note that rail services within London are incorporated seamlessly into the TfL journey planner.

- **Bustimes.org**

<http://www.bustimes.org/>

An independent and comprehensive collection of bus routes and timetables throughout the British Isles, this site gives access to every stop on a route, with maps which even show the current positions of all the buses on a route. This site is invaluable for planning connections at the beginning or end of the day’s walk.

Logistics

- **Bikehike**

[http://www.bikehike.co.uk/
mapview.php](http://www.bikehike.co.uk/mapview.php)

Using OpenStreetMap, footpaths and cycle paths are overlaid on the base map. Useful for viewing link paths to and from the route.

- **National Library of Scotland**

<http://maps.nls.uk/>

It may seem curious to reference a library in Edinburgh for information about London’s topography, but NLS carries an extensive collection of digitised historic maps covering the whole of Great Britain. These may be searched from an overlay on the modern map. Within the narrative text in this document, if a reference is made to “old maps”, then NLS will be your source.

Superloop walking route (orbital)

Start	North Finchley bus station — N12 0EN
Intermediate route termini	Walthamstow bus station — E17 7FU North Woolwich Pier — E16 2JN Woolwich Elizabeth Line station — SE18 6EU Bromley South station — BR1 1LX West Croydon bus station — CR0 2UA Hatton Cross station — TW6 3RE Harrow bus station — HA1 1BD
Finish	North Finchley bus station — N12 0EN
Distance	147.0km
Duration	30 hours 49 minutes
Ascent	912m

Overview

The orbital route lies well within the London conurbation (and well within the overall TfL network), and indeed, necessarily tramps many streets. However, the route searches out paths, fields, parks and towpaths where it is feasible to do so, though it must be said that the north-eastern quadrant has less green/blue walking than the rest of the route. This may be explained in part by the modes of housing expansion in this area in the half-century after 1880 — it was a little more relentless than elsewhere, and got into full swing earlier.

To repeat points made in the overall introduction, we must note that the only fixed points are the termini of the bus routes: the Superloop Walk routes are walking routes. However, you are never far from public transport. The walking route fills the gap between the SL2 at North Woolwich and the SL3 at Thamesmead using the foot tunnel and the riverside path. The intersection with the SL8 radial route is in the west of Southall, one SL8 stop from the bus intersection point on the other side of the Hayes by-pass (that is the Hayes in Hillingdon, of course, rather than the other completely-within-London Hayes in the borough of Bromley).

The orbital route of the Superloop Walk, following the example of the bus routes, takes as its conventional start North Finchley bus station, the approximate twelve o'clock of the route (the northernmost point on the route is actually at the exit from Broomfield Park onto Alderman's Hill in Palmers Green), and

continues in a clockwise direction. To complete the set, we note that the walk's eastern extremity is at the turn onto Iris Avenue in Bexleyheath, the southernmost point is the meeting with Coombe Lane in Croydon, and the orbital route goes no farther west than Hatton Cross (though Uxbridge on the SL8 route is farther west).

Of course, since this is a circuit walk, any point may be chosen as the start. For the sake of the description, though, the starting point (and finishing point) of the walk will be taken to be North Finchley bus station, the north-western terminus of the SL1 route, and the north-eastern terminus of the SL10 route.

SL1

North Finchley to Walthamstow

The journey from North Finchley is never far from the noise and grime of the busy North Circular Road, but there are a few outbreaks of green, particularly in Walthamstow's Lloyd Park near the end of the section. This park is not to be confused with another Lloyd Park (it was a different Mr Lloyd) on the SL5 route in Croydon.

The route is described on the pages starting at page 13.

SL2

Walthamstow to Woolwich

The route from Walthamstow to Ilford makes use of Epping Forest and Wanstead Park to keep a fair amount of green on the route: between these two areas, there is a short length of streets and park paths in order to connect with Tube stations at Snaresbrook and Wanstead. Between Ilford and Barking, it is houses all the way. South of Barking, there is a mix of riverside, segregated paths, and housing to reach North Woolwich, the terminus of the SL2 bus service. The walking route continues through the foot tunnel and across the renewed parkland of the western tip of the former arsenal to reach Woolwich station on the Elizabeth Line.

The route is described on the pages starting at page 23.

SL3

Woolwich to Bromley via Thamesmead

The SL3 bus route does not (for reasons that we assume are known to TfL, though no hint is given to the would-be travelling public) start at Woolwich — this would have provided a much-needed express link between central Thamesmead and the heart of Woolwich.

The walking route must therefore improvise a link and it uses, for the most part, the riverside path past Tripcock Ness and a fairly straight line through northern Thamesmead, including part of the town's flood evacuation route (designed into the town plan following the 1953 inundation). Beyond Abbey Wood station (the south-eastern terminus of the Elizabeth Line), the route passes through Lesnes Abbey Park and its surrounding woodland, after which an alternating sequence of parkland and streets leads to Bromley South station.

Though the SL3 terminus is at Bromley North station, it seems sensible to make the break at the principal station in the town at Bromley South.

The route is described on the pages starting at page 41.

SL5

Bromley to Croydon

The walking route passes the south-eastern corner of the estate occupied by the Royal Bethlem Hospital, Shirley and Lloyd Park. The streetscapes are punctuated by paths, some following ancient routes and some still devoid of tarmac.

The route is described on the pages starting at page 57.

SL7

Croydon to Hatton Cross

The route has alternating sections of streets and parkland as far as Old Malden, then follows the Hogsmill River to Kingston. It then crosses the Thames and passes through Bushy Park. The London Loop forms part of the route to Hatton Cross, much of the length alongside the banks of the River Crane.

The route is described on the pages starting at page 67.

SL9

Hatton Cross to Harrow

Since there is no pedestrian access to and from the central area of Heathrow Airport, the SL9 section of the Superloop Walk begins at Hatton Cross and passes to the east of the airport, following the London Loop to the Grand Union Canal. It then follows the Paddington Arm of the canal to Greenford, and passes Sudbury Hill station before taking in the summit of Harrow Hill and descending to Harrow bus station.

The route is described on the pages starting at page 83.

SL10

Harrow to North Finchley

This section of the Superloop Walk alternates streets with parkland between Harrow and Hendon before picking up the Dollis Valley Greenwalk, cutting east near West Finchley station to arrive, the orbit complete, at North Finchley bus station.

The route is described on the pages starting at page 97.

Route SL1

North Finchley to Walthamstow

17.0km; 3hr 33min;
88m ascent

Introduction

1 The journey from North Finchley is never far from the noise and grime of the busy North Circular Road, but there are a few outbreaks of green, particularly in Walthamstow's Lloyd Park near the end of the section. This park is not to be confused with another Lloyd Park (it was a different Mr Lloyd) on the SL5 route in Croydon.

The map at <https://explore.osmaps.com/route/19013258> covers this section of the route.

Route

North Finchley to Great Cambridge Junction 8.9km

2 From the main bus station entry on Kingsway, turn left (eastwards). Cross High Road using the three-part divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Continue ahead on the left-hand footway of Woodhouse Road for 500m to reach Woodhouse College on the left.

Turn right, and use the pedestrian crossing to cross Woodhouse Road, then continue ahead on the left-hand footway of School Way. Take the first street on the left (Ingleway) and follow its left-hand footway to its end (round a final bend) at the junction with Summers Lane. Use the pedestrian crossing to cross Summers Lane, and turn right.

Cross over Fallowfields Drive, and follow the left-hand footway of Summers Lane, with a school on your left. Bear left onto Porters Way and follow its left-hand footway for 100m.

*The end/beginning of the
orbital loop, North Finchley*





Coppetts Wood

Turn left, keeping the school's boundary fence on your left. Where the road narrows, continue straight ahead. After passing houses on the left, turn right, then almost immediately after the turn, take an earthen footpath (which may be muddy) on the left to enter Coppetts Wood.

3 After about 300m, in a scrubby clearing, take a path which veers off to the left (this point is at a clear three-way path junction), and then gradually bends to the right to take up an easterly bearing. This path brings you

out onto Colney Hatch Lane. Turn right and follow the right-hand footway to a mini-roundabout with a coach company's parking area just ahead on your right, and turn left to cross Colney Hatch Lane by the refuge.

4 Turn right along the left-hand footway, then turn left to follow the left-hand footway of Ribblesdale Avenue for its full length. Pass through the traffic barrier onto Balmoral Avenue and follow its left-hand footway to its end at the junction with Regal Drive. Turn left, and follow Regal Drive to a break in the brick wall on the right-hand side. Double back, then turn left to cross the railway at New Southgate station by a footbridge.

New Southgate station is served by stopping trains between King's Cross and Hatfield. There are card readers on the platforms, and the ticket office is across the bridge in the building by the forecourt. The stops for the SL1 bus are over to the left at the top of Station Road.

There are shops on Friern Barnet Road up to your left, including a supermarket opposite Station Road.

5 Turn left out of the station forecourt to reach a pedestrian crossing. Cross Station Road by the crossing. Turn right to reach the junction with Woodland Road ahead, and turn left to follow its right-hand footway. At its end turn right onto High Road.

Take the next street on the left (The Limes Avenue) and follow the right-hand footway round its gentle curve to its end at Palmer's Road. Turn left to follow the right-hand footway out to Bowes Road. Cross Bowes Road by the pedestrian crossing to reach the entrance to Arnos Grove station.

There is a variety of shops and cafés in the vicinity of Arnos Grove station, with a pub just ahead on the route.

Arnos Grove station is on the Piccadilly Line: the eastbound SL1 buses stop in the station forecourt, while the westbound SL1 stop is across Bowes Road.

Arnos Grove is a classic example of the architecture of Charles Holden (1875-1960), who was responsible for a number of new stations on the Piccadilly and Northern Lines when these lines were extended north and south/west.



Arnos Grove station

Charles Holden was born in Bolton, and his early architectural work included commissions from William Hesketh Lever (later ennobled as Lord Leverhulme) for Port Sunlight, his Merseyside company village on the Wirral.

Holden was also responsible for important works in the Bristol area too, but his best-known work is in London, and particularly with the Tube network. Apart from stations, he designed the block (built on top of St James's Park station) at 55 Broadway for London Transport; he was also in charge of the design brief for the Senate House and library (often known fondly as the London Lubyanka) of the University of London in Bloomsbury.

6 Turn right at the entrance to Arnos Grove station (or turn left if exiting the station) and follow the left-hand footway of Bowes Road to the junction with Arnos Road at a large inter-war pub.

The pub serves food during normal licensing hours.

Turn left onto Arnos Road and follow it to its end. Continue ahead across Pymmes Brook and into Arnos Park, and turn right. Follow the path with the brook on your right to exit the park onto Wilmer Way.

Pymmes Brook, Arnos Park

You will be following the Pymmes Brook Trail as far as the Great Cambridge Junction, and you will later pick it up again at Pymmes Park — the waymarking for that route may assist your navigation.

Turn left to follow Wilmer Way across Morton Way at a mini-roundabout. Cross over to the right-hand footway of Wilmer Way at a suitable location, and continue ahead on Wilmer Way to reach





Lower lake, Broomfield Park

another mini-roundabout at the junction with Powys Lane. Cross Powys Lane and enter Broomfield Park by a gate.

Turn right and follow the path inside the park, passing through a brick archway to reach a lake on your left. At the end of the lake, turn left to keep the lake on your left, and follow the path to a junction of paths, with the remains of Broomfield House ahead on your right.

There are toilets on the right at this junction — somewhat penitential, but useful in an emergency.

For some years, there have been ongoing plans to restore Broomfield House, which is a Grade II* listed building, but funding has not been secured, and the project is almost totally becalmed, and the house is covered with sheeting.

7 Pass the shell of Broomfield House on your right, then take a path on your right. Turn left at the end of the path and follow a path to the north end of the park. Turn right to reach the park exit at Alderman's Hill.

You are now at the northernmost point of the Superloop Walk.

Turn right and follow the right-hand footway of Alderman's Hill (or take the parallel path within the park) to its end on Green Lanes.

There are shops (including a large supermarket) on Alderman's Hill, and Palmers Green station (with services running to and from King's Cross and Moorgate) may be found on the north side of the road — if you intend to use the station, cross Alderman's Hill using the pedestrian crossing at the exit from Broomfield Park.

Green Lanes, with its curious plural form, is actually one of the longest streets in London, linking up a line of drovers' tracks for over ten kilometres through what is now the endless suburbia of north London. Along this route into the city, many drovers brought cattle from Hertfordshire (some beasts having been driven — and swum — from as far away as the Outer Hebrides) to the City's Smithfield Market. Now a main road for much of its length, there is not much green about Green Lanes, save for a few parks which adjoin its route.

At the junction with Green Lanes, turn right and follow its right-hand footway to the next junction. Turn left to cross Green Lanes by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and continue ahead onto Oakthorpe Road, following its left-hand footway past a school to reach a bridge over the New River.

The New River was dug between 1608 and 1613 to bring a supply of fresh water from the River Lea in Hertfordshire to serve London. The Lea was tapped at Amwell, near Ware, and the New River flowed for about 60km. Though rather wider than the *levadas* on the island of Madeira, it serves the same function, moving water by gravity from where it may be captured to where it is needed.

Despite the obvious potential, of the project, its financial position began so shakily that Myddelton was forced to plead for assistance from King James I (actually, to be precise, King James VI and I) to ensure its completion. In places, there is little or no flow today.

After you have crossed the river on the bridge, cross over to the right-hand footway of Oakthorpe Road and follow it out to the North Circular Road.

8 Turn right to reach a divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing, using it to cross the North Circular Road. Turn left onto the right-hand footway, and advance 30m. Just before you reach a lamp standard, turn right onto an enclosed path. Follow this path past Bowes Meadow on your left. Do not cross Pymmes Brook, but turn left to follow the Pymmes Brook Trail (which is unmetalled at this point, so may be muddy) with the water flowing close by on your right.

Note that older maps still show the original route of the Pymmes Brook Trail along Princes Avenue to the south of the brook.

At Chequers Way, cross the road and turn right to follow the left-hand footway to a junction.

There is a convenience shop on the left just before you reach the junction.

Turn left at the junction onto Tile Kiln Lane. Thanks to intensive and insensitively poor parking, the left-hand footway beside the brook is more than likely to be unusable, so follow the right-hand footway past a school. After you have passed the school, bear left to keep a football ground on your right, and take a brookside path ahead to reach Offstile Road. Fight your way across the busy road and advance towards Great Cambridge Road. Just before you reach the main road, turn left and descend a flight of steps to reach the footpath/cycleway which snakes its waybeneath the roundabout



New River, Palmers Green

of the Great Cambridge Junction, where the A10 crosses the North Circular Road, the latter flowing (or not!) beneath you.

Great Cambridge Junction to Walthamstow bus station 8.1km

9 Descend the steps (do not take the level footway round the roundabout) and turn right to pass beneath the roundabout. Turn left to cross above the North Circular Road, then turn right to pass beneath the north-eastern part of the roundabout. Turn right to ascend by a ramp to the end of the row of shops on Kendal Parade.

There is a convenience shop at the top of the ramp.

Continue ahead on the left-hand footway to reach Silver Street. Beyond a theatre building on the right, a right turn through a gate leads to Pymmes Brook, but the brookside path is very muddy and is in poor repair. Continue, therefore, along the left-hand footway of Silver Street to reach a gate on the left which leads into Pymmes Park.

Enter the park through the gate, and turn right to follow a path along the perimeter of the park. Pass a small lake on your left, and then pass a memorial stone.

The simple memorial is to a local man, John Christie, who was awarded the Victoria Cross in 1917: the memorial was unveiled to mark the centenary of the award.

Continue along the park's perimeter path to exit the park through a gate on your right to reach Victoria Road. Cross the road and turn right, and follow the left-hand footway to reach the junction with Sterling Way at Silver Street station.

Silver Street station is served by frequent services on the Weaver Line of the Overground which connects Liverpool Street with Enfield Town and Cheshunt. Pass beneath the bridge for trains

Left — Pymmes Park

Right — Christie memorial



towards Liverpool Street. The bus stop for the eastbound SL1 service is beyond the station.

10 If you are exiting Silver Street station, turn right from the station forecourt to reach the junction of Victoria Road and Sterling Way (the North Circular Road is in a tunnel beneath Sterling Way). If you have stepped off an eastbound SL1 bus, walk back to pass beneath the tracks to reach the junction. You will need to use two pairs of light-controlled pedestrian crossings to reach the south side of Sterling Way, where turn left and return to the railway bridge. Pass beneath the tracks to reach the junction with College Close.

The bus stop for the westbound SL1 service is stop A ahead: if you have stepped off a westbound SL1 bus, continue ahead to the junction with College Close.

Turn right onto College Close. At the end of the terraced houses on the left, take a path on the left. This path runs onto College Gardens ahead. Follow the right-hand footway of College Gardens to the junction with Fore Street, and turn right. Cross to the left-hand footway using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Turn right, then turn left to take an alleyway (with an iron archway) through to Trafalgar Place, and continue ahead onto Raynham Terrace.

Follow the right-hand footway of Raynham Terrace to its junction with Raynham Avenue, where turn right. Follow the left-hand footway of Raynham Avenue as far as the junction with Seaton Street, where turn left. At the end of the road, cross over Woolmer Road and continue ahead onto Sayesbury Lane. Follow the path out to York Road, where cross the road and turn right. Take the next street on the left, Alston Road, and follow its left-hand footway to its end on Dysons Road, where cross the road and turn right.

There are a few shops on Dysons Road.

11 Follow the left-hand footway of Dysons Road across the end of Willoughby Lane to reach Leaside Road at a roundabout. Turn left and ascend the left-hand footway of Leaside Road to cross the railway, and proceed to a major junction with traffic lights.

Meridian Water station, on the line between Liverpool Street and Hertford East, is off to the left at this junction.

Cross the major road by a divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing to continue ahead on the left-hand footway of a much slimmer Leaside Road. Continue ahead beyond the road end onto a path to cross firstly Pymmes Brook, and then the more substantial Lee Navigation. Turn right to descend to the towpath, and follow it with the water on your right for 200m.

Turn left to cross a stream by a footbridge, and take the path ahead which will bend gently to the right, and then to the left to come to another footbridge. Follow the road over the water-channel, and up to Sandpiper Close, where bear right.

12 Follow the left-hand footway of Sandpiper Close up to its end (ignore the narrow path which descends on your right-hand side towards Waterhall Close), then use the ramp up beside the brick wall to reach Sinnott Road. Turn left and follow the right-hand footway: the street-name soon becomes Cooper Avenue, and then merges into Lawrence Avenue where it comes in from the right. Cross McEntee Avenue and take a path opposite (Garnett Way) to Billet Road.

There is a convenience shop on Garnett Way.

Turn left on Billet Road, then take the first road on the right, Millfield Avenue, keeping to its right-hand footway for its full length to North Countess Road. Turn right, then use the pedestrian crossing to transfer to the left-hand footway, and turn left onto Pennant Terrace. Follow Pennant Terrace and its successor Brettenham Road to a squeeze-point just beyond house number 90, where turn right to enter Lloyd Park. Continue straight ahead (southwards) through the park, passing a café on your right.

13 At the end of the park, turn left after passing the William Morris Gallery on your left, then right to exit the park onto Forest Road. Turn left, then cross the road at the pedestrian crossing. Double back, and turn left onto Gaywood Road. At the top, turn right onto Hoe Street.

Follow the right-hand footway of Hoe Street to the pedestrianised Walthamstow High Street, where turn right. Pass Tower Mews on the left, then take a path on the left to reach Walthamstow bus station. Walk through the bus station to come out onto Selborne Road opposite the entrance to Walthamstow Central station.

Walthamstow Central station has Victoria Line services to and from central London, and Overground services running between Liverpool Street and Chingford. If you are breaking your journey here via Walthamstow Central station you may choose to enter the station from within the bus station — this gives access to

both the Victoria Line of the Underground and the Weaver Line of the Overground.

There are all facilities in Hoe Street, High Street and Selborne Road, with a shopping mall to the west of the station.

Walthamstow Central station was established by the 1870s, and the line between Chingford and London was established by 1873. The line was electrified in the late 1950s, with services starting in 1960. The Victoria Line arrived in 1968, and the

*William Morris Gallery,
Lloyd Park*





Overground took over the Chingford services in 2015, the line being renamed as the Weaver Line.

*Walthamstow Town Square,
adjacent to the bus station*



Route SL2

Walthamstow to Woolwich

19.7km; 4hr 00min;
71m ascent

Introduction

1 The Superloop walking route from Walthamstow to Ilford makes use of Epping Forest and Wanstead Park to keep a fair amount of green on the route: between these two areas, there is a short length of streets and park paths in order to connect with Tube stations at Snaresbrook and Wanstead. Between Ilford and Barking, it is houses all the way. South of Barking, there is a mix of riverside, segregated paths, and housing to reach North Woolwich, the terminus of the SL2 bus service.

The walking route continues through the Woolwich foot tunnel (or you may prefer to use the Woolwich Free Ferry) and across the renewed parkland of the western tip of the former arsenal to reach Woolwich station on the Elizabeth Line.

There are full-service areas in Ilford and Barking, with shops and cafés punctuating the gaps. Next to Woolwich station, there is a small supermarket and a selection of cafés, with two pubs close by. The commercial centre of Woolwich lies to the south of Woolwich station, across Beresford Road. The area has all facilities, including National Rail and DLR stations and a wide range of refreshment possibilities.

Walthamstow to Ilford

8.8km

2 Walk eastbound on Selborne Road from Walthamstow bus station, turning left at the bus station exit — if exiting Walthamstow Central station, follow the signs for the bus station to reach the correct exit, emerge onto Selborne Road, cross the road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and turn right onto the left-hand footway..

At the end of Selborne Road, cross Hoe Street by the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and descend the steps to reach St Mary Road. Follow the right-hand footway of St Mary Road for its full length, then continue on a path ahead to reach, on your left, a block of almshouses.

The Squires almshouses were endowed in 1795 by Mary Squires for six poor widows of tradesmen of the parish “and no other”



Top and middle — Squires Almshouses, Walthamstow

Bottom — Vinegar Alley

(to quote the rather restrictive endowment document).

At the end of the row of almshouses, take the path leading diagonally left through the churchyard to the church.

The church is of twelfth-century foundation, though very little remains of works earlier than the fifteenth century. There was major reconstruction in 1535, and further works ever since, into the current century. The church suffered bomb damage in 1940 and again in 1944.

Pass the west end of the church, and turn right onto Vinegar Alley, with a hedge on your left and the churchyard on your right. Follow Vinegar Alley to its end on Church Lane, with a school on your left, noting the gate into the northern part of the cemetery for “residents only”.

Names of streets or other areas with *Vinegar* in the title usually denote a plague pit — the local ladies would pour vinegar into the ground to sanitise the soil. This is almost certainly the case with Vinegar Alley here.

A shorter route which forms an alternative to Vinegar Alley is to follow Church Lane directly. There is a bench to rest weary limbs next to a fine (though now disused) postbox of 1869, with a view across the road towards the fifteenth-century Ancient House.

Turn left from the end of Vinegar Alley (or continue ahead along the footway from the postbox) and follow the right-hand footway of Church Lane out to the junction with Shermhall Street. Cross over Shermhall Street using the pedestrian crossing on your right, then turn left to follow the right-hand footway of Shermhall Street

to Vallentin Road, where turn right to follow the right-hand footway for the full length of the street.

At the end, turn right onto Wood Street, pass beneath the railway, and use the pedestrian crossing to reach the entrance to Wood Street station in Upper Walthamstow Road ahead.

Wood Street station is on the branch of the Weaver Line of the Overground between Liverpool Street and Chingford, and was designated to be the northern terminus of the Victoria Line in the early stages of that line's planning, but it was soon decided that the benefits of duplicating the above-ground connection in a tunnel (the Victoria Line is the only Underground line, excepting the short Waterloo and City Line, which runs in a tunnel along its entire length) would not have outweighed the extra costs of tunneling and of other construction.

3 Follow the left-hand footway of Upper Walthamstow Road for about 150m, then continue by taking the right fork where Fyfield Road bears off to the left (actually, Fyfield Road is the straight-ahead option). Where Upper Walthamstow Road bends right, with a community centre on the left, continue straight ahead onto a path.

You are now entering Epping Forest, which is managed as an out-of-city public good by the Corporation of the City of London without direct taxation of residents or City dwellers.

The land was purchased in the late Victorian era to allow Londoners and others to enjoy fresh air and green space. Other areas so purchased include Hampstead Heath and Burnham Beeches (north of Slough), and some commons in the extreme south of what is now Greater London. In addition, parks such as Queen's Park and West Ham Park came into Corporation hands in the same way.

Much of the money to fund these purchases came from lairage charges on ships in the London docks, and from taxes on coal and wine brought into the area around the City (within about 24km of the centre).

The path leads straight out onto Woodford New Road with a restaurant on your left. Cross the road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and turn right. Immediately (before reaching



*Diaused postbox and
Ancient House*



*Top — Epping Forest:
the clearing towards
Snaresbrook Road*

*Above — swans on Eagle
Pond, Snaresbrook Road*

the bus stop) turn sharp left to follow a path in a roughly north-easterly direction. Cross another path at a scissors junction, then cross the inkling of a stream.

At a T-junction of paths, turn right (east-south-east) with a view of a clearing ahead to follow another path. Where a further path comes in from the left, bear right to follow the path. Soon, you will find a school on your right, and then some housing (also on the right), to reach Snaresbrook Road opposite a car park. Cross the road ahead and, ignoring the car park, turn left along the right-hand footway.

4 Follow the right-hand footway past Eagle Pond, which usually has ducks, geese, swans and gulls in profusion) to reach Hollybush Hill.

There are bus stops on Snaresbrook Road at the pond. Eastbound services connect with Snaresbrook Underground station, as well as several other stations on the Central Line, all the way to Loughton.

There is a large pub/restaurant across the road on Hollybush Hill.

Cross Hollybush Hill at the pub and turn right to follow its left-hand footway to the junction with High Street. Turn left and take the left-hand footway of High Street.

Snaresbrook station, on the main branch of the Central Line, is on the right at the railway bridge: its sloping approach road is on your right near the junction with Hollybush Hill. All facilities are available on High Street beyond the railway bridge. If you intend to make use of the station, cross High

Street at the junction with Hollybush Hill, using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

5 Follow the left-hand footway of High Street to the junction with Hermon Hill, and use two light-controlled pedestrian crossings to cross the junction and continue along the right-hand footway of High Street.

The commercial centre of Snaresbrook lies ahead on High Street, with multiple options for refreshment and replenishment.

After 50m, with the war memorial ahead, bear right onto Memorial Green, following a metalled path. At the far end of the Green, continue ahead onto the street called Church Path.

Follow the left-hand footway of Church Path and cross over Wanstead Place. Take a path immediately to the left of the church gateway.

This church dates from 1861 and was designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott, the architect of St Pancras station, the main building of the University of Glasgow, and many other buildings. It is on the site of a mere chapel of ease attached to Wanstead church, but was rebuilt to cope with the increasing population of Snaresbrook, particularly following the arrival of the railway in 1856.

At the far end of the path, regain High Street at the junction with Woodbine Place. Turn left to cross High Street by the pedestrian crossing, and then turn right to follow the left-hand footway through the shopping area to reach and cross Harriet Avenue using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and arrive at the entrance to Wanstead station.

Wanstead station is on the Hainault Loop of the Central Line.

6 From the entrance to Wanstead station, continue ahead (southwards) using the left-hand footway of The Green (turning left off Harriet Avenue if exiting the station), then continue ahead

*Christchurch Green,
Wanstead*



onto the left-hand footway of St Mary's Avenue, with Wanstead Green initially on your right.

At the end of St Mary's Avenue, turn left onto Overton Drive (crossing Langley Drive in the process), and passing St Mary's church over on your right.

St Mary's church is on the site of the original parish church (first recorded in 1208): the current church was completed in 1790 and the earlier church was demolished.

Pass the clubhouse for Wanstead Golf Club, and then turn right off Overton Drive onto The Warren Drive. Follow the road around its left-hand bend, and continue along the right-hand footway out to its end at Warren Road, where turn right.

Follow the right-hand footway of Warren Road to pass through a gateway. Go over a slightly rougher road surface to reach a small car park, where turn left onto a broad path, bearing right where you reach an information board. Follow the main path to the point where, at another information board, a lesser path makes its way through Chalet Wood.

*Below — St Mary's church,
Wanstead*

Bottom — Chalet Wood



Follow this path, which is bordered by logs, to reach the open land of the park, with Wanstead Park Temple on its hummock off to the left. Cross the grass ahead to reach a path, where turn left to follow it to the temple.

Wanstead Park as we see it today is a small part of the land of Wanstead Manor. The place-name is of Saxon origin (place on a mound), but an account of 1715 describes a mosaic which would be consistent with Roman-era habitation, and recent surveys using ground-penetrating radar suggest a house of this era, just north of the café kiosk. The Manor is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, and King Henry VII acquired it to be a hunting-lodge. A Palladian mansion was built on the site of the previous house in 1715, but it was demolished in 1825 after a somewhat chequered history which





culminated in the spectacular financial self-destruction of the owner, a dissolute nephew of the Duke of Wellington (of the Peninsular War and the Battle of Waterloo).

The owners of the estate sold off parcels to the City of London in 1882, and to Wanstead Sports Grounds in 1920. From the era of the mansion, which was built to rival Blenheim Palace with gardens of the splendour of Versailles (neither boast came to fruition), the ornamental basin at the west end of the estate and the Temple (a folly, now a small exhibition and event space with a visitor centre) are the most prominent survivors. The site of the mansion is in the middle of the current golf course.

If you are walking through the park in the appropriate season, Chalet Wood is suffused with the fine carpet of bluebells in the wood.

7 From the south-eastern corner of the temple (at the back of the building), take the path on the right and follow it to a lake.



Top — the Temple, Wanstead Park

Below — the lake at Wanstead Park

Bottom — the usually sluggish River Roding at the point where the route meets the river bank

Walk down the eastern side of the lake, with the water on your right. At the other corner of the lake, turn left. At a path crossing (next to Epping Forest Gate 173), turn right. Keep a horse-pasture on your left, following the fence round its corner to the left. Continue along the path with the boundary fence of Manor Park's City of London Cemetery over to your right.

In 1853, the Corporation of the City of London bought 80ha of land from the Second Duke of Wellington for a cemetery to relieve the stress on the parish churchyards within the City. A crematorium was added in 1904, and a second one (with two chapels) was added in 1971. The cemetery landscape is listed Grade I, and there are no fewer than eight structures associated with the cemetery which are listed Grade II. Although at first there were two chapels (one for Anglicans, the other for Dissenters), the cemetery is strictly non-denominational. Among the interments are Dame Anna Neagle, two of the victims of Jack the Ripper, and the ashes of Sir Bobby Moore.

This path, which may be rather muddy, continues between the River Roding and the cemetery. Follow the path to reach the bank of the River Roding on your left.

Between this point and Romford Road, you may notice waymarks for the "Roding Valley Way". There are high-flown hopes for a footpath route which would follow the river from its source near Stansted

Airport to its outflow into the River Thames at the Barking Flood Barrier. Much of the route is yet to be designated as a long-distance path, and indeed there are parts of the route which have yet to be designated as a path of any sort. The enterprise may well have been conceived by an individual or small group whose interest has waned with the passage of time, though there have been recent positive rumblings from the Mayor of London.

8 Continue along the muddy path, which now leaves the riverside to abut the cemetery immediately on your right, with a generally cleaner, though still unhardened, surface, while the river wiggles its way south away to your left — the smaller Alders Brook is closer to you on the left.

When you reach the corner of the cemetery, continue ahead to pass beneath the railway (two bridges) and emerge onto a housing estate. The path bends to the right to reach Aldersbrook Lane. Turn left and follow the left-hand footway across Daines Close. At the point where Aldersbrook Lane bends to the left, take a path on the right which leads out onto Romford Road.

River Roding at the foot of Ilford Hill



Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of Romford Road. Pass beneath the North Circular Road, then cross a bridge over the River Roding. The river (which becomes Barking Creek just before it reaches the River Thames) is tidal downstream from this point.

For Ilford station (on the Elizabeth Line), keep to the left-hand footway of Ilford Hill: the station has a side entrance on your left, and the main entrance is on the bridge over the tracks to your left, at a major junction in the commercial centre of Ilford, where all facilities are available. There are ticket machines and ticketing gates at each entrance to the station.

Ilford to Barking

2.7km

9 Beyond the North Circular Road, cross Mill Road then turn right and cross Ilford Hill using a light-controlled pedestrian crossing for each half and turn left to continue along its right-hand footway. Turn right at the junction with Chapel Road to reach Roden Street, where cross the street and turn right onto the left-hand footway.

If you are starting the day's journey from Ilford station, turn right outside the main entrance and follow the right-hand footway to the major road junction. Cross both parts of Ilford Hill, each by its own light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and continue along the right-hand footway of Cranbrook Road. Continue ahead across Chapel Road and Winston Way by the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Turn right to follow the left-hand footway of Winston Way, keeping left to reach Roden Street ahead as Winston Way bends to the right.

Pass a supermarket car park and cross over its entrance on your left to reach the junction with Riverdene Road.

The pedestrian entrance to the supermarket is over to your left. There is a pub on the corner of Riverdene Road..

Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of Riverdene Road. At Nigel Mews (on the left) the vehicular route of Riverdene Road has been stopped up. Continue ahead, therefore, on a path, with a park on your right, to reach Cecil Road on your left and Lowbrook Road ahead. Continue along the left-hand footway of Lowbrook Road as far as Baxter Road, where the road turns right.

*Uphall school, with the
modernist annexe
on the right*



10 Continue ahead on St Luke's Path to pick up Uphall Road at a school.

The school is a standard-issue high Victorian building, but it is distinguished by the fine 1930s modernist annexe at its northern end.

Follow the left-hand footway of Uphall Road ahead as far as Roman Road, where turn left to follow its right-hand footway to its end. Turn right onto Ilford Lane to reach the junction with Tanner Street.

Cross Tanner Street and turn right along its left-hand footway, then turn left onto Glenney Road and follow it to its end, where take a path on the right to reach Gurdwara Way, Barking's Northern Relief Road. Continue ahead on the right-hand footway to reach a roundabout, where turn right and cross Gurdwara Way using the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Turn left to pass the roundabout on your left, and follow the right-hand footway round onto Longbridge Road. Pass a bus stop to reach Barking station on the bridge at the top of Station Parade.

Barking Manor was mentioned in a charter in 735CE, though Barking Abbey claims 666CE as the date of its foundation. The name derives from "the settlement of the followers of Bereca" ... or possibly from the more prosaic "settlement near birch trees".

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

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

Barking station



Barking station was built in 1854, and the Underground arrived in 1908.

A more recent railway arrival is the "new Silk Road" weekly service from Yiwu in China. The freight journey ends at the DB Eurohub facility east of Barking station, having taken eighteen days to traverse Asia and Europe.

Barking Manor was mentioned in a charter in 735CE, though Barking Abbey claims 666CE as

the date of its foundation, just two years after the Synod of Whitby settled the calculation of Easter in favour of the Roman, rather than the Irish, model. The name of the town derives from “the settlement of the followers of Bereca” ... or possibly from the more prosaic “settlement near birch trees”, with later spellings of the word suggesting the latter option.

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

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

All facilities may be found in the vicinity of the station, the bulk of the centre being ahead .

Barking to Woolwich 8.0km

11 Continue along the right-hand footway of Station Parade (that is to say, turning right if exiting the station). Where the road bends left to become Ripple Road, continue ahead through a pedestrianised street to East Street.

At the end of East Street, cross North Street ahead (there is a pedestrian crossing just to your right), turn left, and take a path past the Three Lamps. When you reach the end of the path, bear right onto another path. Just before its end, bear right to reach Abbey Road at a light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

Cross the road and turn left to reach the Circle of Stones artwork, where turn right onto the left-hand footway of the street called Town Quay.

Follow the road round to the left to reach the quay on Barking Creek, the outflow of

*Circle of Stones,
Town Quay*





Barking Creek, with egret

the River Roding to the River Thames. Cross the river, looking out for all sorts of birdlife, including herons and egrets, on the river or the mudflats.

Take Highbridge Road to reach the high-level footbridge across the North Circular Road, and descend to a path on the western side of the road. Walk ahead (southbound) for about 250m, with school grounds on your right, then take a path off to the right (keeping the school grounds on your right). At the end of the path, take a right-and-left zigzag which will bring you out onto Folkestone Road, in the London Borough of Newham.

12 Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of Folkestone Road for its full length, taking its bend to the right, to reach Gooseley Lane, with the park opposite. Turn left onto Gooseley Lane, then right at the end of the road (in front of the gateway to the allotment gardens). Cross the A13 by the footbridge. At the other side, cross the service road and turn right. Just past the bus stop, turn left to reach the retail park.

Cross a road within the retail park, and follow a pathway to the left of a small stream: cross two more roads. Bear left, away from the stream, then right along the long frontage of shops (in a south-south-easterly direction).

When you reach the next road, you will see from the bus stop to your left that it is the main access road to the retail park: turn left here and follow it out, crossing to the right-hand footway at the crossroads within the park.

From the bus stop, the 262 service will take you to Gallions Reach (on the DLR), then on to Plaistow (on the District Line and the Hammersmith and City Line), the route ending at Stratford. The 325 service provides a link to West Ham station (District Line

and Hammersmith and City Line), and the 366 service serves Barking station *en route* to Redbridge, and Gallions Reach station (on the DLR) *en route* to Beckton.

To your right, you will see a fast-food outlet: turn right beyond the restaurant onto the right-hand footway of the main North Circular Road. The path dips below the level of the main road to your left to run behind the fast-food outlets in the retail park to your right.

Once beyond the retail park, the path rises to meet the Greenway.

This straight-line path is built above one of London's major Victorian sewers, and links the Olympic Park to Beckton: its route passes the splendidly ornate Abbey Mills pumping station near Plaistow. Due to what flows beneath the path, the Greenway rarely freezes over with frost and ice during the winter!



The end of the Greenway

13 Keep to the path as it drops down from the level of the Greenway. You will pass industrial units on the right, then the path eases to the right, before coming back towards the main road above to your left. Pass some housing on the right, but do not take the road to the right. Instead, continue ahead to a path junction, where a signpost should point to the right. Follow this path (if you find yourself beneath a bridge, backtrack), and reach a roundabout.

Turn left, cross a minor exit from the roundabout, and continue towards a larger roundabout, signposted for Woolwich Ferry on the first roadsign. Cross the frontage of a car dealership, and cross Royal Docks Road in two parts, using the central refuge (there is no designated pedestrian crossing) to reach the forecourt of Gallions Reach DLR station.

Gallions Reach DLR station is on the Beckton branch — for any journey except to Beckton, pass beneath the tracks before ascending to the platform.

14 After passing beneath the tracks, turn right to cross Atlantis Avenue using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Turn right to pass beneath the railway again, and follow the footway round to the left. Turn right to cross Woolwich Manor Way using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and turn left to pass beneath the railway one more time.

There are stops on the LL2 service here: before you cross Woolwich Manor Way for buses to North Woolwich, and after the crossing (next to the University of East London) for buses towards Walthamstow.

Pass in front of a bus shelter, and follow the right-hand footway ahead — do not descend to dockside level. As the footway rises,



*From left — City Airport,
Canary wharf skyline,
Royal Albert Dock, and
University of East London*

you will see the campus of the University of East London on your right, with the butterfly-wing-roofed student residences along the dockside.

If you are in desperate need of sustenance, you may take the dockside path to the centre of the campus, where there is a café which is open to the public — to return to the route, retrace your steps to the bus shelter and turn sharp right.

The road takes you across the Sir Steve Redgrave Bridge over the Royal Albert Dock, then continues over the bascule bridge of the King George V Dock: these bodies of water are separated nowadays by the runway of London City Airport.

The road (Woolwich Manor Way) bears left before bending right to become Albert Road. Continue as far as a fenced-off entrance to London City Airport on your right.

If you have a pressing appointment and really need to reach King George V station in a hurry, continue along the right-hand footway round the corner, then turn right onto Woodman Street. Follow the street round to the left and take it to its end at Pier Road: the station is along Pier Road to your right.

There is a convenience shop on the right just before the end of Woodman Street (but you will probably be too busy rushing for that train to bother with retail therapy). King George V station is on the line between Woolwich Arsenal and Canning Town.

Use the pedestrian crossing at the traffic lights at the emergency access to the airport to cross to the left-hand footway. Pass Barge House Road (or Bargehouse Road according to the older street-sign) on your left, then take the next street on the left (once again, Woolwich Manor Way). This street swings to the right, then swings to the left, to reach a gateway which leads into Royal Victoria Gardens — there are toilets just inside the park.

Do not enter the park (unless you need to), but continue up to the riverside path: there are fine views in both the upstream and downstream directions. Turn right and follow the path to the far end of the gardens, where ascend a stairway to reach the left-hand footway of Pier Road

If for any reason the riverside path is blocked at the far end, turn right and, dropping to the lower level of the gardens, reach a path junction and turn left to exit the gardens.

Cross Pier Road and turn left onto its right-hand footway. Opposite the point where the ferry traffic takes a slip road to the left, pass the former North Woolwich station, now boarded up. Though Grade II listed, the decaying building seems destined for a lonely death by demolition.

The railway to North Woolwich opened in 1847, and closed in 2006. For much of the time, it was simply a link to Stratford, but from 1985 to the time of the line's closure, it formed the eastern terminus of the North London Line (or Silverlink, of Network SouthEast), all the way — slowly and, for an urban line, infrequently — to Richmond. It is fair to say that it was unloved by rail management and passengers alike. The section between Stratford and Richmond is now part of the Mildmay Line of the Overground: the nearest DLR station to connect to Stratford is King George V, along Pier Road to your right (note — a change of train may be necessary at Canning Town).

The ferry has operated since the fourteenth century, originally to connect the two parts of the estates of a Lord of the Manor, the estates being co-owned since shortly after the Conquest. This linkage of manorial estates influenced the boundary of the parish of Woolwich, and later local government: it was only in 1965 that North Woolwich became part of the London Borough of Newham, separate from Woolwich south of the river.

The river crossing became a free ferry in 1889 when the tolls on bridges in London westwards from Tower Bridge were abolished (thanks to the income that the City of London derived from such levies as the Coal Tax). The ferry route joins the eastern ends of the North Circular Road and the South Circular Road — at least until the Silvertown Tunnel (between City Hall and North Greenwich) is opened between.

It is possible that the ferry service will be discontinued following the opening of the Silvertown road tunnel. The ferry carries pedestrians as well as vehicular traffic, so is an alternative to the Woolwich Foot Tunnel for those who prefer not to take the direct route underwater.

The Woolwich Foot Tunnel was built in 1912 to provide an option for pedestrians (and cyclists) when the ferry was not running. Today, motion sensors provide the excellent and much-needed service of the monitoring of tunnel traffic, mainly for cyclists' excessive speeding and inconsiderate behaviour.

15 Cross the bus access road by the pedestrian crossing provided: the

*Woolwich foot tunnel,
north portal*





*Woolwich foot tunnel
Leftt — north staircase
Right — mid-tunnel*

*The two ferries, seen from
the embankment on the
south side of the river*



brick pepperpot portal of the Woolwich Foot Tunnel is ahead of you. The entrance to the tunnel is to be found on the right-hand side of the building.

Descend the 126 steps of the spiral staircase to reach tunnel level and walk the 504m beneath the river, rising at the far end to the south bank of the river. The lift (if it is working) is recommended for ascent, otherwise you will need to climb the 107 steps of the spiral staircase.

On reaching the riverside, turn left as you exit the tunnel portal and make your way to the riverside path. Turn right to follow it downstream, with the water on your left. At a small wooden jetty, turn half-right to take a path diagonally across Maribor Park





(named after Woolwich's twin city in Slovenia), passing a water feature. Turn left along Duke of Wellington Avenue to reach the junction with New Warren Lane, where turn right. Near the end the right-hand end of a pair of red-brick balcony-strewn blocks of modern flats, turn left to pass through a prominent archway onto Thunderer Walk.

Continue ahead and pass through an identical archway, then bear right to reach a cannon in front of the Royal Brass Foundry. Continue to the left of the foundry building to reach the pillared Guard House (now a pub) on the right. Turn left and make your way across to reach the entrance to Woolwich station on the Elizabeth Line.

For the DLR and Southeastern Railway stations, and for the commercial centre of Woolwich, turn right at the station, cross Beresford Road, and follow the street uphill. There are buses which run to Thamesmead, the start of the SL3 route, from Woolwich station.



Top — Maribor Park fountains, with Royal Victoria Gardens and Gallions Point across the river

Middle — cannon in front of the historic brass-foundry building

Bottom — guardhouse, with statue of Nikē, Greek goddess of victory



Route SL3

Woolwich to Bromley via Thamesmead

**26.7km; 5hr 42min;
239m ascent**

Introduction

1 The SL3 bus route does not (for reasons that we assume are known to TfL, though no hint is given to the would-be travelling public) start at Woolwich — this would have provided a much-needed express link between central Thamesmead and the heart of Woolwich.

The walking route must therefore improvise a link and it uses, for the most part, the riverside path past Tripcock Ness, followed by a fairly straight line through northern Thamesmead, including part of the town's flood evacuation route (designed into the town plan following the catastrophic inundation of 1953). Beyond Abbey Wood station (the south-eastern terminus of the Elizabeth Line), the route passes through Lesnes Abbey Park and its surrounding woodland, after which an alternating sequence of parkland and streets leads to Bromley South station.

Though the SL3 terminus is at Bromley North station, it seems sensible to make the break at the principal station in the town at Bromley South.

The map at <https://explore.osmaps.com/route/19013954> covers this section of the route.

Woolwich to Lesnes Abbey

8.0km

2 Strike north from the entrance to Woolwich station (on the Elizabeth Line) — that is, turning right if exiting the station — onto Major Draper Street, and turn left to walk along the frontage of the Dial Arch pub, past the outside tables and through the (former) Royal Arsenal.

The Royal Arsenal was established in the middle of the sixteenth century (though it was only named such in 1805) when the Royal Dockyard moved upstream. By the end of the seventeenth century all military work concerning gunpowder and ordnance, including all proof trials, had been moved from Deptford and other nearby sites to Woolwich, and during the following century, the site took



*Dial Arch building,
Woolwich Royal Arsenal*

*Top — looking westwards
along the terrace*

*Above — sundial
over the archway*

on the tasks of manufacturing ammunition, guns, cannon and carriages.

There was substantial enlargement throughout the nineteenth century, with expansion of the site, and of the barracks.

By the time of the Crimean War in 1855, the great engineers, forever to be double-barreled as Armstrong-Whitworth, had brought greater mechanical efficiency into the Arsenal's manufacturing processes. In 1868, twenty workers at the Arsenal set up a communal food-purchasing enterprise which became the Royal Arsenal Co-operative society, and in 1886, eleven workers played a game of football against Eastern Wanderers, winning 6-0 — the first match of what would eventually become Arsenal FC, joining the Football League in 1893 and moving to north London in 1913.

In the lull after the Great War, railway locomotives were built at the Arsenal; during the lull after 1945, the focus turned to railway waggons and knitting

frames for silk stockings. All military activity at the site ceased in 1994, since when the site has been developed for housing.

At the far end of the building, turn right and follow No. 1 Street to reach the riverside.

There is a sculptural group (*Assembly*, by Peter Burke) on the riverside, next to a café and Woolwich Royal Arsenal Pier (for riverboat services).

Turn right, and follow the Thames Path, with the water on your left. Where you have the choice, prefer the left-hand of the two paths — the one which is lower and closer to the river.

After you have walked 1.5km along the riverside path, you will pass (on the other side of the river), the lock which gives access to the Royal Docks.

This part of the river is known as Gallions Reach, and the riverside area on the north bank has adopted the name. You may spot the colourful residential blocks of the University of East London, but the easier way to spot the location is to watch the aircraft coming to or going from London City Airport.

Continue along the riverside path, passing a semi-circle of flats on your right to reach the remains of a wooden slipway at what was the corner of the Royal Arsenal West.

3 After you have passed the built-up area on the right ends, the path loses its urban paving, and leads on to the bend in the river at Margaret Ness, otherwise known as Tripcock Ness. A maritime beacon marks the point. The Barking Creek flood barrier may be seen ahead, towering above the Creek's outflow on the other side of the River Thames.

4 Follow the riverside path for almost 2km after leaving Tripcock Ness. On the way, you will pass a concrete pumping station on your right, and a little farther along, you will find a green Thames Path signpost announcing its location as the pumping station.

You will then come to another green signpost, located as *Harrow Manorway*. At this point, there is a brick wall on the right (with benches at the far end), with a ramp up to street level. In order to nail the correct exit, you will have passed Coastguard point 161 (these numbered locations are on red signs), and you will have come to the end of houses up on your right.

This point marks the borough boundary between Greenwich and Bexley (both boroughs resolutely within Greater London), Bexley extending downstream to Dartford Creek.

5 Take the ramp, and join the Green Chain Walk through Thamesmead, starting at a set of flood defences which date from the time when this was Royal Arsenal land.



Views across the river

Below — Royal Docks

Bottom — Barking flood barrier from Tripcock Ness

Green Chain Walk at the Thames Path, with Royal Arsenal flood defences





Top — Harrow Manorway

*Above — Watercourse
south of Crossway*

Thamesmead was built by the Greater London Council, starting at the end of the 1960s, on land previously part of the Royal Arsenal, predominantly to house people who were moved from inadequate housing in London. The area had been flooded in the great inundation of 1953 (on the night of 31 January to 1 February) which claimed 307 lives on land in the United Kingdom and 224 lives at sea on British ships, plus more in the Low Countries. The memory of the inundation was still raw when Thamesmead was being planned, so the 1960s houses were built to be entered at first-floor level. The area was connected by walkways at that level.

Thamesmead has remained relatively isolated (witness the mindset which did not run SL3 as an express service between Woolwich and Thamesmead), with the resultant social problems which tend to accompany such isolation.

Lakes, and an old canal which was used to ferry timber and other materials to the Royal Arsenal in Woolwich, were used to break up the monotony of the housing.

It is probably fair to say that this earlier part of Thamesmead has not been without its problems and has fallen behind Milton Keynes, or even East Kilbride, in creating community balance and happiness. However, later developments from the 1980s onwards have been more successful as some lessons have been learned.

Take the ramp and head inland. At the end of a small area of grass on your left, choose the left-hand path which runs straight, passing a school on your left. Pass beneath Crossway, then turn left to keep a semi-circle of housing to your left, with a watercourse on your right. Turn right to cross a footbridge, and keep to the left-hand footway of Fieldfare Road. At the end of the terrace of houses on the left, bear left on a path and, with a moat on your left, advance eastwards to Garganey Walk.

Follow Garganey Walk across Curlew Close and over a footbridge,

where turn right to follow a path, with water on your right, beneath Crossway (again). At the end of the houses on the left, turn left to follow a path which passes sports facilities on your right, bending to the right where Erith Town FC's ground is on your left, to pass beneath Eastern Way.

On the south side of Eastern Way, bear right to join a path, known as the Ridgeway, which runs parallel to Eastern Way, with Bazalgette Way on your left. Take the second ramp down on your left to reach Bazalgette Way at the north-eastern corner of South Mere.

The game is given away by citing the name of Sir Joseph Bazalgette on the street-name. The Ridgeway runs above one of Bazalgette's mighty sewers, a twin to the Greenway on the north side of the River Thames, which was crossed on the SL2 route through Beckton. The Ridgeway sewer ends at Crossness, just to your left after you pass beneath Eastern Way.

6 Cross Bazalgette Way and follow the path ahead with the water on your right. At the end of the lake, at Southmere Square, follow the path (signposted at ground level on a boulder) towards Lesnes. This path becomes elevated (it was built as one of the post-1953 flood escape routes) and passes through a linear park to cross over Yarnton Way. It then crosses the railway.

Beyond the railway, steps down to the right lead to Fendyke Road. By following Fendyke Road and performing a quick right-and-left zigzag before passing beneath Harrow Manorway, you will be brought in 500m to Abbey Wood station, the south-eastern terminus of the Elizabeth Line. Ascend the stairs on your right to reach the station entrance.

If you are joining the route from Abbey Wood station, turn right at the exit and descend the stairs. Turn left onto Gayton Road and follow the above directions in reverse.

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



Flood defence, Yarnton Way

Top — raised housing

Above — elevated bridge on flood escape route



Lesnes Abbey ruins

7 Continue southwards on the elevated flood escape path, and cross Abbey Road, the traffic flowing beneath you. Continue ahead to reach, on your right, Lesnes Abbey Lodge. On your left are the ruins of Lesnes Abbey.

There are signs for toilets here, but on the two occasions when I passed, the access gate was locked, and the frontage of the Lodge (which contains a café) was shuttered. It appears that the Lodge does not open for the business of refreshment until 0930 in the morning.

Lesnes (which is pronounced “Less-ness”) was, in 1525, the first religious house to be dissolved by order of King Henry VIII, pre-dating the wholesale Dissolution of the Monasteries (by Act of Suppression) by several years.

Lesnes Abbey to Sidcup

9.8km

8 Turn left at the south-eastern corner of Lesnes Abbey Lodge, and immediately beyond the gardens on your right, turn right (thus turning away from the abbey ruins) onto a straight path. At the far end of the gardens, continue ahead uphill to a junction of paths, where the Green Chain Walk departs to the right, chainees following the waymark on the stump post, with the Data Tree over to your left.

The Data Tree is an artwork installation remembering key people and events in the history of Lesnes. There is an interpretive panel next to the tree.

Turn left to pass the Data Tree on your right, and climb the stony path to a summit point, where a broader path comes in from the left. After, no doubt, a short break to re-acquaint your lungs with normal service, continue ahead onto a steep descent, your path



swinging from east-south-east to east-north-east, to pass an old chalk pit behind a fence on your right.

At the path junction at the far end of the chalk pit, turn right, then branch left away from the pit (travelling just east of southwards). Follow this path out, with a final bend to the left on the ascent, to Woolwich Road.

9 Turn right and follow the right-hand footway of Woolwich Road, crossing to the left-hand footway using a refuge, to continue across the end of Westergate Road and on as far as Bedonwell Road. Turn left to follow the right-hand footway of Bedonwell Road to Glenview, where turn right to follow its right-hand footway. Turn left onto Leckwith Avenue, and follow its right-hand footway to reach bungalow country.

Turn right onto Abbott's Walk (a street), and follow the left-hand footway as far as 19 Abbott's Walk, then after passing the house turn left along an alleyway to reach King Harold's Way.

Cross over King Harold's Way, and take the right-hand footway of Cumberland Drive, all the way out to its end at a roundabout on Long Lane.

10 Turn left to cross Cumberland Drive using the refuge, then turn right to cross Long Lane using another refuge. Follow the left-hand footway of Pickford Lane ahead for almost 1km, all the way to Bexleyheath station, whose approach is on the left just beyond the railway bridge.

Left — The Data Tree

*Right — ascent through
Lesnes Abbey Woods*

There are shops on Pickford Lane near the station, and there is a café on Station Approach. There is a bus stop, served by the SL3, just to the north of the station.

11 Continue along Pickford Lane after crossing the railway and continue along its left-hand footway, the street-name changing to Avenue Road beyond the railway bridge.

There are more shops and a pub on Avenue Road.

After you have passed the shops on your left, cross over Sheridan Road, then bear left onto Pickford Road (if you reach a bus stop on Avenue Road, you have overshot). Follow the right-hand footway of Pickford Road all the way to its end at Crook Log, which takes the line of the Roman Watling Street. Cross the main road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

There are shops and other refreshment opportunities on the A207 at Crook Log.

Bexley Woods

*Below — woodland path
near Bridgen Road*

Bottom — River Shuttle



Turn right after crossing the road, then turn left onto Upton Road. Follow its right-hand footway to reach Red House Lane.

Red House, signposted to the right, is a National Trust property and was built in 1860 as the Arts and Crafts home of William Morris. It was an epicentre of the Pre-Raphaelite Movement.

Continue along Upton Road, passing a mini-roundabout on your left. In time, you will find a fence on your right, behind which is a golf course. At the end of the fence, turn right onto Iris Avenue. Pass a school on your left, and where the road bends sharply to the left, continue ahead on a path, which leads to a footbridge over the A2.

12 Cross the A2 by the footbridge, and at its far end, continue ahead (do not turn parallel to the A2). The path leads out onto Arbuthnot Lane, where turn right to follow its left-hand footway to the end of the road at the junction with Bridgen Road.

There is a pub on the left at the junction.

Cross over Bridgen Road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and turn left along the right-hand footway, following the road to a bridge, under which flows the River Shuttle.



13 Cross the River Shuttle and take a path on the right, with the water flowing towards you on your right, to enter Bexley Woods. Make your way through the woods at valley level, then where the path reaches some houses on the left, turn left to follow the edge of the woodland uphill. You will pass some house-backs on the left before coming out onto Hurst Road.

As on Bridgen Road, you may see the SL3 bus passing, but there is no stop between Bexleyheath and Sidcup.

When you reach the junction with Carisbrooke Avenue, turn left. Follow the left-hand footway as the road bends to the right. At the junction with Steynton Avenue, turn left to follow its right-hand footway to Albany Park station.

There are shops, including a small supermarket, at the station.

Turn right in front of the station building, then immediately turn left, with the station car park on your right. Turn right to follow a path next to the railway fence. Continue on this path beyond the car park to reach a crossing path, with a footbridge over the railway to your left. Ignore the bridge, but continue ahead on the path, with a cemetery now on your right, to its end at Foots Cray Lane, where turn right.

14 Follow the right-hand footway of Foots Cray Lane as far as the junction with Canterbury Avenue. Cross Foots Cray Lane at the junction using the refuge, and take up the left-hand footway of Canterbury Avenue. Where the road bends to the right, bear left into Abbeyhill Park.

Turn right to follow the right-hand edge of the park to its far end, where turn right to follow a path out onto Hurst Road.

In wet conditions, you may prefer to follow Canterbury Avenue out to Hurst Road and turn left.

Turn left to follow the left-hand footway to its end at the junction with Station Road. Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of Station Road, passing beneath the railway to reach Sidcup station on your left.

All facilities are available on Station Road.

The place-name probably means a “hill shaped like a seat”, and the parliamentary seat of Sidcup was for many years held by Sir Edward Heath, before, during and after his service as Prime Minister between 1970 and 1974.

It is said that the genesis of the Rolling Stones came about on Sidcup station (Keith Richards having local connections); other musical connections include John Paul Jones (as in Led Zeppelin, not as in US Navy) and Dame Ethel Smyth, who conducted her *March of the Women* with her toothbrush from the window of her cell at Holloway Prison (when Sir Thomas Beecham came calling),

where she was incarcerated for her part in the women's suffrage movement.

Quentin Blake, the illustrator, was born in Sidcup, and who can ever forget the bulky form of Roderick Spode, so often Bertie Wooster's nemesis in the works of PG Wodehouse — as Spode ascends to the peerage with the title of the seventh Earl of Sidcup?

Sidcup to Bromley

8.7km

15 From the entrance to Sidcup station, continue southwards (that is to say, turning left if exiting the station from London and passing beneath the railway, or turning right if arriving from the east) and follow the left-hand footway of Station Road to the junction with Hatherley Crescent. Cross Hatherley Crescent using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, then turn right to cross Station Road by a similar crossing.

The SL3 bus service stops at this junction — towards Bromley, its stop is on Hatherley Crescent, towards Thamesmead, you will find the stop just uphill on Station Road.

This is the commercial centre of Sidcup.

Follow the right-hand footway of Station Road as far as the junction with Crescent Road, where turn right. Follow the left-hand footway of Crescent Road to the junction with Christchurch Road, where turn left to follow the right-hand footway all the way to the end of Christchurch Road at its junction with Main Road.

16 Cross Main Road and turn right along the left-hand footway. Pass a small fire station on your left and advance to the junction with Sydney Road, where there is a small outbreak of telecommunications cabinets. Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of Sydney Road, passing tennis courts (glimpsed before a tall hedge shuts them off from view) on the left.

At the vehicular entrance to the sports club, cross to the right-hand footway of Sydney Road to its end at a three-way junction with Northcote Road and Tyron Way.

Here, follow the signpost's direction ahead along the enigmatic "Footpath 158". No destination for the footpath is given, but after no more than a few metres, we find out why not.

The end of Footpath 158



It ends, after having passed through a kissing-gate, with a bang rather than a whimper, onto the side of the busy Sidcup by-pass (A20), with neither pedestrian crossing, nor underpass, nor footbridge to help the walker. A few metres to the right, the crash barrier dips to allow access to the central reservation at a matching dip in its barrier.

Turn to the left along the narrow central reservation between the barriers to a dip in the right-hand barrier to cross the westbound carriageway.

At busy times, you will need to allow up to ten minutes for this crossing, such is the relentlessness of the traffic flow. Just be patient, and be prepared to wait for suitable gaps in the traffic. As the famous fellwalker Alfred Wainwright wrote, "better a postponement than a post-mortem".

The section ahead contains thick scrubland which abounds in nettles and briars, making the wearing of shorts, skirt or kilt unsuitable. It would be all too easy to rip open a leg from contact with the vegetation, or even to put out an eye if you are not wearing goggles.

See below for an alternative, less purgatorial route.

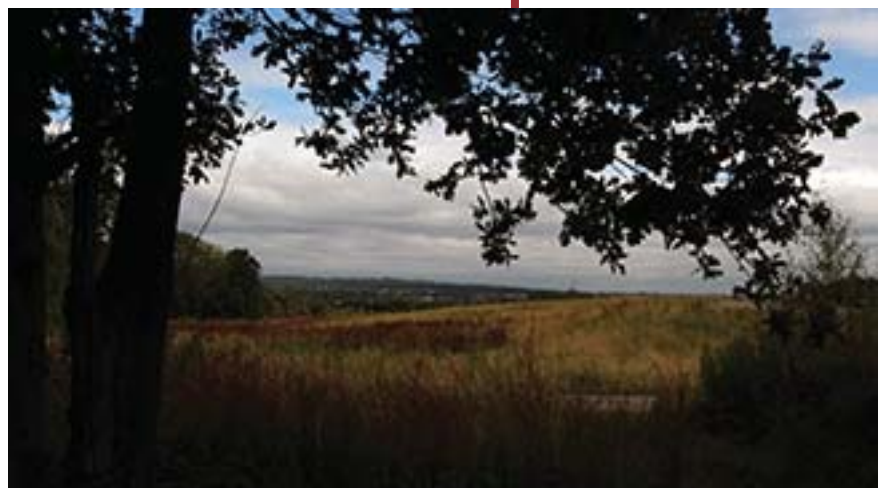
17 Turn right to follow the left-hand footway of the by-pass for about 70m (to the right of a health club's access road), then bear left onto a path through dense scrub.

There is nothing in the state of the maintenance of this path which would detract from the suspicion that this is a view to extinction through deliberate neglect.

After 150m (probably involving some injury to limbs and/or clothing — pack a first aid kit), the Purgatory Path comes out
Top — Purgatory Path, Ashen Grove (main route)

Middle — Shooter's Hill and Oxleas Woods from Ashen Grove

Bottom — Entrance to cemetery path on the left (alternative route)



onto a track with open ground ahead. Turn left to follow the track for 60m, passing a large inscribed bench on the left.

The fringes of the woodland hereabouts contain graves, but they are not anonymous, and there is far too much “memorial” jetsam, often tacky in style. This “fly-tip and forget” attitude does not enhance the respect for the environment that visitors are exhorted to maintain, and that woodland burials in parks such as this are claimed to uphold.

There is a fine view over to the right, taking in Shooter’s Hill and Oxleas Wood, with the water tower on top of the hill just visible above the trees.

Where the track turns to the right, turn left onto a path and return into the woodland, passing a sign for *Woodland Graves Area 2*, to reach a double kissing-gate at a high metal fence at the edge of the wood.

If the overgrowth in the scrubland next to the A20 is sufficient deterrent (as it should be for those without protective clothing), you may follow an enclosed path reached by a kissing-gate to the left of the health club entrance on the south side of the A20.

*Left — cemetery path
(alternative route)*

*Right — at the beginning of
the path between
Foxbury and Chislehurst*



At the end of the health club’s property, take a path on the right, with school playing fields now on your left, through a right-and-left double bend, and follow the left-hand edge of a field for its two sides to reach the double kissing-gate. Pass through the gate.



Turn right in front of the gate (or turn left after having passed through the gate if you have followed the alternative route to reach this point) and follow a path with a tall metal fence on your left. You will come, after 350m, to a major path junction (with Belmont Lane ahead).

Turn left to follow the lane with Foxbury Manor to your left, onto Kemnal Road. Opposite an entrance to Foxbury Manor, and after having passed the first house on the right, turn right onto an enclosed path which follows the house-backs of Acorn Close.

After passing, on your right, a fence which has in an advanced state of collapse, the path takes a broad bend to the left, then takes a right turn. Pass a school, then some allotment gardens, (both on the left) to come out onto Green Lane, your entry into Chislehurst.

There are shops along Green Lane to the right, with a convenience shop at the far end of the row, and there is a pub opposite.

At the row of shops, there is a bus stop for services, by a long route, to Bromley, serving both stations.

18 Cross Green Lane by the pedestrian crossing, and turn left, passing the front of the pub. Immediately, turn right onto Park Road and follow its right-hand footway to High Street in the centre of Chislehurst. Cross High Street by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing over on your right.

All facilities are available on High Street.

Follow the right-hand footway of Willow Grove (opposite Park Road) to the point where the road takes a bend to the right. Cross the road to pass between the two chevron marker signs to reach a path. Turn right and follow this path, with house-backs on the right and a golf course on the left. Continue ahead where the path flows into Camden Park Road, and follow the road out to its end at Lubbock Road.

19 Turn right onto Lubbock Road, and then immediately turn left onto Yester Road to pass beneath the railway. Bear right onto Sundridge Avenue, and follow its right-hand footway. Cross Elmstead Lane at a mini-roundabout and then, at a left-hand bend in the road, continue ahead to the right of the chevron marker sign onto a path.

Follow the path past house-backs on the left, crossing the end of Newing Green, to come out onto Romney Drive, where turn right along the house frontages. At the end of Romney Drive, continue ahead on a path (clearly a continuation of the previous, long established path which was interrupted by the building of the houses) to the left of the final house. Pass a school on the left, and follow its access road out onto Orchard Road. Turn right to reach Plaistow Lane at a roundabout.

20 Cross Plaistow Lane and follow the right-hand footway of Upper Park Road. Cross over Harleyford, the (where the

double yellow line finishes on the kerb to your left) bear right along a path. Cross Frelands Road, and continue ahead onto Frelands Grove. At a bend to the left, the street-name changes to North Road.



At the end of North Road, cross over Palace Road to take a path ahead. At the end of the path, turn left onto Rodway Road and follow its right-hand footway to the end of the road, with Bromley North station on your right.

Bromley North is definitely the poor relation to Bromley South station. It was constructed in 1878 and was rebuilt in 1926. Direct services to London were reduced to peak-hour trains in 1976, and were withdrawn completely in 1990 (when the station received the consolation prize of Grade II listing), leaving just a short branch-line shuttle service to and from Grove Park. This service could easily be replaced (and improved) by an extension to the SL4 bus service, releasing the trackbed between Grove Park and Bromley North for off-road pedestrian traffic.

21 From Bromley North station, cross Tweedy Road by the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and follow East Street ahead.

22 Continue ahead across East Street, using the light-controlled pedestrian shopping, onto Market Square. At the far end of

the square, ease right to reach High Street, where turn left to follow the pedestrianised street to Bromley South station on the left.

This is the southern end of the centre of Bromley, where all facilities are available on the streets which you have walked from Bromley North station.

Bromley South station, the principal station in the town, is just to the left. From here, there are many bus routes which cover the area bounded by Crystal Palace, Eltham, Orpington and Croydon.

Above — Bromley North station)

Left — Bromley High Street



Bromley is first mentioned in a manorial charter of 862, and became a market town in 1158. For the next seven centuries, it was little more than a sleepy village, but the coming of the railway in 1858 turned that sleepy village into a dormitory town

Among many writers from Bromley, the list includes HG Wells, Richmal Crompton, David Nobbs, Enid Blyton and Hanif Kureishi.

Route SL4 is a radial route between Canary Wharf and Grove Park. The description of its walking route, which is extended, for the sake of transport convenience, to the two stations in central Bromley, is covered in the document of radial Superloop routes.



Route SL5

Bromley to Croydon

12.5km; 2hr 41min;
112m ascent

Introduction

1 The walking route passes the south-eastern corner of the estate occupied by the Royal Bethlem Hospital, then passes through Shirley Park and Lloyd Park. The streetscapes in between these areas are punctuated by paths, some following ancient routes and some still devoid of tarmac.

The map at <https://explore.osmaps.com/route/19014452> covers this section of the route.

Route

Bromley to Shirley 7.2km

2 From the entrance to Bromley South station, cross High Street using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and turn left. At the junction, turn right onto Westmoreland Road and follow its

Left — Westmoreland Road

Right — South Hill Park



right-hand footway, passing a redbrick church (in typical suburban barn style) over to your left.

Where Hayes Road goes off to the left, continue ahead on Westmoreland Road, following its right-hand footway up the hill. Cross Cumberland Road by the refuge, and complete the ascent at the junction with South Hill Road.

Take advantage of the park gateway ahead to fashion a green interlude, following the path along the left-hand perimeter of the park, through South Hill Wood, to regain Westmoreland Road opposite some shops. Turn right and follow the right-hand footway to the junction with Hayes Lane.

The parade of shops contains a convenience shop and a café.

*Below — Hawksbrook Lane,
at the start of the Langley
Park school cluster*

Bottom — Highbroom Wood

3 Cross Hayes Lane using the refuge at the traffic lights (and using the sequence to time the two halves of your crossing — there is no pedestrian crossing signal built into the traffic lights). Continue ahead on the right-hand footway of Barnfield Wood Lane, and follow it across the plateau and down the western slope.



Pass a golf clubhouse on the left and descend to reach a mini-roundabout on Wickham Way.

With the mini-roundabout on your left, cross over Wickham Way using the refuge provided, and continue ahead on Hawksbrook Lane (also known as St Dunstan's Lane) with sportsfields on the right and the golf course on the left. After taking a bend to the right, and just before the lane reaches a school gate, turn left (still definitively on Hawksbrook Lane).



Follow the lane through a right-hand bend and out through a traffic barrier onto an access road for the three schools which are clustered here (one on the left and two on the right). Follow the road out to reach South Eden Park Road.

For Eden Park station, take Upper Elmers End Road opposite.

4 Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of South Eden Park Road. At the roundabout, cross the road ahead and turn left along the right hand footway (still on South Eden Park Road).

Cross a bridge and, just before a street junction, turn right onto a path which leads through Highbroom Wood in a generally southerly direction. Where there is a clear path to the right going over a hump, take it, then turn left to regain the southerly line.

Exit the woodland onto a street, St David's Close, with a block of three-storey houses on your right. Follow the road round to the left, then take a tarmac path on the right to keep a school on the left. Follow the path through a right-and-left double bend to emerge onto Chamberlain Crescent.

Continue ahead, crossing to the right-hand footway at a suitable location beyond the school car park. Beyond the junction with Pine Avenue, the street-name becomes Cavendish Way. Continue ahead on the right-hand footway to reach the junction with Wickham Road at a roundabout.

Cross Wickham Road using the refuge and turn right along the left-hand footway.

Note the pillared lodge across the road on your right: it was once the south-eastern lodge for the estate upon which the Bethlem Royal Hospital (which gave us the term *Bedlam* for a madhouse or, metaphorically, for a state of utter confusion) was built.

The first Bethlehem hospital in London was built (on the site where part of Liverpool Street station now stands) in the middle of the thirteenth century and was a charitable home for paupers run by monks. By the beginning of the fifteenth century, patients who had (in our modern terminology) learning difficulties, epilepsy and dementia formed the majority of those being taken into the hospital's care. By this time, the local pronunciation of "Bedlam" had taken hold in informal references.

By the middle of the seventeenth century, the monks had been supplanted by medics in the running of the hospital and some of the worst instruments of restraint and correction were being retired. The medical management, noting that the hospital was built on top of a sewer, petitioned for a new hospital, and in 1676, the hospital moved to a new building, which was brighter, cleaner and larger. This new hospital was in Moorfields, just north of the Roman Wall and

*Former lodge,
Wickham Road*



stretching from Moorgate to the eastern end of the Barbican estate at Moor Lane.

In 1815, the patients were transferred to a newly built hospital in St George's Fields in Southwark, and in 1930 the hospital moved to its present site in Bromley. The vacated building in Southwark became home to the Imperial War Museum which, on moving in, vacated the Crystal Palace — a stroke of luck for the museum, given the later history of the Palace. The current hospital contains the Museum of the Mind.

Pass a parade of shops and other business premises on the left to reach the junction with Bridle Road.

If you happen to come out onto Eresby Drive (having crossed the brook in High Broom Wood), follow it out onto Monks Orchard Road, where turn left and follow its left-hand footway out to reach the junction with Wickham Road.

On the row of shops on Wickham Road, there is a newsagent and (farther along) a convenience shop, as well as other businesses of less immediate use to a walker.

5 Cross Bridle Road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and turn left to follow its right-hand footway. Cross over the end of Devonshire Way, then take Farm Drive on the right. At the end of the road, with 36 Farm Drive immediately on your right, continue ahead on a path, which is often muddy beyond the initial stepping-stones. Thread your way along this path which runs today between house-backs. Cross over Longfield Gardens and continue on the path ahead.

Cross over the end of Bennetts Avenue (on your left) and continue along the path to emerge onto Westway, where continue ahead to the junction with Hartland Way along the left-hand footway.

The path is clearly of ancient origin, appearing on all the old Ordnance Survey maps. It connected, at the very least, West Wickham and Shirley, and may have been part of a route to Croydon Minster.

By referring to different editions of the map, we find that most of the houses were constructed during the early years of the 1930s, with those to the east of Bennetts Avenue coming later. The houses on Farm Drive were the latest of all.

6 Cross over Hartland Way and continue ahead onto Westway Gardens. Follow the left-hand footway of Westway Gardens down the hill. Cross over the end of Spring Park

*Path leading off from
Farm Drive*



Avenue and continue ahead, taking the right-hand bend to reach Wickham Road, where turn left.

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

There is a stop on the SL5 route along Wickham Road about 300m distant to the right, at the library. Other, slower, buses ply the road, serving bus stops along the way. The stop at the library is the only one between the shops passed earlier on Wickham Road and East Croydon station which is served by the SL5 route.

Follow the left-hand footway of Wickham Road, passing on your left an area of modern housing which has been built on the site of a former nursery. Beyond these houses, you will pass another pub on the left, to reach the junction with Upper Shirley Road at a roundabout.

Shirley to West Croydon

5.5km

7 Take the left-hand footway round the junction from Wickham Road onto Upper Shirley Road and cross to its right-hand footway using the pedestrian crossing. Ascend to the junction with Oaks Lane.

There are notices to the effect that there is no access to Oaks Farm via Oaks Lane. this is somewhat misleading — there may be no vehicular access, but there is a perfectly good pedestrian path. The golf club which provided these deterrent notices admits as much in requesting pedestrians to keep to the “bridle path”.

Turn right and follow Oaks Lane down to a gate. Go through a kissing-gate on the left, and continue ahead on the bridle path across the golf course, maintaining golfing etiquette by standing stock-still when you are in the sight of a golfer addressing the ball or playing a stroke.

Shirley Park golf course



At the far end of the course, pass the event buildings of Oaks Farm (there is no farm today). Beyond the access to Oaks Farm on the right, the road bends half-left to pass a building on the right. At the next half-left turn of the road, where it moves to face south, leave the road on your right to continue in a roughly south-western direction along a muddy lane. Do not enter the field on your right.

If you miss this point and follow the road out, you will reach Oaks Road opposite a traffic barrier: turn right to follow the right-hand footway (which is sometimes unmade) to reach the tramway crossing.

Follow the muddy lane to reach a traffic barrier and continue onto a tarmac lane, passing a cricket ground on your left. Continue ahead along the lane to emerge onto Oaks Road near the tramway crossing. Turn right to follow Oaks Road across the tramway and out to Coombe Road.

8 Turn right to follow the right-hand footway of Coombe Road all the way to the Lloyd Park tram stop — do not cross the tracks before you reach the stop. Turn right and cross the tracks to enter Lloyd Park.

Lloyd Park, which measures 46ha, was made over to the local authority in 1927, following the death of Edward Lloyd, a local newspaper proprietor.

There is a café in the building off to your right.

Turn left to follow the left-hand side of a car park, with tennis courts on your left, and continue to reach and cross Lloyd Park Avenue. Turn left onto a footpath (between houses numbered 18 and 20).

This path forms part of the Vanguard Way, a 107km long distance path which runs from East Croydon to the Channel port of Newhaven, and was devised to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary, in 1980, of the Vanguards Rambling Club.

The name is somewhat redolent of the “more socialist than thou” clubs for hikers and cyclists which were set up during the 1930s, principally in the areas around Manchester and Sheffield, with hortatory names such as *Onward* and *Clarion*, but the birth of the Vanguards’ name is a bit more prosaic. The original members of an informal rambling group found themselves, at the end of a group walk, sharing the guard’s van on a crowded train back to London, and that is how the name came about, first for the group, and then for the route “from the suburbs to the sea” which was devised by the group members.

The Fairfield Path (and Vanguard Way) south of Reynolds Way, following the first winds of September



Our current path is clearly a route of some antiquity, and may even be part of an old route linking Croydon with Farleigh (with its eleventh-century church) and beyond. Its route has been cut in places by housing development, but essentially, we follow it as far as the junction with Barclay Road.

Follow the footpath beneath the tramway to reach Brownlow Road. Pick up the footpath on the other side of the road. The path comes out, via a short sharp ascent, onto Reynolds Way, where turn left to follow its left-hand footway. You will pick up the footpath again as it leaves Reynolds Way on the left. Follow it to Park Hill Road, where turn right to reach a pedestrian crossing.

9 Cross Park Hill Road and pick up the footpath ahead, with a wall on your left. The path leads onto a road called St Bernard's: follow its right-hand footway out through the small housing estate of that name to reach and cross Chichester Road. Turn right, then turn left onto Cotelands, and follow its left-hand footway past a school on your left. Where the road bends to the right, continue ahead on the path.

Cross over Stanhope Road and continue ahead, the path now enclosed by walls on each side. At the end of this corridor, the route opens out onto the street called Fairfield Path, and continues to the junction with Barclay Road.

Here, one speculates, the path continued westwards, untrammelled by buildings or railway, to reach either Croydon Minster or the Whitgift Almshouses chapel.

Cross Barclay Road by the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and continue onto Altyre Road ahead. Follow the left-hand footway, passing the law courts on your left. Cross Hazeldean Road, and continue along the left-hand footway of Altyre Road, now walking against the flow of the one-way traffic. At the end of Altyre Road, turn left onto George Street. Use the light-controlled pedestrian crossing to cross George Street, then cross the tram tracks to reach East Croydon station, where turn left.

East Croydon station was opened (as Croydon, just as West Croydon had been called) in 1841 on the main line

*East Croydon station
and tram stop*





Whitgift Almshouses on High Street

between London and Haywards Heath (later, of course, extended to Brighton): confusion was resolved by renaming both stations with the names they hold today.

The station was rebuilt in 1894 and again in 1992. The current steel structure is reminiscent of several recently-renovated stations in the Netherlands (for example, Amersfoort and Leiden), but the East Croydon building is designed for purely structural rather than decorative reasons.

Today, East Croydon station is the primary station in Croydon: it is on the main line between London and Brighton, with services to many parts of the south coast and inland Sussex. The fastest services between Croydon and central London are at East Croydon station, and there are through services to Bedford, Peterborough and Cambridge. There are also stopping suburban services.

There is a café and a small supermarket in the railway station, and shops, cafés, restaurants and pubs line the route from this point to West Croydon station.

10 Continue along the right-hand footway of George Street, and cross Dingwall Road by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Continue ahead to cross Wellesley Road (a main north-south route through Croydon) by the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and advance to pass George Street tram stop and reach the Whitgift Almshouses on the right.

The Whitgift Almshouses were founded in 1596, the gift of John Whitgift (c1530-1604, and Archbishop of Canterbury 1583-1604) “to serve the poor and needy of Croydon”, as Whitgift’s dedication terms the donation. Today the Whitgift Foundation provides residential and homecare services.

Turn right at the junction beside the almshouses onto the pedestrianised High Street and follow it for its full length, easing to its right-hand side.

All facilities may be found on High Street and on its extension, North End. There is a shopping centre on each side of the road.

At the end of the pedestrianised section, cross over Poplar Walk (on your right) by the pedestrian crossing, and advance to the junction with Station Road. Turn right and follow the right-hand footway to West Croydon bus station, the western terminus of the SL5 route.

To reach West Croydon railway station, unless you are heading south by train, the easiest route is to cross the road to the tram stop and

turn left onto the right-hand footway of Station Road to the junction with London Road: the main station entrance is on the right.

Across the road from the bus station to your right is the original station building, now a foot outlet. There is an entrance to the station beside the building, giving onto the down through platform. The other platforms may be accessed within the station via a footbridge.

West Croydon may be the secondary station in Croydon, but it has history behind it. It was the site, between 1801 and 1836, of the southern basin of the Croydon Canal, which was dug from New Cross to Croydon. The canal was out of date even before it was completed, and the line of its route (which was straightened in places such as in the vicinity of Anerley Park) became the London and Croydon railway in 1839. The line of that railway is now the southern end of the Windrush Line of the Overground.



*West Croydon original
station building
(later re-purposed)*



West Croydon bus station

East Croydon station was established two years later: since the separate railway companies had each named their station as simply *Croydon*, an agreement was later made to rename them with the names we know today.

Train services running between West Croydon and Wimbledon were discontinued in 1997 to make way for Tramlink services.

Croydon was established before the Conquest, and features in the Domesday Book of 1086 with a population of 365 (about one thousandth of the present population of the borough). Alongside the town's market, the major industries were in the production of charcoal, leather and beer. The railways turned Croydon into a commuter town, though today there is much inbound commuting to work at governmental and commercial premises.

Route SL6 is a radial route between Russell Square and West Croydon. The description of its walking route is covered in the document of radial Superloop routes.

Route SL7

Croydon to Hatton Cross

34.5km; 7hr 03min;
99m ascent

Introduction

1 The route has alternating sections of streets and parkland as far as Old Malden, then follows the nature reserves which adjoin the Hogsmill River to Berrylands, before following streets and waterside paths to the heart of Kingston. It then crosses the River Thames and passes through Bushy Park. The London Loop forms part of the route to Hatton Cross, much of the length alongside the banks of the River Crane.

The map at <https://explore.osmaps.com/route/19011217> covers this section of the route.

West Croydon to Sutton

7.8km

2 From West Croydon bus station, cross Station Road and turn left. Follow the right-hand footway to the road junction.

West Croydon railway station is on the right at the junction. There are shops, cafés and pubs in the vicinity.

Cross North End (the main road) and take the right-hand footway of Tamworth Road ahead, easing into Ruskin Road to keep the railway wall on your right. At the end of Ruskin Road, turn left, then turn right to cross the tram tracks. Follow the right-hand footway of Cairo New Road (no, it does not go there) beneath Roman Way and past the junction with Rectory Close.

Next to a pedestrian crossing, turn right to cross the railway tracks by a footbridge, then pass beneath the tram tracks to enter Wandle Park.

Ahead of you is the source of the River Wandle. The Wandle

*West Croydon station
entrance on London Road*





Left — source of the River Wandle



Right — Wandle Park

Trail follows the river all the way to its confluence with the River Thames at Wandsworth: our route follows it, or runs close to it, as far as Carshalton Ponds.

The Wandle Trail is highly recommended, particularly in spring and autumn, for the variety of natural environments through which it passes. See <https://wandlevalleypark.co.uk/projects/wandle-trail/> for full details, including a downloadable map. The total distance of the Trail is 22km.

Crossing the River Wandle to Richmond Green



Turn left and follow a path just inside the park Turn left to cross the tram tracks at Wandle Park station and continue ahead on the right-hand footway of Vicarage Road to Waddon Road, where turn right. Follow the right-hand footway to the junction with Purley Way.

3 Cross Purley Way by means of the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing and continue ahead on the left-hand footway of Mill Lane. Pass Waddon Ponds on the left: beyond the Ponds, continue straight ahead, ignoring the path which strays left towards a children's play area, separated from Mill Lane's industrial estate by a fence. Cross over the end of Aldwick Road, then turn right to cross the river at the end of Lavington Road.

Turn left, still following the Wandle Trail, to follow Richmond Green, either on the grass verge to the left of the roadway or using the footway on the right-hand side of the road. At the point where the road bends to the right, continue ahead on a tarmac path just to the left of 13 Richmond Green.

The path comes out onto the left-hand footway of Kingston Gardens: follow it to the junction

with Wandle Road and turn left to cross the river. Cross to the right-hand footway and follow it to the junction with Bridges Lane.

The tall building on your left was once the Wandle Mill, and is now a block of flats.

Turn right to follow the right-hand footway of Bridges Lane, continuing ahead on a riverside path where the road turns to the left. This path leads out to Hilliers Lane.

4 Cross Hilliers Lane using the pedestrian crossing and turn right. Turn left onto Guy Road and follow the right-hand footway, initially with the river immediately on your right, round to the left to reach the junction with Church Lane. At this point, turn right to follow (if you are able to do so) the left-hand footway. At the end of the road, pass through the traffic barrier and cross Streeters Lane.

Continue ahead on a path, which leads to Church Lane and, continuing ahead as Church Path, passes a church. Cross Church Road and continue past the traffic barrier gate for 200m, then take the left-hand option at a fork. Follow this path to reach a car park on your left. Ignore the crossing path and continue ahead to reach a school, where turn right to follow a westbound path out to London Road, passing a car park on your right and Manor Garden Pond on your left.

5 Cross London Road using the refuge, and turn left to follow the right-hand footway. Pass a pond on your right, and cross Butter Hill.

There is both a pub and a convenience shop at this junction, on the south side of Butter Hill.

Pass the pub and shop on your right, then turn right onto Westcroft Road, following the left-hand footway through a traffic barrier and on to its end at High Street, where turn right. Follow the right-hand footway of High Street to reach Old Watercress Lane.



View across the River Wandle from Bridges Lane



Manor Garden Pond and car park



*The large (eastern pond,
Carshalton*

There are stops on the SL7 route a little over 100m ahead (to the west) on High Street.

6 Turn right onto Old Watercress Walk and follow it (there is no footway) to reach the gateway into the Grove, with a bowling club's pavilion ahead. Turn left to pass a basketball cage on the right, then pass some fitness equipment on your right, to reach a path junction with a car park on your left.

If you turn left and pass through the car park, you will reach Carshalton High Street, where all facilities are available. Turn left along High Street to find bus stops for all local services and for the SL7 buses towards Croydon and Heathrow.

This is the point at which the Wandle Trail turns right and makes for Wandsworth.

Continue westwards to pass, on your left, one of the Carshalton Ponds. The path turns right at the far end of the pond, so you will need to follow it round, pass a small arched exit, and then turn left to exit the park through the gates onto North Street. Turn right onto North Street, crossing to the left-hand footway by the pedestrian crossing, and advancing to the junction of Mill Lane and West Street Lane.

There is a pub on the corner here, over to your right, and if you continue along North Street for 250m, you will reach Carshalton station. Thameslink trains between St Albans and Sutton, and Southern Railway trains between Victoria and Dorking, serve the station.

Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of West Street Lane, changing to the right-hand footway once you have passed through the traffic barrier, to come out onto West Street.

There is a pub on West Street opposite, which offers fairly standard pub fare at standard times. Just 40m to the north, the Hope is a community-owned pub selling lunches, and offering simple food well into the evening.

Turn right and follow West Street for 40m. Opposite the Hope pub, turn left onto an enclosed path which passes to the right of a park, then borders the railway line to emerge onto Shorts Road. Cross the road and turn right to pass beneath the railway and reach Westmead Corner.

There is a café and a convenience shop on the Westmead Road flank of the shops.

Cross Westmead Road by the pedestrian crossing and turn left to follow the right-hand footway as far as the junction with Benhill Road.

On the way, you will find a convenience shop and a traditional breakfast café on the right-hand side of Westmead Road.

7 Cross Benhill Road using the refuge, with the mini-roundabout on your left, to reach Lower Road ahead, and cross to the left-hand footway using the refuge, again with the mini-roundabout on your left. Pass a convenience shop and a pub as you continue westwards to the junction with Lind Road.

There is a café on Lind Road to the left.

Cross Lind Road with the roundabout on your right and take the left-hand footway of Broadway opposite (the left-hand of the two roads ahead), the street-name soon changing to Manor Lane. Where Manor Lane ends, cross Lenham Road and follow the path ahead (with a brutalist car park on your left) to reach Throwley Way. Cross the road ahead using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and follow the right-hand footway of Lodge Place to reach High Street, which is now pedestrianised.

If you look up at the junction with High Street, you will see that Manor Lane once continued to this junction, before it was severed by the pushing through of Throwley Way.

You are now in the commercial heart of Sutton: all facilities are available nearby. The railway station and bus stops on the SL7 service are off to the left.

Sutton to Worcester Park

5.5km

8 Turn right onto High Street and follow it as far as Crown Road at (no surprise here) the Crown pub, by which point motor traffic has returned to High Street. Cross Crown Road using the



*Top — Manor Lane, Sutton
Above — the street formerly
known as Manor Lane*

light-controlled pedestrian crossing and turn left to pass a large supermarket on your right. At the far end of the supermarket, turn right to take an enclosed path between the supermarket and the access road to a housing estate.

At the end of the path, continue ahead onto Bushey Lane, and follow the right-hand footway to its end, passing Sutton bus garage on your left. Where the road turns right, continue ahead onto an enclosed path which leads out to Pylbrook Road. Turn right to follow the left-hand footway to Stayton Road, where turn left and pass beneath the railway.

Immediately after passing the railway, turn left onto an enclosed path and follow it for 90m (if you reach a turning circle, you have overshot), passing some cottages on the left, then with two gable ends on your right. Turn right, with Chaucer Gardens off to your left, to follow another path, passing a fenced-off lake on your left, to reach Oldfields Road with a storage facility on your right.

This path is very likely to be muddy and, at its eastern end, appears to be constantly rubbish-strewn. There are also tree-roots to trip up the unwary.

9 Turn right to reach a divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and use it to cross Oldfields Road.

The huge supermarket in the retail park ahead has all facilities, including ATMs and a café. If you do visit the supermarket, turn right on exiting and keep the building on your right, turning right alongside the building to reach an exit onto Willow Walk, where turn right to join the main route.

Turn left to follow the right-hand footway past a fast-food outlet. Turn right onto Willow Walk at its blocked-off end. Follow the

right-hand footway of Willow Walk to its end, passing through another traffic barrier. Turn left to cross over Kimpton Road and turn right onto the left-hand footway.

Immediately, take a path ahead on the left of the road, to the right of a recreation ground. Follow the path, with house-backs on your left, to reach London Road, where turn right to reach a pedestrian crossing, and use it to cross London Road.

Off to the right, the bus stop is served by buses to Morden Underground station, Wimbledon station and Putney Bridge. The SL7 stop at North Cheam Broadway may be reached by bus in the opposite direction from a stop to the left of the storage facility.

Turn left and follow the right-hand footway to reach the end of Trafalgar Avenue.

Willow Walk, Cheam



There is a convenience shop, a traditional breakfast café, and a pub ahead in the vicinity of this junction.

10 Turn right onto Trafalgar Avenue. Follow the left-hand footway to the end of the road and, ignoring the footpath which continues ahead, bear left onto Charminster Road. Follow the right-hand footway of Charminster Road to its end, where turn right onto Boscombe Road. Continue ahead onto Pondside Avenue, and at its end, turn half-left to enter Worcester Park.



The painfully kitsch modern housing on and around Pondside Avenue has been constructed to look like fake New England architecture.

*Fake New England kitsch,
Worcester Park*

11 Follow the straight broad path made of bonded crushed stone which runs west-north-west through the park, crossing its summit. At the far end, pass to the side of a hall and continue out to Green Lane, where turn left.

Once you reach Green Lane, the fake Disneytown recedes, thankfully, to be only a memory, or a nightmare.

Follow the left-hand footway of Green Lane until a right-hand footway comes into being, where cross the road and follow it to its end on Central Road, and turn right.

There are shops, cafés and a pub at this junction or to the left on Central Road.

Unless you intend to make use of Worcester Park station or the bus stop for the Croydon-bound SL7 service, cross the road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and turn right along the left-hand footway, passing beneath the railway and crossing Park Terrace using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing.

The bus stop for the SL7 service towards Kingston and Heathrow is just beyond the junction with Park Terrace. There are two trains per hour to and from Waterloo.

Worcester Park station opened (as Old Malden) in 1859, and was renamed in 1862.

The SL7 route reaches Kingston via New Malden, but there is little opportunity for off-street progress, so the pedestrian route takes a more westerly line to follow the Hogsmill valley to Kingston, calling at Malden Manor on the way.



*Comfortable houses,
The Manor Drive*

Worcester Park to Kingston 7.1km

12 If you have arrived by train at Worcester Park, or by bus from Heathrow or Kingston, cross the main road (now called Malden Road) using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and walk along its left-hand footway (or a path farther from the roadside) to the junction with

The Manor Drive, where turn left.

Follow the right-hand footway of The Manor Drive, bearing right (and still on The Manor Drive) at a mini-roundabout. Continue ahead to follow the right-hand footway all the way until you pass 110 The Manor Drive. Turn right down an alleyway, soon with a school on your left. The alleyway executes a left-and-right zigzag and emerges onto Church Road.

Of course, there is an alternative to the alleyway — continue along The Manor Drive to the roundabout and turn right to follow the right-hand footway (it is still The Manor Drive). Pass a school on your right to reach another roundabout. Turn right onto Church Road to reach the pedestrian crossing, where turn left.

Turn left, then cross Church Road using the pedestrian crossing and continue to Manor Drive North. Turn right and pass beneath the railway to reach, on your right, Malden Manor station in Old Malden.

There are shops at this junction, including a supermarket and a café/kebab-house.

Malden Manor station



was never extended from Chessington South through to Leatherhead, and the glory departed from the stations along the line as more concrete filled in the architectural niceties and a degree of dilapidation set in.

13 From the forecourt of Malden Manor station, cross Manor Drive North using the refuge, then turn right to walk with the roundabout on

your right. Turn left onto Sheepcote Way and, at the end, continue past the traffic barrier.

Descend to a bridge, but do not cross it. Turn right in front of the bridge, now with the waymarking of the London Loop to guide you (all the way to the end of Lower Marsh Road) to follow a crushed stone path with the Hogsmill River on your left.

This path, here passing through the Southwood Nature Reserve, is the Thames Down Link, which (as the name suggests) links the Thames Path at Kingston with the North Downs Way at Westhumble. It is 24km long: our route follows it, and the coincident London Loop, towards Kingston.

Much work has been carried out to improve the area alongside the Hogsmill River on both sides of the A3 between here and Surbiton Hill Park, re-introducing bends and side-lakes, and improving habitats for wildlife of sizes ranging from woodlice to heron.

At the end of the path, rise up to the road level ahead as the noise level also rises. At the busy and noisy Malden Way (the A3 Kingston by-pass), turn left and follow the south service road to reach a ramp which leads down to an underpass crossing beneath the A3.

There is a convenience shop at the entry to the underpass.

14 Turn right at the end of the underpass to reach the north service road of the A3. Cross the end of Elmbridge Avenue to reach the block of flats called Perak Court on your left (the chunky upper-case italicised and serified typography of the building's signage harks back to about 1962).

Leading off the road, the path (signed as the London Loop) descends to the left onto the grassy ground of Elmbridge Meadows. The path, again made of crushed stone, passes some concrete foundations on your right as it turns left to run beside the Hogsmill River, now flowing with you on your right.

Keep the river close on the right as far as a footbridge crossing a minor stream draining into the Hogsmill River from your left. Bear left across a field, passing a picnic table on your left, to reach a roundabout. Bear right to keep the roundabout on your left, crossing over a cycle



Southwood



Elmbridge Meadows



Berrylands pub

access to the roundabout, and turn left to reach a street called Surbiton Hill Park, keeping to its right-hand footway as you ascend. Cross over the end of Rose Walk (on your right) to reach a roundabout with a huge pub, the Berrylands.

This building is an absolute classic of 1930s suburban pub architecture. Thousands of similar pubs were built in suburbs and on by-passes throughout the country (handy for the new breed of

pre-breathalyser motorists), and many are now being bulldozed or repurposed as small local supermarkets, fast-food outlets or blocks of flats.

15 Bear down to the right, past a rather odd assemblage of local shops, to reach the entrance, on your left, to Berrylands station. Continue ahead to pass beneath the railway, keeping to the left as you pass through the tunnel, to reach Lower Marsh Lane, and begin your approach to Kingston. Lower Marsh Lane is enclosed by high fencing on each side: sewage works are behind each of these fences. On the left, the sewage works give way to Surbiton Cemetery, glimpsed in passing. At the end of the cemetery wall, there is a gurdwara on the left.

Keep to the left-hand footway past houses to reach the junction (with a mini-roundabout) at the end of Lower Marsh Lane.

There is a small supermarket on the left at the end of Lower Marsh Lane, and a pub diagonally across the junction from it.

Cross Villiers Avenue in front of the supermarket using the pedestrian crossing, and turn right. Cross over the end of Lingfield Avenue using the refuge, and turn left at the pub to take up the right-hand footway of Grove Lane.

At this point, you will take temporary leave of the Thames Down Link and the London Loop as they make their own way to the centre of Kingston — feel free to follow the Loop to and across Kingston Bridge as an alternative to the route as described below, particularly if you are not stopping for the day in Kingston.

16 Follow the right-hand footway of Grove Lane across two side-streets, Balmoral Road and Glenthorne Road. Just beyond 13 Grove Lane, turn right to follow the right-hand footway of Bellvue Road. Where the road swings to the left, continue ahead through a parking area, and onwards onto a footpath to reach Portland Road, crossing it at the squeeze-point.

Turn right along the left-hand footway, and immediately turn right onto Three Bridges Path. Before you reach the first bridge, turn left onto a path, with the Hogsmill River now on your right, with its flow much increased since we first met it at Elmbridge Meadows. Rise to road level and turn right to cross the Springfield Road bridge, which is free of motorised traffic.

At the traffic barrier, turn left onto Grange Road and follow the left-hand footway

past a school. Beyond the school, take a path on the left to cross the Hogsmill River, with a weir over to your left. After you have crossed the bridge, turn right to follow a path with the water on your right. Pass a terrace of houses (just beyond the stub end of a street) on your left, the path bears round to the left. pass some sheltered housing on the left and emerge onto Penrhyn Road.

Cross Penrhyn Road ahead. using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, but do not be tempted to take Oakley Path ahead. Turn right onto the left-hand footway and follow it round to the left, passing the junction on your right, and with a college building on your left. Turn right at the end of the college building to cross Kingston Hall Road by the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and continue ahead to take up the left-hand footway of St James's Road.

Pass the County Court building on your left and continue ahead to cross Eden Street using the refuge. Turn left along the right-hand footway, and turn left onto traffic-free Apple Market.

There is a café on the left, and there are more options for refreshment on Market Place, farther along Eden Street. If you choose the latter, exit to the right of the market hall.

At the end of Apple Market, bear right onto Church Street, then bear left towards the church, but immediately bear right to reach the junction of Clarence Street and Wood Street.

This is the centre of Kingston, with all facilities. There is a bus stop for the SL7 service on Wood Street ahead, and the railway station may be reached by following Wood Street beyond the bus stops.

Kingston's recorded history starts in 838CE, when it was called *Cyninges tun*, the seat of King Egbert of Wessex. Mercia lay on the other bank of the River Thames, and in 924, King Æthelstan united the kingdoms of Mercia and Wessex, thereby becoming the first King of the Anglo-Saxons.



*The Hogsmill River
east of Springfield Road*



*“The Hippopotamus wants to try new things with Rabbitwoman”.
Church Street, Kingston*

Kingston (Kingston-upon-Thames, with or without the hyphens, to parade its full name) has been a market town since Saxon times, and it is a lively town today, with many different flavours of sport and culture, along with a broad base of restaurants, pubs and cafés.

Edward Gibbon (*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*) and the playwright Michael Frayn are among the notable Old Kingstonians (former pupils of Kingston Grammar School), along with, in more modern times, several Olympic rowers. Other notable locals include Eadweard Muybridge, a pioneer in photographing moving objects, and authors John Galsworthy and Dame Jacqueline Wilson. Eric Clapton’s early performances included busking in Kingston, and the central pedestrianised area is today plagued with the annoying egotism of amplified sound.

Three Men in a Boat, by Jerome K Jerome, begins its river journey at Kingston, and in *War of the Worlds*, by HG Wells, cannon are aimed at the Martians there. Mr Knightly, in Jane Austen’s *Emma*, visits Kingston regularly, but this is off-stage as far as the narrative is concerned.

Kingston to Twickenham Road

6.7km

17 Walk westwards on the left-hand footway of Clarence Street, passing the church on your left, and continue ahead to cross Kingston Bridge on the upstream (left-hand) footway.

You are now re-united with the London Loop, which you will follow, with short gaps, all the way to Hatton Cross. Once again,

*The River Thames,
looking upstream
from Kingston Bridge*





the Loop forms an alternative route which may be simpler for those who prefer to follow waymarks. The route between Kingston and Hatton Cross is about 80% off-road, in parks and nature reserves.

The expanse of the south-eastern part of Bushy Park

Cross over Barge Walk and bear left. At the war memorial, cross to the right-hand footway of Hampton Court Road using the pedestrian crossing. Continue ahead to the junction with Church Grove and turn right. Follow the right-hand footway as far as a pedestrian crossing, where cross the road and take the gate into Bushy Park.

Bushy Park, at 445ha, is second (as a Royal Park) only to Richmond Park in size. It was established as a deer park in Tudor times, and there are still over 300 red and fallow deer roaming the park.

Follow the path from the gate for 400m, initially with allotment gardens on your right, to reach a junction of paths, with cricket nets on your right.

Take the grass path leading away north-west (bearing right) aiming for the right-hand edge of a clump of trees (not the path leading west-north-west towards the left-hand edge of the clump) from the nets. Your route follows that of the London Loop, but do not rely on its waymarking at this junction.

Follow the path past the clump of trees to reach Leg of Mutton Pond. Turn left alongside the water (on your right), then turn right to cross a footbridge. Turn left, with the water now on your left, and follow the path to another lake, Heron Pond.

18 Turn right, then bend left to keep the pond on your left. Follow the edge of the pond (still on the London Loop), passing an ancient tree which is somehow reminiscent of the hippopotamus in the sculpture outside Barclays Bank in Church



*Ancient tree beside
Heron Pond, Bushy Park*

Street, Kingston. Take the right-hand bend at its end. Ignore a footbridge on your left to follow the water on your left.

At the end of the watercourse, bear left (with the Loop) to cross Chestnut Avenue, the main carriageway through the park. Once you are through the trees on the far (western) side of the road, bear left follow the Loop route to a crossing path, where turn right to cross a bridge and enter the Woodland Gardens. Take the path to the right, which bends left, then turn left to reach The Pheasantry, the park's Visitor Centre.

There is a café and, at weekends, a shop at the Visitor Centre, with toilets adjacent.

19 Pass the Visitor Centre on your right (or turn right on exit from the Centre) and turn right at the end of the building. Pass the toilets on your right, and bear left on a path

to keep a car park on your right. Cross a road and take a path in a north-westerly direction to reach a car park on Cobbler's Walk, where turn left to follow the road. Pass a *No entry* sign at the end of the car park, then continue straight ahead at a four-way signpost, with Bartons Cottage visible over to your right.

20 The path now swings gradually to the right. Cross a bridge, then pass a path coming in from the left. You will come to a junction, where the London Loop carries on straight ahead. Here, take the path half-left (not the one at 90° to the left). Follow this path to pass a cricket ground on your left and reach the exit from the park at Hampton Hill Gate (the cage effect at the gate is to ensure that the deer stay inside the park). Follow Cricket Lane out to High Street, and turn right to reach the junction with Park Road at the centre of Hampton Hill.

*Burtons Road,
Hampton Hill*



There is a convenience shop to the left where you enter High Street, and there are cafés, pubs and a small supermarket on your route along High Street.

Buses here (but not the SL7) connect with Kingston and Hatton Cross.

21 Cross over Park Road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and continue along the left-hand footway of Hampton Hill's High Street to

its junction with Burtons Road. Turn left and follow the full length of the left-hand footway of Burtons Road (this is the London Loop) to the junction with Uxbridge Road.

Cross over Burtons Road to reach a line of communications boxes, watched over by a mobile-telephony mast. Squeeze to the right of these to reach a path heading roughly north-west. Pass a sports centre on your left and make your way out onto Twickenham Road, crossing a connecting road where the car park is on your right.

Twickenham Road to Hatton Cross

8.4km

22 Turn right to follow the right-hand footway of Twickenham Road, crossing the road by a light-controlled pedestrian crossing and continuing along the left-hand footway to reach a mini-roundabout.

Turn left onto Court Close Avenue (still with the Loop), then turn right onto River Meads Avenue. Follow the left-hand footway to Bye Ways (uncurling your toes after reading the street-name), where turn left. Cross over the end of River Way to bear right onto Willow Way, which will lead you out onto Hospital Bridge Road. Turn left and follow the left-hand footway to cross the River Crane.

This is the southern extremity of Hounslow Heath, where in 1686, King James II reviewed the military at an encampment, which provided the King with a re-enactment of the Siege of Buda Vár, which had been retaken from the occupying Turkish forces. See

<https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryMagazine/DestinationsUK/Hounslow-Heath/>

for a fuller history of Hounslow Heath

23 Advance towards the roundabout ahead, but when you reach a mobile telephone mast in front of the roundabout, turn left onto a path and descend to the left, following a grass path to reach the riverside path, continuing with the water on your left. Pass beneath Great Chertsey Road (with a mere 1.7m headroom) and follow the signage for 800m to reach the Shot Tower (which may never have been used to manufacture any shot).

24 Bear right at the tower, and follow the path out to Hanworth Road, ignoring a path off to the right which leads to Ellesmere Avenue.

At this point, the route leaves the London Loop to take a more direct route (with no long street section) towards Hatton Cross.

Shot Tower, Crane Park





*Path beside the River Crane,
Brazil Mill Wood*

Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of Hanworth Road across the River Crane and on to reach a pedestrian crossing, where turn right to cross Hanworth Road. Pass through a gateway to take a crushed-stone path, with the crematorium on your right. Where that path reaches a peak, with the corner of a housing estate on your left, bear right onto another crushed-stone path, which makes its way in a generally northerly direction to reach a tunnel beneath the railway.

25 Pass through the tunnel, turning left half-way through, and continue northwards, with the River Crane flowing towards you on your right, to reach a bend in the river where a footbridge crosses from your right.

At this point, the London Loop re-joins the route, having crossed the footbridge.

26 Continue ahead to follow a path with the water still on your right. Part of the

length of the path is on a raised boardwalk above wetlands. The woodland is known as Brazil Mill Wood. Follow the path up to the left in front of a road bridge, and emerge onto Staines Road at a petrol station.

There is a convenience shop and a small supermarket at this junction.

27 Cross Staines Road, and turn right along the left-hand footway to reach, just before Baber Bridge, a path on your left which leads into Donkey Wood. Cross three footbridges, one of which crosses the Duke of Northumberland's River, and follow the River Crane ahead, with the water flowing on your right, passing beneath The Causeway. Turn left to ascend to road level.

28 Turn right onto the right-hand footway of The Causeway, and follow it for 450m to reach, just beyond a light-controlled pedestrian crossing on your left, the blocked-off end of Green Man Lane. Follow the left-hand footway to the Green Man pub, and continue ahead onto Faggs Road. Use a refuge to cross to the left-hand footway, and follow it all the way to the junction with the A30. Cross the main road using the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing to reach Hatton Cross station.

The SL7 bus continues from Hatton Cross to Heathrow Central bus station. However, there is no pedestrian access to the central area of the airport, so Hatton Cross must stand as the handover point to the SL9 walking route.

Route SL9

Hatton Cross to Harrow

17.9km; 3hr 47min;
135m ascent

Introduction

1 Since there is no pedestrian access to and from the central area of Heathrow Airport, the SL9 section of the Superloop Walk begins at Hatton Cross and passes to the east of the airport, following the London Loop to the Grand Union Canal. It then follows the Paddington Arm of the canal to Greenford, and passes Sudbury Hill station before taking in the summit of Harrow Hill and descending to Harrow bus station.

This route calls for lightweight walking boots in all but the driest conditions. Although the canal towpath is generally hard-surfaced, there are potentially muddy stretches beside the River Crane, in Grove Farm, on Sudbury Hill, and even on the descent from Harrow Hill to Lowlands Road.

The map at <https://explore.osmaps.com/route/19009699> covers this section of the route.

*River Crane,
Cranebank Meadows*

Route

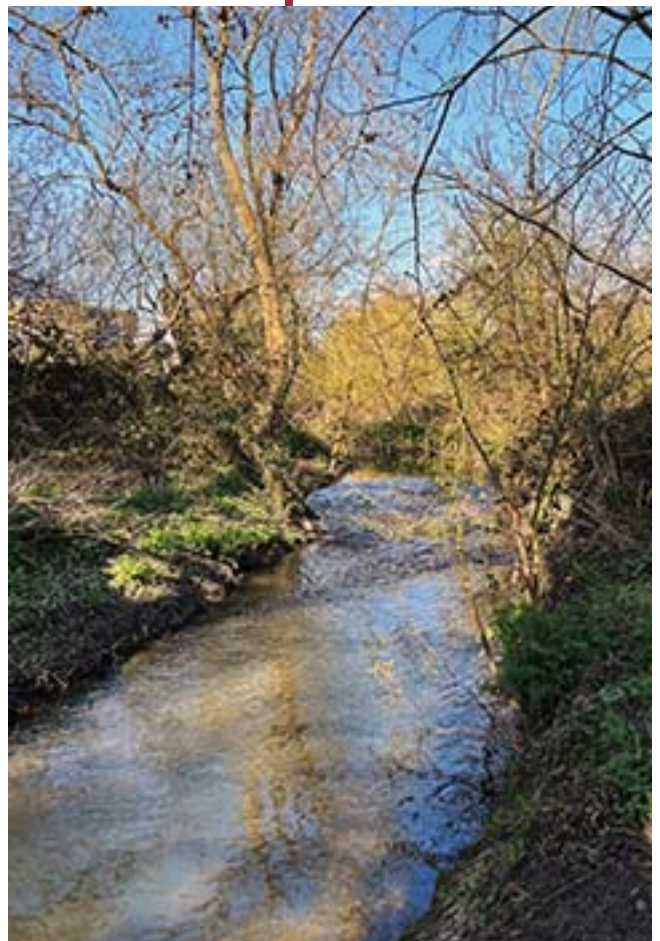
Hatton Cross to Southall 7.5km

2 From Hatton Cross, take the left-hand footway of the A30 eastbound for 600m, where ease left, passing a pedestrian crossing to your left, to reach a mini-roundabout.

Here, the Piccadilly Line emerges from its tunnel from Hatton Cross to cross the River Crane, before the railway dives underground once again as far as Hounslow West.

Continue ahead onto Earhart Way. Pass a severe barrier (the gap is on the left-hand side of the road) and cross the river.

3 After crossing the river, turn left with the London Loop onto a path which leads through Cranebank Meadows. Keep close to





*Berkeley Meadows,
Cranford Park*

the river (on your left) until the path swings away to the right. After taking the bend, follow a path half-left (not the path to the left which returns to the riverside) diagonally across the open space and out to Waye Avenue. Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of Waye Avenue out onto Bath Road.

There is a small supermarket at the junction, and a breakfast café.

There is a bus stop over to your left for services to Heathrow Central, Slough and Uxbridge. On the other side of Bath Road, over to your right, buses at the stop serve Hounslow, Kingston and Greenford.

4 Cross Bath Road by the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing (over on your right) and turn left to follow the right-hand footway for 350m to cross the River Crane. Turn right onto a path which leads, with house-backs on your left, to Cranford Lane, where turn right to follow the road (carefully — there is no footway).

Half-way round a bend to the right, turn left to cross the double-height kerb and continue onto an unmade path (which will be muddy after rain or snowmelt). The path soon crosses a stream on a plank bridge and eases to the left through woodland, with the River Crane on your right. Once the path emerges from the woodland take the right-hand side of a meadow.

Where you can see two Lombardy poplar trees in the distance, with copses to their left and right in the middle distance, take a half-turn to the left, aiming initially for the poplars, to follow a grass path across the meadow to the right-hand edge of the left-hand copse. Make for the left-hand edge of a low enclosure ahead, and follow the London Loop signage to reach a small car park. Continue ahead (northwards) to reach Cranford church.

This point marks the southern terminus of the Hillingdon Trail (<https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/article/4888/Hillingdon-Trail>), which takes a 32km traverse of the borough, with the northern terminus on the Grand Union Canal between Harefield and Rickmansworth. It is one of the finest borough routes (whether traverse or circuit) in the country, maintaining an almost unbroken off-road route throughout. The present route follows the Hillingdon Trail as far as Spikes Bridge.

5 Bear left with the Loop, then turn right along a brick pathway to reach the former stable yard of Cranford House (ther prominent clock is not working). Cross the cobbled yard to pass



*North stable block,
Cranford House*

through the arch on the left-hand side of the building, and pass beneath the M4.

Cranford House, built in 1722, was owned for two centuries by the Earls of Berkeley as their out-of-London seat for entertaining royalty and the nobility — their principal country seat was the eleventh-century Berkeley Castle, near Dursley in Gloucestershire. The castle remains in the family and is used mainly as an “events venue”. Cranford House and the southern stable block were demolished in 1944 by the local council, to whom the estate had been sold in 1932. The stables had 28 stalls. The offices of the countryside park rangers are situated in the remaining stable block.

On emerging from the tunnel on the north side of the motorway, turn right with the London Loop and the Hillingdon Trail to follow a path which soon bends to the left away from the motorway. Continue along the path, passing a first-generation stump waymark for the Hillingdon Trail. The path eventually leads out onto the left onto Watersplash Lane, where turn right to reach the junction with North Hyde Road at a set of traffic lights.

Turn right, then cross to the left-hand footway of North Hyde Road (using the traffic-light sequence to time your crossing, and continue ahead to reach, at a roundabout, the junction with the A312, Parkway.

Note — there is an error on the 1:25000 and 1:50000 Ordnance Survey maps here: the “waymarked path” lozenge is shown between the River Crane and Parkway — it should be on Parkway. There is no way across the canal at the River Crane aqueduct.

Bear left at the roundabout to follow the higher-level footway (do not dip to go beneath the roadway) left to cross the Grand Union Canal on the left-hand footway of the bridge. Immediately after crossing the canal, turn left to descend to canal level, passing beneath the road as you do so.



*Left — Hillingdon Trail
waymark north of the M4*

*Right — canal junction,
Bull's Bridge*



*Bull's Bridge from the
Paddington Arm*



By following the towpath (with the London Loop) to the right for 1km, you will reach Hayes, where all facilities, including Hayes and Harlington railway station (with Elizabeth Line services) and a bus stop on the SL9 route, are available.

The SL9 route northbound from Hayes is urban in nature: it leads to the crossing-point with the SL8 radial route at the Grapes junction (Lombardy Park). However, the canal towpath makes for a much more pleasant route. The SL8 radial route (which is described in the document of radial Superloop routes) may be reached at the Trinity Road bus stop, the second stop to the east along Uxbridge Road.

Turn left onto the towpath and follow the canal, with the water on your right, over Bull's Bridge, where the Paddington Arm of the canal meets the main waterway route between Brentford and Birmingham.

6 Turn left to reach and follow the towpath of the Paddington Arm, with the water on your left. Pass beneath the railway, and continue ahead.

To the right, a large housing development is being created on the site of the former Southall



*Beside the Paddington Arm,
Southall*

gasworks: the decontamination process has been, to say the least, challenging. The Newspeak for the area (whose development is spurred by the construction of the Elizabeth Line) is, in full council pomp, *The Green Quarter*, usually abbreviated to *TGQ*. Those who know the history of the area, though, will probably associate the initials with *Toxic Gas Quarter*.

On the approach to Hayes Bridge, you may take Bankside, the street parallel on your right, if you are heading for Uxbridge Road and the SL8 bus, otherwise follow the towpath and pass beneath the bridge to continue.

The centre of Southall is off to the right here, as are the bus stops on the SL8 route. The actual intersection of the SL8 and SL9 bus routes is on the other side of the Hayes by-pass at the Grapes Inn.

*Approaching Hayes Bridge,
Southall*





Left — Spikes Bridge



Right — Willow Tree bridge

*Left — footbridge at
Engineer's Wharf*

Right — A40 crossing

Southall to Greenford 5.6km

7 From Hayes Bridge, follow the canal towpath northwards, with the water on your left. Pass beneath Spikes Bridge (which is used by the SL8 walking route as it crosses, and which is where the Hillingdon Trail leaves the canal towpath towards Yeading Meadows), then pass a marina on the far side of the canal to reach (but not to cross) Willow Tree Footbridge.

8 Continue along the towpath. Once the parkland has given way to housing, you will pass an area of moorings on the far side of the canal (with a footbridge to link Engineer's Wharf with the towpath), and then you will pass beneath Ruislip Road.



There is an exit path on the right which leads up to road level — facilities are very limited in the vicinity.

9 Continue along the towpath, passing beneath Kensington Road. Pass a recent footbridge and then pass beneath the A40. On the north side of the A40, the canal now threads its way between industrial sites.

A footbridge over the canal leads to Mandeville Road and Northolt station 1km away.

10 Continue along the towpath, passing beneath the Central Line, to come to Black Horse Bridge on Oldfield Road North, in Greenford. Take a path to the right of the towpath to reach road level.

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

The Who played their first concert under that name in a Greenford pub. One former Greenford resident was Freddie Frinton (1909-68), a music-hall comic whose star may have dimmed in Britain, but who remains a posthumous stalwart of New Year television in Germany and throughout the Nordic and Baltic lands with his *Dinner for One* film routine.

Follow Oldfield Road North to the right (southwards) for 700m to reach Greenford station and its adjacent shops and cafés.

Greenford to Harrow

4.8km

11 Turn left to cross the canal on the left-hand footway of Oldfield Road North, and continue ahead to the junction with Clare Road, where turn left onto its right-hand footway.

There is a convenience shop on the corner of Clare Road.

Turn right onto Hadden Way, and follow the right-hand footway to the end. Cross over Wadham Gardens and turn right to follow the left-hand footway. Turn left onto Malden Avenue and follow the left-hand footway to reach Whitton Avenue West, crossing the road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing to your left.

Whitton Avenue West is on the bus route between South Harrow and Willesden Junction via Sudbury, Hanger Lane, North Acton and Harlesden.



Grove Farm Nature Reserve

12 Turn right to follow the left-hand footway of Whitton Avenue West as far as the entrance to Grove Park Nature Reserve, where turn left. At the back of the houses, fork left onto a path, and follow it until you reach a waste bin ahead on your right.

Here, bear right onto a smaller path, keeping the waste bin on your left. This path eases to the left and climbs through the nature reserve. At a path junction, bear left onto a stepped path to reach a fence at the top. Turn right to keep the fence on the left and, where there is a gap, turn left to pass through a kissing-gate onto a track.

Your ears will probably be assaulted here by industrial-strength air-conditioning: the big blocky building is a sports centre.

Turn right to follow the track out to a roundabout, and continue along the right-hand footway of the road, with the Piccadilly Line joining on your left. Follow the road out through

the imposing gateway to reach Greenford Road, where turn left to reach the entrance to Sudbury Hill Underground station.

As well as the Piccadilly Line station, there are buses on Greenford Road, and ahead lies Sudbury Hill Harrow station on the Chiltern Railways line between Marylebone and High Wycombe (but this station offers only a rather limited weekday service).

Greenford Road contains many shops and cafés.

An alternative route between Greenford and Sudbury Hill station visits the top of Horsenden Hill, with its fine 360° panorama. This alternative adds about 2km and an energetic ascent to the route.

Continue along the towpath from Oldfield Road North, passing beneath Greenford Road and taking a right-hand bend. Just before the towpath reaches a footbridge, take a path up to the right, then turn left to cross the footbridge (now following the Capital Ring route), above which the treescape of Horsenden Hill fills the horizon, drawing you on. On the north side of the bridge, the path turns right through 180°, descends to canal level, and then turns left through 180°.

Walk away from the canal: after a few metres, where the path eases slightly leftwards, a large area of sports fields opens out on the left.

Navigation is a bit intricate from here to Horsenden Hill, so be sure to keep your wits (and the following instructions) about you.

The path keeps to the right-hand side of the sports fields, taking a slight rightwards bend. At a point where the path bends once more to the left, look out for a little plank bridge on the right. Cross the bridge into the corner of a field, and almost immediately take a path

on the left through a gap into the next field. Bear right, and keep the hedge on your right up the side of the field.

You will meet a path coming in from the left: a blue-topped post is visible on its route. At the top right-hand corner of this field, turn right through the gap into another field, then left onto the nearby top corner of this field. From this field-corner, a path snakes its way through the woodland, rising to come out onto Horsenden Lane North (beware traffic!) opposite a few wooden steps.

Cross the road, climb the steps to the path beyond the road, and turn right. Soon, you will reach the entrance to a car park.

If you come out onto Horsenden Lane North in the wrong place, find the path on the far side of the road and follow it uphill to the car park entrance.

Do not take the roadway up to the car park, but continue along the path past the pole barrier. After a few metres, a path strikes out left, going resolutely uphill. Keep going uphill. At the top of the climb, you will come out onto the grassy plateau on top of Horsenden Hill.

The highest point of this field is the summit of the London Borough of Ealing, 85m above sea level. Your arrival is at the north-west corner, and I lean towards the idea that the south-west corner is the highest point, so walk along the right-hand edge of the field, passing the trig point on your left, and work out for yourself where you think the summit might be.

The views all round from the summit of Horsenden Hill are spectacular, with the Chiltern Hills taking the background to the west and the basin around Heathrow quite evident to the south-west. From the southern border, there is a good view of Wembley Stadium through a gap in the trees to the east, and you can also see the edge of Sudbury golf course.

*Harrow Hill from the
summit of Horsenden Hill
(on the alternative route)*



Make your way back to the trig point: the hill in view is Harrow Hill, with the famous school monopolising the top of the hill. Cross to the north-easterly corner of the plateau to pick up a path going down to the right. Keep going down, taking the lower option at a fork (north-east), until you come out to a level cross-path at the foot of the slope. Continue ahead (north) to the end of Whitton Drive, where turn left. Follow the path westwards to Horsenden Lane North, where turn right.

Follow the right-hand footway, crossing over Robin Hood Way and Drew Gardens. At the next junction, keep ahead on the right-hand footway of Melville Avenue to reach Whitton Avenue, crossing it by the refuge. Continue ahead onto Rosehill Gardens, and follow it to its end. Turn left to follow a path along the left-hand side of some open space. Continue ahead on Ridding Lane to reach Greenford Road. Turn right to cross the Piccadilly Line. Cross Greenford Road by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing to reach Sudbury Hill station.

Greenford Road has lots of convenience shops with wide ethnic variety.

13 Continue northbound along Greenford Road (or turn left if exiting the station) and follow the left-hand footway (with the Capital Ring route) through the shopping area. Cross the Chiltern railway line at its Sudbury Hill Harrow station (which, you should note, has rather limited services) and continue to the junction with South Vale. Turn left to follow the left-hand footway of South Vale to its end where the road bends left to become Wood End Road.

Take a path on the right (do not pass through the gateway onto Orley Farm Road). The stony (and sometimes muddy) path leads steadily uphill and emerges at the junction between Sudbury Hill and South Hill Avenue.

Cross over South Hill Avenue and follow the left-hand footway of Sudbury Hill through two bends to a pedestrian crossing, where the street-name changes to London Road. Use the crossing to reach the right-hand footway and follow it to the junction with Roxeth Hill, where continue ahead on London Road, which becomes High Street just before the junction with Byron Hill Road.

There are all opportunities for refreshment here.

14 Continue along the right-hand footway of High Street, crossing to the left-hand footway using a pinch-point at Obadiah Slope (a touch of Harrovian humour, after a character

Ascending the south face of Sudbury Hill



in *Barchester Towers* by Anthony Trollope, who spent a miserable time as a pupil at the school).

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 such criterion), royalty and many other famous (male) personages have had a Harrovian education.

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 (probably better known by her by-line of Baroness Orczy).

Keep left ahead, leaving the Capital Ring as it descends to Northwick Park, to ascend Church Hill, reaching the lychgate of St Mary's church, which was founded by St Anselm in 1094. Bear left at the lychgate to climb to the church entrance on its south side.

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 during 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, not surprisingly, at the

Top — Obadiah Slope

Middle — Harrow-on-the-Hill
Bottom — St Mary's church on Harrow Hill, with, and Harrow School buildings to its right on the horizon





*Westward vista from
the summit of Harrow Hill*

*Vista from the north slope of
Harrow Hill, towards Old
Redding (on the horizon
immediately to the right
of the close trees) and
Stanmore Common*

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 (of St Pancras station fame).

St Mary's churchyard was a favourite retreat of Lord Byron — his illegitimate daughter Allegra (who died at five of either typhus or malaria) is buried in an unmarked grave in the churchyard near the south porch.



Pass the south porch and the tower on your right. The westward view ahead stretches across the north-western suburbs of London to the Chiltern Hills beyond. As you come off the summit of the hill, take the right-hand path ("to Roxborough Road"), to descend steeply between scattered gravestones to reach the end of a road, Roxborough Park.

Turn right along a footpath (with the Capital Ring), then turn left to keep house-backs on your left. The path runs onto Lansdowne Road: at Lowlands Road, where continue ahead across the street (using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing a few metres to your left) to pass through Harrow-on-the-Hill Underground station (without the need to pass through the ticketing gates, unless you are taking a train). Harrow bus station is on the left at the foot of the stairs.

Harrow-on-the-Hill station is at the branch-point of the Metropolitan Line, with trains westbound to Uxbridge on one line and to Amersham, Chesham and Watford on the other line. The station also hosts Chiltern Railways services between Marylebone and Aylesbury. The bus station is the handover point of the Superloop between the SL9 and SL10 services, and is a major transport hub for north-west London.

The commercial centre of Harrow is ahead and to the right, with all facilities, including toilets in the shopping centre opposite the station (on the left when you reach the courtyard).



Route SL10

Harrow to North Finchley

17.7km; 3hr 49min;
178m ascent

Introduction

1 This section of the Superloop Walk alternates streets with parkland between Harrow and Hendon before picking up the Dollis Valley Greenwalk, cutting east near West Finchley station to arrive, the orbit complete, at North Finchley bus station.

The map at <https://explore.osmaps.com/route/14661259> covers this section of the route.

Route

Harrow to West Hendon Broadway

9.6km

2 Walk eastwards from Harrow bus station on the left-hand footway of College Road (that is to say, crossing the road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and turning right if exiting either the bus station or Harrow-on-the-Hill Underground station). At the end of College Road, cross Station Road ahead using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Turn right to follow the left-hand footway of Station Road, and continue almost as far as the railway. Turn left to follow the right-hand footway of Gayton Road to the junction with Sheepcote Road.

Cross this major road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and continue along the right-hand footway of Gayton Road to the junction with Kenton Road. Turn left along the left-hand footway to reach a light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and use it to reach the other side of the road. Turn right along the left-hand footway, then immediately turn sharp left

*The placid suburbia of
Northwick Avenue*



onto Northwick Avenue and follow its right-hand footway as far as the access road to Northwick Park station. Turn right and follow the path to the station entrance, beneath the tracks.

3 After emerging from the station tunnel, do not follow a path into the university campus, but bear left to follow a path along the right-hand edge of the playing fields of Northwick Park until you reach the end of the buildings on the right, where a path comes in from the right. You are once again following the Capital Ring.

An alternative start to this section is available, which retraces the SL9 walking route to the church on Harrow Hill. Cross the railway through the entrance to Harrow-on-the-Hill station and cross Lowlands Road. Take the path ahead to ascend the grassland, and turn right at the top to reach Roxborough Lane, where turn left to reach the summit of Harrow Hill at the entrance to the church.

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 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 in the churchyard 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.

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 Orzi (probably better known by her by-line of Baroness Orczy).



Descend, continuing ahead on Music Hill. At the foot of the hill, turn left and follow the Capital Ring signage through a right turn and then a left turn, threading between sports pitches, to reach and cross Watford Road. Continue ahead on a path (still the Capital Ring) with the hospital on your left to reach the path junction at Northwick Park.

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

Continue ahead along the right-hand side of the park, following the Capital Ring, past a pavilion. Turn left at the corner of the park, then turn right at the next corner to exit the park onto Nathans Road. Turn left onto The Link, and follow the path through the tunnel to the entrance to South Kenton station, served by the Bakerloo Line and the Overground.

4 Emerge from the tunnel on the east side of the railway (turning right if descending from the platform) to reach Windermere Avenue.

There are shops up to the left, and the large Windermere pub beside you. The 223 bus from Harrow or Wembley serves the bus stops next to the pub here.

Turn right, pass the Windermere pub, then take the first left off Windermere Avenue. This is marked as a cul-de-sac (called Allonby Gardens — the street names hereabouts have a distinctly Cumbrian flavour), but at the far end, there is a path which leads you out onto Montpelier Rise (that one is less Cumbrian). Turn right, and after about 30m, turn left to enter Preston Park, following the Capital Ring signs. The route goes straight across the park to exit onto College Road.

A lone cyclist passes through the shadows of Preston Park

Turn right, across the frontage of Preston Park primary school, and take the first street on the left, Glendale Gardens. At the end, turn left onto Longfield Avenue, then turn right at the end onto Grasmere Avenue. This leads out onto Preston Road, where you turn left to climb to the bridge over the Metropolitan Line tracks at Preston Road station.





Harrow Hill from the roundabout on West Hill

There is a wide range of shops and cafés on this bustling street in the vicinity of the station, and of course, the station is a prime transport point.

5 Cross Preston Road by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing just to the north of the station entrance to take the right-hand footway to the end of the block. Turn right onto Uxendon Crescent (following the Capital Ring waymarks).

Take the right-hand footway of Uxendon Crescent all the way down to The Avenue, where turn right. Cross at the refuge, and continue under the bridge (which carries the Jubilee Line). The road crosses the Wealdstone Brook at the junction with West Hill on the left. Take West Hill, the most direct (but steepest) option to reach the summit.

Near the top of the street, there is a roundabout — taking in the view of Harrow Hill might be a justification for making use of the welcome bench which has been provided.

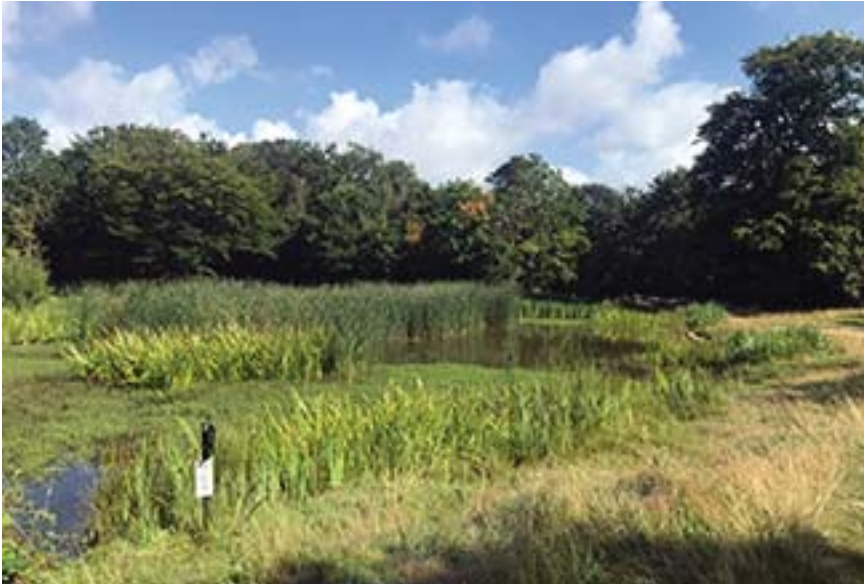
Section 10 of the Capital Ring, running clockwise, turns left onto Uxendon Hill, and the Ring provides an alternative (a little longer and marginally more rural) route to the pond at the summit of Barn Hill.

The pedestrian Superloop route, in conjunction with the London Summits Walk (<https://lwalks.london/london/personal/summits/>), on the other hand, marches straight up West Hill to its summit opposite Barn Rise.

From here, Wembley Park station (Jubilee Line and Metropolitan Line) lies about 1.1km down to the right. To reach the station, you should follow Barn Rise downhill, all the way to Forty Avenue. Turn left, then turn right at the traffic lights onto Bridge Road: the station is ahead on the right. Reverse these directions to reach this point from the station.

The great bulk of Wembley Stadium is framed in the view to the right, its energy-wasteful, glaring and obtrusive advertising display craving your attention and obeisance to the god of sport money, just like an obnoxious and whiny brat forever demanding sweets and attention.

Turn left, with your back now pointing at the stadium — it is much easier on the eyes this way — and climb the broad grass path to reach a fingerpost and trig point on Barn Hill: beyond, you will see the summit pond.



6 Turn right at the pond, continuing eastwards down an unmade path (boots are recommended in all seasons for the support offered to the ankles, and a spare pair of trousers could be useful if you fall into the mud). At the foot of the woodland, turn left to follow a level path along the left-hand side of a buttercup-strewn meadow, at the end of which you will come to a small car park on the right.

The Capital Ring offers an alternative route between the pond and the car park, but overuse has turned it into a difficult descent and a muddy morass along the foot of the woodland. It is best avoided for reasons of safety and of ecology.

Take a moment to read the interpretation board: Barn Hill is at the end of Fryent Country Park, a green space wearing considerable history. Note especially that each field is individually named: these are predominantly of Anglo-Saxon origin and are obviously very old names. The ecological diversity is particularly luxuriant throughout the country park.

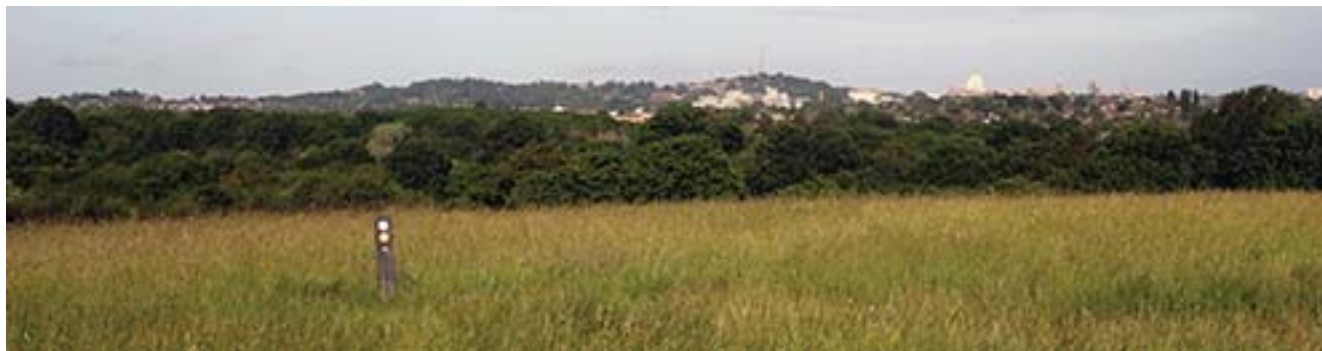
7 Make your way across the busy Fryent Way by means of the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing, turn right, and then immediately turn left through the gate in the berm. A clear path tries to draw you straight ahead (*i.e.*, to the east), but the present route bears north-east (half-left once through the berm) with trees immediately on your left.

Go through a couple of gaps, still keeping north-east, and cross a large field (named as *Warrens* on the signboard map at the car park) to the top corner where several paths converge. Bear half-left through the gap, and up the right-hand side of the next field (Goldringe), now in a northerly direction. Continue on the same line, ever upwards, to reach the stake and fingerpost at the summit of Gotforde's Hill.

Descend to the east following the direction given by the fingerpost. At the right-hand corner of the field, pass through a hedge on the right (as indicated by the Capital Ring waymark), and turn left

Left — Barn Hill summit pond, looking north

Right — heron on the pond



*Looking west from
Gotforde's Hill*

*From left —
Horsenden Hill,
Sudbury Hill,
Harrow Hill (fronted by
Northwick Park Hospital),
Harrow, and (far right),
Eastman Quarter*

(though without any waymarking help) to follow the path with a hedge on your left. Pass an old stable on your right to come out onto Slough Lane at a junction. Cross the road and continue ahead (still in an easterly direction) on the left-hand footway of Slough Lane to reach and cross Church Lane — there is a pedestrian crossing a few metres to your left at the junction.

There are shops on Church Lane to the left, including a fast-food outlet and two convenience shops, and a bus stop on the routes between Golders Green and Alperton, and between Mill Hill and Kensal Rise.

Take the lane ahead (or turn left onto the lane if you have come from the pedestrian crossing), passing a school and a play area on the right, straight across the middle of a recreation ground. At the far end, continue ahead to follow the right-hand footway of Elthorne Way out to its end at Townsend Lane.

8 Cross Townsend Lane and pass to the right of a children's play area ahead. Continue ahead to the end of Fryent Grove, aiming for a tall stench-pipe, but do not enter the street. Turn right to follow the left-hand edge of the field. Before you reach the sports stadium ahead, pass through the hedge to continue along the right-hand edge of the adjoining field.

*Church Lane Recreation
Ground, Kingsbury*



At the far end of the stadium, where there is an exit on the right onto a car park, turn left through 90° to cross the grassland in a straight line, and take a path ahead to reach the shore of Brent Reservoir. Bear right at a path junction to follow the path out to Cool Oak Lane. Turn left to cross the recent pedestrian enhancement to the historic Cool Oak Bridge. Follow the left-hand footway of Cool Oak Lane up to the junction with West Hendon Broadway.



Amongst the shops on West Hendon Broadway, you may find a convenience shop and fast-food outlets.

Ahead on the left-hand footway of West Hendon Broadway, there is a bus stop served by the SL10 route towards Harrow; beyond it, Station Road on the right leads to Hendon station (for Thameslink services) and to the bus stop for the SL10 route towards North Finchley. The distance to Hendon station from the junction with Cool Oak Lane is approximately 500m: there is a light-controlled pedestrian crossing at the foot of Station Road for the crossing of West Hendon Broadway.



Top — Silk Stream arm of Brent Reservoir from Cool Oak Bridge

Above — a recent enhancement to the pedestrian experience — a bridge parallel to the historic (but narrow) Cool Oak Bridge

West Hendon Broadway to North Finchley 8.1km

9 Cross West Hendon Broadway, using the traffic-light sequence to time your move, and turn left along the right-hand footway. Turn right onto Park Road and follow its right-hand footway over the Midland Main Line railway and then over the M1 to reach the junction with Mount Street.

If you have arrived at Hendon station by Thameslink train or by an eastbound SL10 bus, cross Station Road using the pedestrian crossing, turn left along the right-hand footway across the M1, turn right along Algernon Road to its end, turn left onto Vicarage Road,

turn right onto Mount Street to the junction with Park Road, where turn left to pick up the main route.

Follow the right-hand footway of Park Road to reach a school on the right, where use the pedestrian crossing to cross the road and continue along the left-hand footway, down to a roundabout in a dip and up again to its end at the junction with the always-busy Hendon Way.

Hendon Central Underground station (Northern Line, Edgware branch) is 400m distant to the left, with bus stops on the SL10 route on Queen's Road, just to the east of the station. See below for a quieter access to the buses and trains.

Central Hendon offers all facilities nearby in the vicinity of the station.

Take the underpass on the left to cross Hendon Way, and on emerging, take the left-hand footway of Beaufort Gardens ahead. At the end of the street, cross Cheyne Walk and turn right along the left-hand footway. After about 200m, turn left to cross the railway and enter Hendon Park.

If you turn left after crossing the railway, you may follow a path along the western side of the park, easing right to keep a children's play area and then some tennis courts on your left, to reach Queen's Road, where you may turn left for SL10 buses and Hendon Central station — this is a quieter diversion to these facilities than the noisy trudge up Hendon Way. There are toilets and a park café just inside the park at Queen's Road.

10 Continue ahead across the park to reach its far right-hand corner at Shirehall Lane. Cross the road to continue along the right-hand footway of Shirehall Lane to its end at Brent Street.

Hendon Park



Cross the road ahead using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing, then turn right to follow the left-hand footway downhill, over the end of Woodburn Close, just before the road crosses the River Brent in front of the junction with the North Circular Road.

From the bus stop at this point, any bus will take you to Golders Green, where there is a Tube station, a bus station, and a commercial centre with all facilities.

Follow the Capital Ring signage onto a paved path on the left, with the flats of Woodburn Close on your left, noting the circular structure on your right, to enter Brent Park across a footbridge, following it past a lake on the left and out onto Bridge Lane.

11 Cross the road and turn left, then turn right just before a bridge onto a path with the River Brent flowing on your left. Cross a small bridge, beneath which Mutton Brook flows its final few metres, and reach a path junction with a three-armed signpost.

This is the point where the route diverges from the Capital Ring, which turns right towards East Finchley. The Superloop Walk now takes up with the Dollis Valley Greenwalk, which runs between Moat Mount and Hampstead Heath, though we are walking it in the opposite direction.

Continue ahead (upstream with the brook on your left) to follow the Dollis Valley Greenwalk. Head northwards with the water flowing on your left. Soon, you will have house-backs on your right, and then the path passes beneath the A1, which is carried by a 1930s bridge. After a bend to the left, the path dips down to take an underpass beneath Hendon Lane.



*Riverside structure
north of Brent Street*



Left — Lake in Brent Park

*Right — confluence of
Mutton Brook and
Dollis Brook, and of
the Capital Ring and
Dollis Valley Greenwalk,
looking southwards*



The A1 crosses the Dollis Brook

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

There are bus stops up Hendon Lane to the right: these link north-east to Finchley Central station and south-west to Brent Cross. The nearest stop on the SL10 service is 900m away to your left at the Quadrant.

12 Beyond Hendon Lane, the path enters Windsor Open Space, keeping close to the brook. There is some open space off to the right, but the brookside has

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

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

Dollis Valley Viaduct



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

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

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

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

The path wends its way upstream, mainly in woodland. Houses abutting on the left arrive just before the route crosses Fursby Avenue. There are sports and play facilities on your left in Riverside Park between Fursby Avenue, and Argyle Road, including informal play structures created from the trunks of downed trees.

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

14 Turn right along the right-hand footway of Argyle Road, crossing to the left-hand footway at one of the several

*Informal play structures,
Riverside Park*





Finchley suburbia on Argyle Road, next to the junction with Nether Street

refuges. Pass beneath the Northern Line, and continue to the junction with Nether Street.

Cross Nether Street by the refuge and turn left to follow the right-hand footway all the way to Ballards Lane. Turn right to follow the right-hand footway to the junction with Kingsway. Turn left to cross Ballards Lane by the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing, and follow the left-hand footway to North Finchley bus station, the end of the orbital Superloop Walk.

All facilities are available in the vicinity, including a large supermarket just to the south of Kingsway on Ballards Lane, which has customer toilets and a coffee vending machine. Use bus stop S on Kingsway (outside the bus station entrance) for the SL1 service towards Walthamstow, and bus stop P within the bus station for the SL10 service towards Harrow. The 13 service towards Victoria, via Underground stations at Finchley Central, Golders Green, Finchley Road and Baker Street, also uses bus stop P.

The end of the Loop

