

London Loop

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TFL Section 1 Erith Station to Bexley High Street

8.5 miles (13.5 kilometres)

PJM Section 1 Erith to Crayford

6.41 miles (0.40 mi to Crayford station)

Leg 1 Erith to Slade Green

4.11 miles (0.82 mi to Slade Green station)

Introduction

This section starts at Erith station and heads south to finish close to Bexley station in the historic village of Old Bexley. It offers easy walking, mainly level on riverside paths, with a few short climbs. Paths beside the rivers can, at times, be muddy.

There are cafes and pubs at many places along the way [not many places: only in Erith, Crayford and Bexley] and you can picnic at Hall Place.

Directions

Leave Erith station and follow the station access road under the bridge to the mini roundabout. Here take a right into Stonewood Road which leads to the Riverside Gardens. Turn right and follow the path through the gardens. The LOOP follows for a while the Thames Path.

At the end of the gardens continue along Erith High Street. Take a left, just past the Cross Keys pub, down towards the river and Erith Deep Wharf.

Carry on beside the river. At the end of the path turn right, into James Watt Way, crossing Wheatley Terrace Road, then go through the bollards, and straight ahead to Manor Road. Here, turn left, and keep going along the unpleasant Manor Road for about half a mile. At the end of the industrial estate, after Manor Road meets Ray Lamb Way, turn left down the little tarmac lane, back towards the river.

At the end of the path go right past the Erith Yacht Club compound and straight ahead onto a raised bank. Carry on following the bank beside the river. When you reach the River Darent mouth, the path turns right heading inland, joining the Cray Riverway Walk.

Cross the Dartford Creek Barrier access road via the kissing gates and keep following the river wall inland. About three-quarters of a mile past the dam the path splits in two. The Darent curves to the left. *To continue, follow the Darent round to the left.*

If you want to stop here you should take the right-hand path and carry straight on to Slade Green rail station.

Leg 2 Slade Green to Crayford

3.94 miles (0.82 mi from Slade Green station, 0.40 mi to Crayford station)

Leave the station on the east side, by platform 2, and turn right through the carpark. At the end, turn left along Moat Lane. Keep straight ahead (still on Moat Lane) when the road bends left. And keep straight ahead on the footpath at the next left bend. Carry on to the embankment of the Darent, and then turn right.

Keep following the river wall. The River Cray feeds into the Darent along this stretch.

When the path reaches Crayford Creek, keep following the River Cray. At the end of the path, go through the barrier, turn right at the metal fence then immediately left down the road.

Go under the railway bridge and keep going. Where the road forks, cross to take the right fork and straight ahead towards the busy Thames Road. At the road junction there is a pedestrian crossing to your left, use this to cross the road and on the far side turn left, reaching a roundabout. Soon you will reach Crayford Way, cross and turn left following the path round to the right with the green space on your right. After you cross the River Cray again, turn right and follow the riverside path with the Cray on your right.

Did you know?

The River Cray is home to common reeds - the tallest British grass which can reach ten feet high. It is still used to thatch roofs, and in previous times was harvested in huge quantities. The marshes are one of the few remaining areas of Thames grazing marsh in London, with ditches supporting a wealth of rare plants and animals, and a good range of breeding birds.

Keep walking along the path, and at Malden Lane, turn right and cross the bridge over the Cray, then take the first left up Barnes Cray Road. Where the road curves to the right, follow the track between the garages and the green fence, and there on your left, is the river again. Follow the path. When it forks, keep left by the river. It pops out onto Crayford Way.

If you wish to finish the walk here, there is a bus stop across the road to your right where bus route 428 can take you back to Erith.

Cross the road and go left towards Waterside Gardens, or walk through the gardens with the river on your right. *To continue, at the Bear & Ragged Staff pub, cross Crayford High Street at the pedestrian lights and bear slightly right to continue along London Road.*

Did you know?

The Bear & Ragged Staff was the badge of the Earl of Warwick - the famed Kingmaker of the Wars of the Roses. He was killed in thick fog at the battle of Barnet after he'd just joined the Lancastrians.

Crayford station can be reached from here by turning left and heading down Crayford Road, past the Old Town Hall, then right into Station Road.

PJM Section 2 Crayford to Albany Park

4.31 miles (0.40 mi from Crayford station, 0.46 mi to Albany Park station)

Leg 3 Crayford to Bexley

3.08 miles (0.40 mi from Crayford station, 0.09 mi to Bexley station)

Leave Crayford station from the north side, by platform 2, and turn right onto the path. At the end of this path turn left. At the roundabout turn left again onto London Road. Follow London Road straight ahead until you see the Bear and Ragged Staff. Follow the road round to the left (do not cross it). At the next set of traffic lights bear right, still on London Road.

Keep along London Road, then fork left into Bourne Road and keep going until you reach the garage on the left. The two posts either side of the garage are all that is left of the old Crayford cinema.

After the second post, turn left and go through the kissing gate and walk down the left edge of the playing field. At the bottom follow the path through the vegetation to meet up with the river - turn right and follow the bank.

If you want to take a look at Hall Place, turn right at the second bridge. After your visit you will need to retrace your steps back to this bridge (unless you fancy climbing over the fence in the south corner of Hall Place garden).

Did you know?

Hall Place is a fine Tudor mansion built almost 500 years ago in the reign of Henry VIII for the Lord Mayor of London. It has a magnificent panelled Great Hall with Minstrel's Gallery and fine decorative plaster ceilings, as well as award-winning gardens, a stunning topiary lawn, herb gardens and inspirational herbaceous border.

To continue on the loop, cross over the second bridge just after the carpark, turn left and follow the hedge round to the right, crossing the little creek (usually dry), then round to the right and head for the railway bridge which carries the A2 East Rochester Way. Go through the kissing gate and up the ramp, up the steps and at the top turn left. Stay on this side of the road and cross the railway then immediately after the bridge, fork left through the kissing gate and down the path. At the bottom, take a very sharp left and then left under the A2 bridge.

At the next fork, take the right-hand path. As you start to go up the slope towards the road, there's a stile on the right, leading into Churchfield Wood. Cross the stile and head off down the right hand path. Keep following the path, with the woods on your left. At the end you reach a tarmac path. Turn right and keep walking.

When you reach the end of the footpath with St. Mary the Virgin church opposite, turn left towards Bexley High Street, then keep right. Pass under the railway bridge, then cross the road and turn left at the mini roundabout.

This section ends at the junction of Bexley High Street and Tan Yard Lane on the left.

Station Approach is just past Tan Yard Lane on your left - taking you to Bexley station. Alternatively, bus routes 229 or B12 can take you back to Erith from stop F in Bourne Road.

TFL Section 2 Bexley High Street (Tan Yard Lane) to Jubilee Country Park

7 miles (11.3 kilometres)

Leg 4 Bexley to Albany Park

1.39 miles (0.09 mi from Bexley Station, 0.46 mi to Albany Park Station)

Introduction.

This section offers a very green and mostly easy route through the suburbs of southeast London. It starts in Old Bexley High Street, close to Bexley station. At first, it shares the route of the Cray Riverway through sports grounds and open areas, then beside the River Cray in Foots Cray Meadows, possibly one of the most charming sections of the whole London Loop.

There are cafes and pubs at Sidcup Place and Petts Wood, where there are also public toilets.

Directions.

If you are coming by train, exit the station and turn right on the High Street, where you will very quickly find the start of the walk at Tan Yard Lane.

From the High Street follow Tan Yard Lane under the bridge and beside the railway embankment. Where it opens out, keep the fence on your left and head towards the Bexley Cricket Club and on towards the landfill site - ignore the road to the right. At the cottages, follow the unmetalled path known as the 'Cray Riverway' straight on, up the hill and past the landfill.

Follow the path downhill towards the water pumping station. At the bottom of the hill go straight on, heading for the residential area in front of you. *To continue, after the pumping station on the left, take an immediate left down the little walled alleyway just beyond the first semi-detached house.*

For Albany Park station, turn right into Betterton Drive. At the end turn left into Longmead Drive. Skirt round the grass patch, and take the path to the right to Albany Park station.

PJM Section 3 Albany Park to Petts Wood

Leg 5 Albany Park to Petts Wood

7.18 miles (0.46 mi from Albany Park station, 0.46 mi to Petts Wood station)

Leave the station by the south exit (by platform 1). Turn left in front of the grass patch, and then left into Longmead Drive. At the end follow the road round to the right into Betterton Drive. At the end turn left into Riverside Road. Turn right down the little walled alleyway just before the

last semi-detached house.

Follow the path until you come to the River Cray. Cross the bridge, turn right and keep following the river.

Did you know?

In the trees above you, you're very likely to see, and hear, some of London's parakeets.

Keep the river on the right through Stable Meadows and ignore the footbridge and the next bridge, which is Five Arch Bridge (a brick bridge over a weir built around 1780) leading to Foots Cray meadows.

Keep going past the bridge, with the river still on the right. Cross the little creek, and keep following the river. At the end of the meadow, go through the kissing gate by the metal fence then cross the little brick bridge on your right. This is where we finally leave the River Cray. After around 100 metres fork left and follow the path towards All Saints Church.

At the second and larger of two clearings (with the church on your right) bear right, and head for the entrance in the fence. This leads to Rectory Lane. Turn left and keep going until you reach the traffic lights, or take a short detour to your right to visit the church.

If you are finishing the walk here take the road to the left (Foots Cray High Street) where there is a bus stop with services to Bexley or Swanley, alternatively on Cray Road, straight ahead is a bus stop which can take you to Orpington, Sidcup, Woolwich, Foots Cray or Eltham.

To carry on, go straight over Foots Cray High Street, and ahead into Cray Road. Take the second right up Suffolk Road. At the end, turn left into the playing fields, keeping the metal fence on your left, and follow the hedge round to the right, keeping the playing fields on your left. Where the path turns right, follow it through the concrete bollards and metal kissing gate.

On your left is the ground of Cray Wanderers Football Club formed in 1860 - one of the very first football clubs in the country.

Go through the metal kissing gate, then bear left passing the entrance to the football club. Follow the path straight on, past the next allotments and then through another kissing gate. At the end of the path is an open grass area, known as Sidcup Place, with Queen Mary's Hospital on your left. Walk straight ahead up the hill, past the adventure playground on your right. At the top is a great view back into the valley.

Turn left and pass the pub at the top, and the walled garden. Just past the garden, turn right, keeping the wall on the right. Pass the tennis courts and go straight ahead to Chislehurst Road. Here, turn left.

The bus stops here can get you to Bexley, Foots Cray, Sidcup or Bromley..

Follow Chislehurst Road, and cross the hospital entrance. Just past the bus stop, fork left down the ramp, then right, into the underpass. Take a left up the steps, left again up the ramp and cross the road bridge. Follow the curve; go down the steps and through the next underpass on your left.

After the second underpass, head up the ramp to the left. At the top of the ramp walk right for 10 metres to find a sign for Scadbury Park Nature Reserve (managed by Bromley Council) cross the stile and follow the edge of the field to the left - ignore the path leading off to the right.

Follow the path through some woods, and out into a clearing. Head left across the clearing, follow the path into another wood and over a dry stream. Keep going up hill, and ignore the path off to the right. At the edge of the wood go through the gate, and take the metalled path beyond, which curves round to the right. Take a left through a wooden barrier, then another left, then after around 200 metres, ignore the first right at the end of the field and take the second right. Follow this to the

right uphill, onto the main path and then bear left.. A short detour to your right takes you to the old moated manor.

Follow the path past a huge oak on the right, up some steps and into a birch wood. After a boardwalk, the path bends right and then runs straight for a short distance. Take the next significant path on the left. Go through the remains of a wooden barrier, and at the major path which crosses from left to right - turn right. When you reach the driveway take a left.

This brings you out onto St. Paul's Cray Road. Cross and go past the metal barrier and down the path on the other side. After around 50 metres fork left and keep following the path straight ahead.

The route now passes through land owned by The National Trust. On the left is the Willett Memorial Wood.

Did you know?

William Willett (a builder who lived in Chislehurst) was largely responsible for the introduction of British Summer Time, which was first introduced in May 1916. His original proposal was to move the clocks forward by 80 minutes, in 20 minute steps over four weeks.

Stay ahead past the National Trust sign - open fields are now to the right.

Carry on along the main path - ignore all the side path as it drops gently downhill towards the railway line taking the right-hand fork. Turn right before the underpass and follow the railway line, on your left.

At the next two main junctions take a left and keep going beside the railway line. Ignore all other turnings to the right and left - keep straight ahead. The path takes you over Kyd Brook. Cross the bridge over the railway and head for the next one..

Cross this bridge as well, and keep following the tarmac path. At Little Thrift Road, go straight over, and carry on down the path opposite. Cross one final footbridge over more rail lines, and follow the path beyond it. At the next kissing gate is Jubilee Country Park. *To continue, keep following the path into Jubilee Country Park.*

Follow the station link by taking a left up the footpath leading to Tent Peg Lane, and another left at Crest View Drive, leading to Queensway. Petts Wood station is in West Approach, a few hundred metres down Queensway, on the left.

TFL Section 3 Jubilee Country Park to Gates Green Road, Wickham Common

9 miles (14.5 kilometres)

PJM Section 4 Petts Wood to Hayes

9.57 miles (0.46 mi from Petts Wood station, 0.69 mi to Hayes station)

Leg 6 Petts Wood to Orpington

3.68 miles (0.46 mi from Petts Wood station, 0.91 mi to Orpington station)

Introduction.

This section of the LOOP passes through attractive countryside with strong links to Charles Darwin who described the countryside around the village of Downe as 'the extreme verge of the world'.

The walking is generally easy, but with a few longish, steep slopes, stiles and kissing gates and some small flights of steps. Much of it is through commons, parks and along tracks.

There are cafes and pubs at many places [not really: only at Petts Wood, Farnborough, Keston and Hayes] along the way and you can picnic at High Elms, where there are also public toilets.

The walk starts at Jubilee Country Park and finishes at Hayes station. There are several bus routes along this walk.

Directions.

To get to the start of this walk from Petts Wood station exit on the West Approach side of the station and turn right at the T-junction with Queensway. Follow the street until it curves round to the left, and carry straight on down Crest View Drive. Take Tent Peg Lane on the right and keep to the footpath through the trees to the left of the car park. After 100 metres enter Jubilee Country Park and at the junction of several paths and go through the gate on the left, and join the LOOP.

Then branch left. Carry on, with the wood to the left and the open grassland on the right.

Did you know?

Jubilee Country Park is so named to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977. The hollows, which form ponds in the spring, are bunkers left over from a golf course which existed here before the Second World War.

Keep going. At the end of the path is a kissing gate alongside a field gate; keep straight ahead along the path which runs alongside the entrance driveway to St. James' School on the left. At the end cross Southborough Lane, and go down Oxhathw Crescent.

Cross over Chesham Avenue and carry on straight ahead down Faringdon Avenue to its end where it meets a belt of woodland. Turn left up the footpath past the last house and through Sparrow Woods and Crofton Heath.

Follow the main path for 500 metres through the woods and after crossing the stream go straight on for 400 metres. Stay on the main path, carrying straight on at the junction. Bear right at the next ford (if you get to an open glade with a bench on the left you've gone too far), and pass a bench on the right. After 50 metres turn right at the next junction.

The route then joins a wider path coming from the left, leading to a track with a metalled surface. Turn right onto this and go straight on, keeping the stream on the left. The track leads to Crofton Road; turn left past the Crofton Village sign.

Did you know?

The Manor of Crofton was owned by Archbishop Odo, who fought at the Battle of Hastings and commissioned the Bayeux Tapestry. He used a heavy club instead of a sword, as members of the church were not allowed to draw blood.

There is a bus stop slightly further along the road where bus routes 353 and 61 leave towards Hayes, Bromley, Orpington and Chislehurst.

To carry on, cross Crofton Road at the traffic island and turn right, then left up the metalled path past the Scout and Guide Headquarters. Follow this path through the residential area until reaching Lovibonds Avenue. Cross this road and go straight ahead down Crofton Avenue. *To continue, turn right soon after La Tourne Gardens at a triangle of grass and woodland, into Darrick Common.*

For Orpington station, carry on along Crofton Avenue until it bends sharp left. At this point go straight ahead on the footpath through the wood. At the end turn left into Newstead Avenue.

Follow this all the way to the other end, then turn right. Orpington Station is a short distance ahead of you.

Leg 7 Orpington to Hayes

7.71 miles (0.91 mi from Orpington station, 0.69 mi to Hayes station)

Leave the station by the west entrance (by platform 1). Walk along Crofton Road away from the railway. You may visit the Roman villa on the right. Cross at the pedestrian crossing and carry on up Crofton Road. Turn left onto Newstead Avenue and walk its entire length. When you reach the far end, take the footpath on the right through Newstead Wood. When you emerge from the wood, carry on straight ahead along Crofton Avenue. Turn left at the triangle of grass and woodland, into Darrick Common.

At the second crossroads in the path, take a left passing between wooden railings. When the tennis courts come into view bear right, keeping the tennis courts on your left and the playing fields on your right.

Follow the path round to the right to the benches. In front of the benches there are two mown paths, take the right-hand one diagonally across the field. When you reach the hedge do not go through the gap but instead turn left. In the far corner go down some steps then turn right between wooden handrails. Come out onto Farnborough Way. Cross using the pedestrian island.

Continue straight down the public footpath through the residential area. Continue along the path between the two wooden fences and out onto Gladstone Road. Walk down Gladstone Road to reach Hartington Close, then turn left to reach Farnborough Hill / Farnborough High Street.

Did you know?

Called 'Fearnbioginga' by the Saxons, the name Farnborough is now a lot easier to get your tongue around! The 'village among the ferns' on the hilt flourished due to its location on the old coach road from London to Hastings. Highwaymen were attracted to the area - a reward was offered in 1789 for the 'mugger' of a Post Boy carrying mail from Bromley to Sevenoaks.

There are bus stops here for routes 261, 358, 402 and R1 to Penge, Pratts Bottom, Bromley, Orpington and St. Pauls Cray.

Turn right after crossing Farnborough Hill / Farnborough High Street and first left down Church Road, keeping on the right-hand side of the road. Continue straight along Church Road joining a raised path alongside it on the right. Go through the gate into the churchyard of St. Giles the Abbott.

Did you know?

The church itself, St. Giles The Abbot, was partly damaged after a storm in 1639 and rebuilt in flint and red brick. The field just south of it was referred to in 1600 as a - long slyp wher - the Butts were wont to be - a place for archery practice. The St. Giles Fair, granted in 1220, is held there to this day.

Walk through the churchyard to the right of the church to a gate on the far side. Go through it into the open field, keep ahead down the left hand edge then into the woods. Follow the path for about 100 metres to Shire Lane. Take care crossing over to the path on the other side into High Elms Country Park. The path soon opens out into a car park.

Did you know?

High Elms Country Park covers over 400 acres of woodlands, orchid-rich grassland and a public golf course. High Elms is something of a misnomer - the tallest trees here are the giant redwoods. They are among the fine specimen trees on the former estate of the Lubbock family. Sir John Lubbock, a Member of Parliament, wealthy banker, author and scientist lived at High

Elms. From a young age he was a close friend of his neighbour, Charles Darwin. Nearby Down House was Charles Darwin's home from 1842 until his death in 1882, and is open to the public.

Leave the car park by the gate by the tourist information board. The BEECHE Centre offers refreshment and toilet facilities.

At the sign to the Visitors Centre turn right and follow the road round to the left, go through a barrier and then follow the tarmac path - ignore the gravel one. Turn left on reaching the top of the path to the formal gardens, go straight on down the hill through the yew avenue and out through the kissing gate at the bottom.

Cross the car park of High Elms Golf Club. Keeping the course on your left, leave the car park via the path to the left of the barrier leading out onto the road. Go up the path on the opposite side of the road - turn immediately left through an old orchard following the line of the road.

Turn right on to a path opposite High Elms Clockhouse going uphill. Cross an area of chalk grassland, full of pyramidal orchids and chirping with grasshoppers in the summer. Cross the golf fairway with care and go into the woods. Go straight on at the crossroads in the path. On reaching North End Lane, turn left. 50 metres up, turn right into Bogey Lane an ancient hedged greenway.

After 60 metres take the steps on the left, going up to a field. Keeping right, follow the path round the edge of the field. Where the path curves sharp left, take the steps on the right back down to the junction of paths. Take the path straight ahead through a corridor of trees which continues along Bogey Lane. You come out onto an idyllic little road called Farthing Street - turn right onto it and carry on down the hill. At the bottom is Shire Lane again. Cross it, then turn sharp left along a path between the hedge and the wire fence which follows the line of the road.

Did you know?

You might see aircraft overhead on their way to Biggin Hill, the famous Battle of Britain airfield and now a popular airport for private planes.

Follow the path around the farm and through the metal kissing gate, then take the path to the right between two hedges. Carry on uphill. On reaching a tarmac track, carry on straight across.

Continue along the path. At the end of it you come out onto Westerham Road - cross to the rightmost of the two paths opposite. The bus stop to the left is served by route 320 to Bromley or Biggin Hill and route R2 to Orpington.

Follow the path a few metres until a crossing of paths. Turn right and to a car park with an island of conifers in the middle of it. Walk straight across the car park, keeping the road on your right, and then go down the steps.

Keep following the path with the pond on your right as it curves left between the upper and lower ponds and then take the first right, down the steps. Follow the path to the left of the lower pond to Fishponds Road and cross it.

There are three paths opposite, take the middle one. Further on keep left. This leads to Lakes Road next to a school. Go straight ahead on Lakes Road until reaching the T-junction with Heathfield Road and the heart of Keston village. Buses to Hayes, Biggin Hill, Bromley or Downe can be accessed from here.

Turn right towards the mini-roundabout and cross Fox Lane. At the second roundabout turn left into West Common Road and then immediately left down onto the track and then immediately right onto a footpath. Continue along into the woods, following the line of the road. Eventually reaching the old stables at Baston Manor, follow the path on the left beside the road. Follow the path along Baston Manor Road and back into the woods, go straight on at Hast Hill, leading to West Wickham Common.

Keep walking and ignore the path to the left - follow the line of the fence to the left. On leaving the wood; cross Hartfield Crescent and carry on up the path past the small car park. At the first fork bear left and at the second bear right, to take the path through the more open earthworks and heath land. Follow the path downhill ignoring smaller paths on each side then branch left arriving at an information board next to Croydon and Gates Green Roads.

This section ends near two huge ancient pollarded oaks. *To continue to the next section cross Gates Green Road and turn left.*

To reach Hayes station from the end of this section cross Croydon Road and head right towards Nash College. Turn left away from Croydon Road following the path with the college on your left. Continue along this path until it meets Warren Road and take the left into Station Hill. Follow the road round to the left and just after the roundabout turn right to reach the station.

TFL Section 4 Gates Green Road, West Wickham Common to Hamsey Green

10 miles (16 kilometres).

PJM Section 5 Hayes to Coombe Lane

Leg 8 Hayes to Coombe Lane

4.91 miles (0.69 mi from Hayes station)

Introduction.

This well-wooded section has a fair amount of climbing, rewarded by some splendid views. The route also passes through commons, gardens and nature reserves.

There are numerous pubs [there are pubs only at Hayes] and you can picnic at many places along the way. There are public toilets and a restaurant at Addington Hills.

Directions.

To reach the start of this section of the LOOP, from the main entrance of Hayes Station, turn right, then left onto Station Hill, then right to stay on Station Hill. Continue until reaching Warren Road. Turn right and continue on to Warren Wood Close with Hayes Common to your left. Keep to the right of the fence after the entrance to the Warren. After Nash College on your right you will join Croydon Road, turn right and cross the road at the junction. You have now joined the LOOP at West Wickham Common.

Did you know?

On West Wickham Common are two gnarled Domesday Oaks which are thought to be over 700 years old. They've been pollarded, which literally means 'beheaded' to encourage new growth.

Walk for 50 metres along Gates Green Road, turn right and take the footpath between house gardens, then passing the car park on the right. Cross the road (Kingsway) and keep going along Church Drive, then continue straight through Coney Hall recreation ground.

Did you know?

The route passes The Greenwich Meridian stone in Coney Hall Recreation Ground, marking 0 degrees longitude, the basis for calculating standard time for Britain and throughout the world.

Cross Layhams Road by the zebra crossing on the right and carry on along the footpath towards the Church of St. John the Baptist. Go into the churchyard, turn right in front of the church

and follow the path through a kissing gate, continue across the field to another kissing gate and to the busy roundabout.

Cross Addington Road and enter Sparrows Den Playing Field, there is a small entrance on the corner of Addington Road and Corkscrew Hill. Turn left and follow the fence for 250 metres. Turn right across the field and head for a bench near the end of the wooden fence.

Do not go straight into the woods but take a small footpath up between two fences, almost at the top go through the gap in the wooden fence on your left and continue right up the path to the wooden garden fences. Follow the track round to the left and continue straight, passing through Spring Park, past the boundary stone and into Threehalfpenny Wood. Ignore all the little paths off to the left and right and keep going to reach a bridleway with houses ahead.

The boundary between the borough of Bromley and the borough of Croydon is between Spring Park and Threehalfpenny Wood. It is marked not only by the boundary stone but also with an ancient bank and ditch boundary, and a line of rare small-leaved lime trees. [This is not at all obvious.]

When open grassland appears on the left, turn left, following the left edge of the open space. Go through a belt of trees. Turn right, then left onto the rightmost of two paths that cross another open, grassy area diagonally. Go into the wood and turn right onto the bridleway (briefly sharing the path with the Waterlink Way). After 100 metres turn left at the holly trees crossing a small ditch. After about 30 metres turn left again.

Following the LOOP waymarker posts through Kennel Wood keeping just within the woodland edge with the houses in sight to the right continue to Shirley Church Road.

Turn right and follow the road for just over half a mile, crossing the road before the first mini-roundabout and keeping left at both mini-roundabouts. Cross straight over Pinewood Close. When you reach a small group of trees with the Shirley Church recreation ground tennis courts on your right turn left into Pinewoods (a wood, not a road), then follow the footpath round the school branching right to Sandpits Road that leads on to Upper Shirley Road, passing the defunct Sandrock pub on the corner.

From here bus route 466 goes to East Croydon stations.

Cross Upper Shirley Road into Oaks Road then turn shortly turn left through a gate, into Addington Hills. Turn right - the path runs parallel with the road for 300 metres, then bears left. Keep on the main path. Eventually it ascends. Climb up the steps, with patches of heather on both sides, to the viewing platform.

Did you know?

Addington Hills is London's largest surviving piece of heathland. The viewing platform provides excellent views over London. On a clear day you can see Windsor Castle, 26 miles away, as well as the arch of Wembley Stadium, The O2 (the former Millennium Dome), Canary Wharf and the Telecom Tower.

Leave the viewing platform along the broad path towards the car park (there is a restaurant here with public toilets). Turn right before the car park and soon bear left, then bear right. After a steep descent, turn left on a footpath that leads to Coombe Lane station on the Tramlink line (with frequent services into Croydon). *To continue, cross the tram lines.*

PJM Section 6 Coombe Lane to Whyteleafe

Leg 9 Coombe Lane to Whyteleafe

7.00 miles (0.63 mi to Whyteleafe station)

Leave Coombe Lane tramstop on the south side (the side of trams going towards Croydon).

Then go left on a path that runs between the tramlines and the road.

Continue until you can cross the road via the lights, then retrace your steps to the junction of Coombe Lane and Ballards Way and go through the gates into the gardens of the late 18th century Heathfield House.

Go past the lodge, take the left fork, and down the steps. At the bottom, pass the pond keeping it on your right and bear right up the steps (taking the right fork) to the car park. Exit the car park into Riesco Drive, turn left and continue to reach Bramley Bank Nature Reserve.

Enter the reserve, bear left and keep on keep straight ahead, initially by the left-hand edge of this ridge-top wood, staying on the main track. Leave the reserve via a gate into an area of open grass and go along the right-hand edge. Turn left, with a metal hand rail on your left, then right with a fence on your right. At the end of the fence turn right and cross another grassy field towards a group of five birch trees, bearing left enter the woods. A short way into the woods turn left. Here the path joins the Vanguard Way.

Did you know?

The Vanguard Way, from Croydon to Seaford in Sussex, was developed by the Vanguards Rambling Club. They got their name from a rambling excursion in 1965 when they had to sit in the guard's van of the train on their return journey.

Follow the path up and over the brow of the hill, then left at the junction. Pass the water tower (on your left), turn right at the corner and continue with the playground on the left, then carry on downhill, taking the first fork right after the playground, and leave the wood. Follow the verge round to Addington Road. There is a crossing approximately 100 metres to the left.

From here the 64 bus route goes to East and West Croydon stations.

To carry on, cross the road and head off down the left-hand side of Ashen Vale.

At the gate and driveway to the modern church on your left, find the grassy path alongside the metal fence of the church and follow this path for 750 metres across two roads to a gate at Selsdon Wood.

Once through the gate and up a few steps, turn right and then immediately left, and follow the path up over the hill, ignoring paths to the left and right until you reach the wooden gate at the end of the wood. With houses on your left and green fields ahead turn right up Baker Boy Lane into Puplet Wood, another ancient woodland.

Did you know?

You have now entered one of the oldest remaining parishes on the LOOP - Chelsham & Farleigh. In spite of being so close to London, this part of the parish is designated as an area of great landscape value.

Eventually the path emerges from the woods and arrives at the entrance to Farleigh Court Golf Club. Cross straight over the entrance to the golf club, leaving the Vanguard Way (which turns left) and go straight ahead.

Follow the often muddy horse path beside the road until it emerges opposite Elm Farm. Cross the road to the path next to Allesley Farm. It runs steeply down the hill and on to Mossyhill Shaw, keeping fences to your right to the bottom of the hill.

Did you know?

Sunny glades in Mossyhill Shaw attract all sorts of butterflies, including the speckled wood and the common blue.

You now have to climb back up. At the top of the slope carry straight on along the field edge following the line of trees and cross a stile at the far side. Turn left along Kingswood Lane, with King's Wood itself on your right. Keep going for another 950 metres, until you come out onto Limpsfield Road. This section ends here. *For the next section, to Coulsdon South station, Croydon, continue ahead along Tithepit Shaw Lane.*

From the bus stop opposite on your right, you can get a 403 bus that can take you to Sanderstead station.

TFL Section 5 Hamsey Green to Coulsdon South station

6 miles (9.6 kilometres).

Introduction.

This very attractive section starts just outside Greater London. It features, in 'quick succession', four commons - Riddlesdown, Kenley Common, Coulsdon Common and Farthing Downs - the latter providing a long ridge walk with fine views and grazing cattle.

Other points of interest include Happy Valley with its rare yellow rattle plant and Devilsden Wood.

It is mostly on level ground with three long climbs (two of them very steep with steps). The terrain is mainly rough tracks, footpaths and grassy fields.

There are pubs and cafes at Hamsey Green, Godstone Road, Kenley Aerodrome, Coulsdon Common and Coulsdon South and an occasional kiosk at Farthing Downs. There are public toilets at Farthing Downs.

Directions.

If coming by train and bus from Sanderstead, leave the station on the Mayfield Road exit (the same side if coming from the London direction) and find the bus stop opposite at the end of station approach. Take bus route 403 (towards Warlingham) and get off at Hamsey Green - listen for the next-stop announcements. It is about a 25 minute ride on this bus.

From the information board on Hamsey Green, follow Tithepit Shaw Lane for 400 metres. Where the road bends left go through the gate and take the path straight ahead across the fields towards Riddlesdown passing a trig point (a concrete block used for surveying) on the left. About 200 metres later, turn sharp left into the valley, keeping the hedge on the right.

Did you know?

The steep tree-covered meadow here is home to the rare chalkhill blue butterfly.

Pass through a kissing gate and turn left onto a sloping path which joins an old Roman road. Go over the railway bridge and down onto Godstone Road.

Did you know?

The Quarry at the foot of Riddlesdown is about 200 years old and was working up until 1967. The impressive railway viaduct over the quarry dates from 1884 when the line from Croydon to East Grinstead and Oxted opened.

Cross the main road, turn left and then turn right into Old Barn Lane. Go over the railway bridge and continue up New Barn Lane and up the stone steps at the end. *To continue, turn right up the wooden steps onto Kenley Common.*

For Whyteleafe station, keep straight ahead after the steps bend left. And carry on straight on along a residential road, which eventually ascends, bends left and descends. Turn right along Beverley Road. At the bottom, turn left. You will shortly reach the railway, with Whyteleafe Station on the left.

PJM Section 7 Whyteleafe to Coulsdon South

Leg 10 Whyteleafe to Coulsdon South

5.21 miles (0.64 mi from Whyteleafe station)

Leave the station on the east side (by platform 1) and turn right, away from the level crossing. Take the second right (Hornchurch Hill), then the first left (Hilltop Road). Keep on this road uphill, round a bend, downhill and then straight on, and carry on along a footpath at the end. Go up the flight of steps on the left onto Kenley Common.

Did you know?

In Twelve Acre on Kenley Common, the pyramidal orchid thrives. These commons came into the City of London's care as a result of the 1878 legislation in response to concern at the rapid disappearance of open spaces in Greater London.

Bear right in front of the first City of London noticeboard and enter the woods. Keep going up the hill just inside the woodland edge. Go straight ahead by the second City of London noticeboard at the cross track until you come to a fork. Take the left fork and keep going until you come out onto an open grassy area of the Common.

Cross the grass on a diagonal and enter the wood. After about 30 metres turn right and follow the fence onto the unmade track which is Golf Road. At the end cross Hayes Lane to the footpath opposite.

Turn immediately right, then left, right, left, left. Finally turn right to reach Betts Mead Recreation Ground. Go through a large gap in the trees to the left and turning left follow the field edge passing the corner of the field, before reaching a narrow road.

Did you know?

Just around the corner to the left is the Wattenden Arms which is full of World War II memorabilia from the adjacent Kenley Aerodrome, including many original photos.

Cross the road and track, climb over the stile, walk along the left edge of the field and head for the domes of the Kenley Observatory.

Did you know?

The earth banks to the left [these are not very obvious] are blast bays that once protected Spitfires. A short diversion off the route to the airfield [turn left in front of Briar Cottage (see below)] will gain you a closer look at the World War 2 blast bays, as well as the RAF monument. You may also see gliders being catapulted skywards, so stay within the fence line!

Cross the stile by the observatory and carry straight on onto the track. Turn right before the entrance to Briar Cottage along the leafy path. Walk between the bollards and down the bridle way to Caterham Drive. Continue up Rydons Lane on to Coulsdon Common. Cross the road and follow the path to Coulsdon Road.

From here bus route 466 can take you to East Croydon station.

Cross the road into Fox Lane and go past the pub to a gate. Follow the tarmac path until it reaches the trees. Continue down the hill into the sloping field. Follow the path across the top part of the field and through some trees to a picnic bench with great views of Happy Valley.

Did you know?

Happy Valley is home to one of Britain's rarest plants - the greater yellow rattle. It's so called because when the plant is ready to set seed, the calyx (a group of sepals) dries out and rattles.

Turn left across Happy Valley, keeping the ancient hedgerow on your left. On the far side of the valley turn right and continue along the edge of the wood bearing left into Devilsden Wood.

Did you know?

Devilsden Wood appears on the earliest maps and is classified as an ancient woodland. Hazel, ash and cherry dominate the lower path of the wood. Yew and beech can be seen further up the slope. In spring bluebells and wood anemones lay a carpet of blue and white.

Come out of the woods after about 600 metres, onto Farthing Downs, turning left up the steep hill past the cottages (there are toilets next to the car park). Turn right and follow the road along Farthing Downs for about one mile past two cattle grids. [You will probably find it preferable to walk on the footpath which runs alongside a few yards on the right.]

Did you know?

Farthing Downs is also an unusual site in that English Heritage have designated it an area of archaeological interest due to its ancient Roman landscape and Saxon tumuli.

At this point take a look at the horizon. There's the familiar sight of the London skyline with Canary Wharf and the transmitter masts at Crystal Palace.

Leave Farthing Downs and continue down the hill to the main road. Turn left and left again into Reddown Road. After about 100 metres turn right to Coulsdon South station, where this section ends.

To continue to the next section, to Banstead Downs, continue past the station.

TFL Section 6 Coulsdon South station to Banstead Downs

4.5 miles (7 kilometres).

PJM Section 8 Coulsdon South to Ewell East

7.71 miles (0.82 mi to Ewell East station)

Leg 11 Coulsdon South to Banstead

5.06 miles (0.32 mi to Banstead station)

Introduction.

This section starts with a long, steady climb through residential roads in Coulsdon and Clockhouse, but after that the route is almost entirely level in attractive countryside, with some fine views towards London.

You pass the distinctive black weatherboard houses of the smallholdings on the Little Woodcote Estate, then open fields lead to The Oaks Park, with its cafe, toilets and nature trail.

This is easy walking on mostly level ground. There are some stiles and kissing gates and only Oaks Park is suitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs.

At Banstead station you can carry on to Section seven to Bourne Hall Park, Ewell.

Directions.

Leave Coulsdon South station by the exit on platform 1 near the footbridge. Cross the car park and go down the steps towards the main road (Brighton Road). Cross at the pelican crossing and turn right.

Did you know?

Before the railway bridge is a milestone - with the distance to Westminster Bridge in Roman numerals and to Brighton in familiar Arabic numerals. This was the site of the one of the first public railways in the world - the Croydon, Merstham and Godstone Railway, which opened in 1805. It was an extension to the Surrey Iron Railway (the first railway). The lines closed in 1846 following competition from the current railway.

Walking under both the rail and road bridges and across Cane Hill Drive, follow the Brighton Road on its left-hand side until you get to Lion Green Road, fork left and carry on past the car park. At the junction next to the post office cross Chipstead Valley Road and bear left up Woodman Road.

The road bends left, and immediately after take a turning onto a footpath on the right. Take the left-hand turn through the metal chicane between the two fences and then go over the railway bridge.

At Woodmansterne Road, turn left, cross over and take the next right with a steady climb - this is a continuation of Woodmansterne Road.

Keep to the pavement on the left and cross Bramley Avenue and keep going up the hill. Keep going across Beechwood Avenue, up to The Mount with a parade of shops.

Buses from the stop by the oak tree go to Coulsdon or Wallington. To carry on, go straight on down the road, past the defunct pub on your left. On the right is an ancient hedgerow. Take the first bridleway off to the right, where the left-hand pavement ends. Along this sunken path there is an old Carshalton Urban District Council boundary marker, dated 1898. At the set of black iron railings go through and bear left. To the right are the Woodcote Smallholdings.

Did you know?

The houses you see here, all in the same style, were built for the troops coming back after World War 1 - to what Prime Minister Lloyd George described as "a land fit for heroes!" The scheme was not very successful but vegetables are still grown on some of the plots today.

From the top of the hill there is a great view of London, including the masts of Crystal Palace.

Follow the hedge line to the left, as the path heads down a gradual slope. Carry straight on, past the wilderness on your right. Go straight on the obvious path and at a crossing of paths continue ahead through the bollards into a tree-covered lane. A few metres further on there is a motorbike barrier on the left with a footpath sign to Carshalton Road. Go through it and head diagonally across the field following the waymarker posts, with a travellers' camp on the right.

At the far side of the field, pass through the barrier and turn left up the road (Carshalton Road). At the field gate on the right-hand side about 180 metres up road (by the 30 mph sign) cross over the stile and keep to the left-hand field edge. At the first corner of the hedge, where there is a signpost, turn right. Walk across the field, heading towards a stile in the tree line opposite. Cross a double stile near the large beech trees entering a field growing lavender and follow the obvious grassy path straight ahead. Before reaching the road (Croydon Lane) cross a stile, then immediately

turn right and follow the path parallel to the road until reaching another stile leading to a light-controlled crossing on the left.

Go straight over into The Oaks Park through the black gate, and follow the path to the left towards the cafe and toilets. Here there is a large LOOP information board.

Did you know?

It was at The Oaks Park - after which the Oaks classic horse race was named - that Lord Derby and Lord Bunbury tossed a coin for who would name the classic horse race on Epsom Downs. If it had gone the other way we'd now have the Epsom Bunbury!

Keep following the tarmac path past the ornamental gardens, as it winds round to the left. When the tarmac ends, keep the barrier on your left. At the next junction, turn left and go downhill. At a couple of steps, fork left past the end of the fence and follow the path down, keeping the edge of what used to be a walled garden on the left. Continue round the wall and eventually turn right onto a track called Fairlawn Road.

Continue on this track until reaching a house on the left and a golf course on the right. Turn left onto a bridleway (called Freedown Lane). Keep following the track, past the stables. Carry straight on along the main track with the high-tech walls of the prison on the right until reaching Sutton Lane at the end of Freedown Lane.

About 80 metres up the road to the left is a bus stop for buses to Banstead or Sutton. This could be a good place to finish on a Sunday, as there are no trains from Banstead station on this day.

To continue, cross the road and go straight down the track onto Banstead Downs and continue straight on past a right-hand turning path.

Did you know?

John Totland, a local author, described the Downs as "being covered with grass finer than persian carpets" and in the eighteenth century considerable quantities were shipped to France to form the lawns of the Palace of Versailles. As you walk across the Downs, look out for Britain's smallest butterfly - the rare small blue, which lives here.

Continue down the hill. At the bottom is a little brick bridge over the railway line - cross it and follow the path round to the left. Eventually the path reaches Banstead Downs Golf Course. This is a public right of way, but it is advisable to agree with the golfers who is doing what, and when. Keep straight on between the trees, then bear left alongside the fairway, then pick up the path that leaves the course by the bridleway sign which heads out onto the A217 Brighton Road, known locally as the 'Mad Mile'.

Cross the road with extreme care at the gap in the central reservation.

At the other side of the road take the entrance drive straight ahead, then turn immediately right by the information board. This leads back to the golf course - follow the path across the fairway and into the trees on the far side.

The next junction in the path marks the end of this section.

To leave the LOOP turn left and keep following the path ahead across yet another fairway towards Banstead Road. Cross and turn left. At the top of the hill is the railway bridge and Banstead station.

On Sundays, when trains do not run from Banstead, the nearest bus service is from Banstead Village - carry on past the station and turn left at the end. Take care crossing the busy dual carriageway as there is no pedestrian phase (green man light). Carry on ahead into Bolters Lane following the road right at the mini-roundabout. Continue up Bolters Lane for about one-third of a mile to a roundabout and turn left here into the High Street where you will find the bus stop. Bus

route 166 will take you to Coulsdon Town station (close to the start of this section), or route S1 to Sutton.

TFL Section 7 Banstead Downs to Bourne Hall Park

3.5 miles (5.5 kilometres).

Leg 12 Banstead to Ewell East

3.85 miles (0.32 mi from Banstead station, 0.82 mi to Ewell East station)

Introduction.

Although one of the shortest and perhaps the least green sections of the LOOP, section seven does have much of interest.

This is easy walking on mostly level ground, but with a few long slopes from Sandy Lane to Holmwood Road and two flights of steps. Sections suitable for the less mobile and pushchairs are Warren Farm and Nonsuch Park.

Points of interest on this walk are Warren Farm, which is a Woodland Trust Reserve, Nonsuch Park, Nonsuch Mansion, Bourne Hall Park and the old village jail at Ewell.

There is a cafe and toilets at Nonsuch Mansion and other places to eat along the way. At Bourne Hall Park you can carry on to Section eight to Kingston upon Thames.

Directions.

From Banstead station, turn left into Banstead Road and head down the hill. After about 100 metres, cross the road at the Banstead Road sign and go down the footpath just before Cuddington Park Close. After about 10 metres turn right at the fork and arrive onto the fairway of Banstead Downs Golf Course. Follow the path diagonally across it and into the bushes on the far side. At the first 'crossroads' of paths go straight on (do not bear left) and turn left at the London LOOP finger post at the next junction of paths.

On Sundays, when trains do not run to Banstead, use bus route S1 from Sutton station to Banstead Village. It is a one-mile walk from here to the start of this section. From the bus terminus, head forward and turn right at the roundabout and follow road signs to Epsom and Banstead station.

Follow the path over two cross-tracks and on rejoining the golf course follow the line of trees towards the houses. Take the path between them, cross the road and head straight along Sandy Lane.

At Cuddington Way, turn left and after 150 metres or so turn right down Cheyham Way. At the junction with Northey Avenue turn left again and go down the hill, crossing onto the right-hand side of the road. There is a roundabout at the bottom by St. Paul's Church, follow the pavement round to the right and cross Cheam Road (A232). Go down the steps in front and turn right, or to avoid the steps follow the pavement on this side of Cheam Road.

This road is made up of the old Cheam Road in the middle with a Nonsuch Walk on either side of it.

Turn left into Bramley Road. Cross Buckland and Holmwood Roads and keep straight ahead under the railway bridge to get to Warren Farm. Follow the main track straight ahead.

Did you know?

Warren Farm is a 53-acre site given to the Woodland Trust Reserve in 1994. It has good views across the site and towards Ewell. The young woodland and scrub on the site provide good habitats for flora and fauna that are not generally found in suburban areas.

After about 100 metres there is a path to the left which cuts across the meadow towards some new houses. This goes to Ewell East station. To get to the station, walk to the end of the path and go straight ahead along Seymour Avenue that becomes Nonsuch Court Avenue to Cheam Road. Turn left and cross at the pedestrian crossing by the pub. The station is just across the road.

PJM Section 9 Ewell East to Malden Manor

6.12 miles (0.82 mi from Ewell East station, 0.19 mi to Malden Manor station)

Leg 13 Ewell East to Ewell West

2.49 miles (0.82 mi from Ewell East station, 0.28 mi to Ewell West station)

Leave the station on the west side (by platform 1), turn right and walk down to Cheam Road. Turn left then right into Nonsuch Court Avenue. Keep straight ahead to the far end of Seymour Avenue. Go through a kissing gate, and carry on straight ahead along a footpath across a meadow. On the far side, turn left.

Follow the track straight ahead into the trees and across the two concrete tracks.

Did you know?

This is the Ghost Road. Many houses were due to be built here but building was stopped by the Second World War and by the introduction of London's green belt.

The track leads to Nonsuch Park - Henry VIII's hunting ground. There's a tearoom in the Nonsuch Mansion ahead of you and toilets adjoining it. The Mansion, probably on the site of the Keeper's Lodge of the original palace, dates from the late 18th or early 19th century and the architect was Jeffery Wyatt who also worked at Windsor Castle.

To carry on, turn left down The Avenue, a tarmac road lined with horse chestnut trees. Continue until reaching Castlemaine Lodge on the right.

Did you know?

The lodge is named after Barbara Castlemaine, mistress of Charles II who was given the estate in 1670. Nine years later she had fallen into debt through gambling and the estate was broken up and sold.

A detour to the right just past Castlemaine Lodge will lead to concrete markers showing the site of Nonsuch Palace.

Did you know?

Henry VIII built Nonsuch Palace to outshine anything else in Europe and spared no expense doing it; it had cost him £24,536 - a huge sum for the 16th century. Myth says that there was to be none such as this palace in the whole world - hence the name!

Take the path straight ahead after the lodge, past a concrete pillar - number 2.

These pillars lead you to the remains of Henry's Banqueting House, built in 1540.

Did you know?

During hunting in the Little Park, the Banqueting House would have been used as a grandstand to watch the sport - the deer were possibly driven past it - and as a place for light refreshments, for that was the meaning of a banquet in the sixteenth century.

Fork right after about 10 metres onto a dirt track and continue past pillars 3 and 4. Turn right at pillar 5, past the site of the Banqueting House. Keep the house on your left, then turn left round

the edge of the grass and follow the path round to the right down the hill. Go down the steps to the busy road. This is the A24 Ewell Bypass. Cross the road and turn right. After a couple of metres go down the steps onto the path known as Vicarage Lane.

At the end of Vicarage Lane is Church Street which passes by Ewell Castle School, a castellated early Victorian building. Keep straight ahead along Church Street.

At the end of Church Street turn right into the High Street. Cross at the pelican crossing and pass through the large white archway into Bourne Hall Park. Follow the path around the lake, with the space-age Bourne Hall Museum and Library. Cafe and toilets are on the left.

The end of the lake is the end of this section. There is a London LOOP information board here and a finger post with directions to the station. *The next section continues to Kingston-upon-Thames.*

To go to Ewell West station turn left, fork right and keep the brick wall to the right and take the last door through the wall. Leaving the park, turn left and then bear right up Chessington Road. Ahead is the station on the right.

TFL Section 8 Bourne Hall Park, Ewell to Kingston Bridge

7.3 miles (12 kilometres)

Leg 14 Ewell West to Malden Manor

4.19 miles (0.28 mi from Ewell West station, 0.19 mi to Malden Manor)

Introduction.

The waters and woods of this section have something for everyone; you'll see scenery that inspired Pre-Raphaelite painters, overhanging willows and the gentle curves of the river.

This is an easy walk on mostly level ground. The paths alongside the Hogsmill can be muddy. The section from Berrylands station to Kingston is suitable for the less mobile and pushchairs.

There are stations near the route at Maldon Manor and Berrylands; all the trains are to and from Waterloo.

Points of interest on this walk are the Hogsmill River, the Saxon Coronation Chair and the medieval Clattern Bridge.

There are cafes and pubs at both ends of the route, but no public toilets.

Directions.

To reach the LOOP from Ewell West station (platform 2 side) follow the station approach road ahead and turn left, and keep walking along Chessington Road. Where the road curves round to the left, cross the road and go through the arch in the brick wall. Turn left, and left again at the first T junction, and follow the path to the pond and then turn left again to join the LOOP.

On leaving Bourne Hall Park, cross Chessington Road and turn right alongside a pond.

Immediately before Kingston Road and the traffic lights turn left off the road, up the metalled path. Keep following the path straight ahead. Just past Upper Mill, turn left and after you've crossed the Hogsmill River, turn right and keep going. At the next fork, go straight on and over the humpback bridge.

Did you know?

Sir John Everett Millais, the great Pre-Raphaelite painter chose the Hogsmill River for his famous painting of the drowned Ophelia - Shakespeare's tragic heroine from Hamlet, who committed suicide in a river. The painting is now in London's Tate Gallery.

Cross another bridge, and keep going. At Lower Mill the path comes out onto a boardwalk over the river, and through a tunnel under the railway. After the tunnel, turn right and re-cross the river, and immediately after that turn left off the metalled path, and keep following the river. After about 150 metres the Hogsmill is joined by the Green Lanes Stream, so follow the combined rivers.

Ignore the stepping stones across the river and continue alongside the river on the narrow path straight ahead. Pass the water treatment works on the right, keeping the river on the left. About 150 metres beyond the works, is a made-up path and a bridge over the river. Cross it and follow the path with the river on your right.

Cross the river at the next bridge by the playground and continue along the other side. After a while, the route meets a tarmac path crossing from the left. Carry straight on alongside the river to reach Ruxley Lane.

Cross Ruxley Lane and go down the metalled path the other side. Carry straight on along the path by the river.

Did you know?

Spare a thought for the locals of a couple of hundred years ago, whose idyllic peace was periodically shattered by one of the many gunpowder mills exploding. The Upper Mill is the sole survivor of the many mills that were once along here and in Kingston.

Keep going, past a bridge and some houses on the other side of the river and after a while another playground. Ignore the next bridge and keep going straight ahead with the river on your left. Eventually the route reaches a red brick bridge taking a major road (Kingston Road) over the river.

Just up the road to the right is a bus stop, from which buses can take you back to Bourne Hall Park (route 406) on the far side of the road or to Kingston, or Surbiton railway stations (routes 408 or 418) on this side of the road.

To carry on turn right on Kingston Road to cross the road at the lights, then go back towards and across the river and go through the metal gates on the right. Walk down the path ahead, with the river on the right. You'll see Japanese Knotweed, growing here - unless nipped in the bud, it grows incredibly quickly, covering huge areas, and wipes out all other plants.

The path comes out through a kissing gate, onto a metalled track. Turn right over the bridge, and on reaching the main road, cross and walk up Cromwell Road opposite. Turn left at Grafton Road and then left down Royal Avenue. Go through the little barrier and go straight on past St. Mary's Road. Where Barrow Hill meets Highdown, cross over, go past the metal barrier straight ahead, and down the unmade track.

At the road, cross over and turn right. After about 50 metres turn left towards the church of St. John the Baptist, Old Malden.

Did you know?

Pause to look at the patchwork fabric of the church - medieval flint on the chancel and 17th century brick for the tower and nave. The church goes back to Saxon times and the 'newest' part - another nave and chancel was added in 1875. The name Malden comes from the Saxon "Mael dun" - cross on the hill and it was probably this church which gave the area its name.

Carry on past the church. *To continue, turn left down the hill at the wooden fence.*

For Malden Manor station, turn right at the wooden fence. When you come out onto a small parking area, go straight across and follow the path opposite to reach a residential road. Turn right, and then left at the T junction. Go under the bridge, and Malden Manor station is on your right.

PJM Section 10 Malden Manor to Fulwell

7.94 miles (0.19 mi from Malden Manor station, 0.34 mi to Fulwell station)

Leg 15 Malden Manor to Berrylands

3.42 miles (0.19 mi from Malden Manor station)

Turn left out of the station, and left under the railway bridge. Take the next right into Percy Gardens, then immediately the path on the left. This emerges onto a small parking area. Take the footpath opposite, with the wooden fence on the right. Turn right by the wooden gate.

Follow the track downhill to the river.

Ignore the metal bridge, and keep going on the right hand side of the river. Follow the track under the railway bridge, and about 100 metres beyond cross a tarmac path.

Go straight ahead, taking the left-hand fork close to the river. After a while there's an open grass area - the Hogsmill Open Space.

Keep following the path to the right of the river.

At the metal gate turn left onto Malden Way and head for the subway. Bus route 265 to Tolworth station (this side of the road) or to Putney (other side) can be caught from the bus stops here. Take the subway under Malden Way and on the far side of the road head back towards the river.

Cross Elmbridge Avenue and then turn left through the gate in the fence just after the apartments on the left. Continue with the Hogsmill River on the right. Ignore the wooden footbridge on the right. Cross the wooden footbridge over the Surbiton Stream and at the cycle track, turn left past the high railings and walk up Surbiton Hill Park.

You can get bus route K2 to Surbiton, Hook or Kingston from the bus stops here.

Continue along Surbiton Hill Park to the roundabout. Turn right at the roundabout, passing The Berry pub and head along Chiltern Drive. At the bottom of the hill is Berrylands station. *To continue, go under the railway bridge.*

Leg 16 Berrylands to Kingston

3.86 miles (0.38 mi to Kingston station)

Turn left out of the station. If you were on platform 2, this will take you under the railway.

Go straight on, down the metalled track (Lower Marsh Lane). There is a large water treatment works on the right followed by a cemetery on the left.

At the end of Lower Marsh Lane, turn right along Villiers Road keeping The Duke of Buckingham pub on the left.

Walk past the recreation ground on the right and cross over the river. Cross the road by the school and continue along the other side of the road, turning left down the next metalled path, Swan Path.

At the end of the alley (at the bridge) turn left, then right onto the Three Bridges Path and keep the river on the right. Pass the Stanley Picker Gallery on the left, cross the next bridge and turn

right. The path comes out onto Springfield Road - cross it, turn left then right up Denmark Road. After 100 metres take a right, back to the riverbank.

Keep following the path alongside the river. At Penrhyn Road, cross over at the pelican crossing and turn right. Follow the road round to the left and take the next crossing over Kingston Hall Road. Just ahead before the bridge, turn left. Walk under the Council offices and keep going until reaching the High Street. To visit the Saxon Coronation Stone, take a short detour by turning right.

Did you know?

The 'Chair of Majesty' was used to crown seven Saxon Kings of England, starting with Edward the Elder in 900. It is possibly how Kingston got its name. The Stone was later used as a mounting block for horsemen in the Market Place, but in 1850 it was set, with great ceremony, on a special base and surrounded by ornamental railings.

Back on the route go over the crossing, turn right, cross the bridge and take the steps down to the left.

Did you know?

You'll see the Medieval 'Clattern' Bridge - the oldest bridge in Surrey still in use. Theoretically it received its name from the sound horses hooves made while crossing it.

Head straight on until reaching the River Thames and turn right towards Kingston Bridge.

The finger-posts from here to the bridge are white on black rather than the standard LOOP ones that have been along the route so far.

Did you know?

The author Jerome K Jerome, in 'Three Men in a Boat', says that Caesar crossed the river here, adding, "Caesar, like, in later years, Elizabeth, seems to have stopped everywhere: only he was more respectable than good Queen Bess; he didn't put up at the public-houses."

Follow the river to the steps and either take these or the slope to the right. This section ends at the top of the steps.

To get to Kingston station, turn right and go straight on past John Lewis and The Bentall Centre then turn immediately left up Fife Road which curves round to the right, at the end of which is the station.

TFL Section 9 Kingston Bridge to Hatton Cross

8.5 miles (13.5 kilometres).

Leg 17 Kingston to Hampton Wick

0.89 miles (0.38 mi from Kingston station, 0.27 mi to Hampton Wick station)

Introduction.

This section of the LOOP features easy walking with some extensive green stretches on entirely level ground, mostly on grass and rough footpaths. There is one stile. There are cafes and pubs along the route.

Points of interest on this section are Bushy Park, the Diana Fountain, Waterhouse Woodland Gardens, Crane Park, the Shot Tower and Hounslow Heath.

Directions.

If you are starting from Kingston station, upon exiting the station use the pedestrian crossing immediately ahead of you and continue ahead down Fife Road. Just past Marks & Spencer the road bends left into a pedestrianised section of the road. Take this to the end and turn right. Continue ahead along Clarence Street to Kingston Bridge.

Starting from the eastern (town) side of Kingston Bridge, cross over the River Thames. Continue straight and then bear left to pass a roundabout on the right. Just after the World War II memorial cross Hampton Court Road via the pedestrian crossing and then turn left.

Turn right into Church Grove. Continue up the road to the Victorian St. John the Baptist church on the right.

For Hampton Wick station, turn right into St Johns Road just after the church. At the end of the road, turn left past the Forester's Arms. Hampton Wick station is further along, on the right.

Leg 18 Hampton Wick to Fulwell

3.79 miles (0.27 mi from Hampton Wick station, 0.34 mi to Fulwell station)

Leave the station on the west side, by platform 2, and turn left along Teddington Road. After the Forester's Arms, turn right into St John's Road. At the end turn left round the church.

Opposite the church is a small wrought iron gate (known as Church Grove Gate) in the brick wall. Go through the gate to enter the impressive horse chestnut avenue of Bushy Park. Keep ahead then go through the big gate at the end of the track to expose a large expanse of open space.

Take the rough path that forks right towards the corner of the cricket ground. At the corner, cross the gravel track and take the left-most of the two paths through the long grassy fields towards the Oval Plantation.

Aim towards the left-hand edge of the wooded area. Bear right on reaching it and head through the bracken ferns towards Heron Pond. At the pond, turn right following the path keeping the pond on your left.

Did you know?

Bushy Park is the second largest of the Royal Parks. Henry VIII originally stocked Bushy Park with deer and it became an important Royal hunting ground in Tudor times.

Keep close to the edge of the pond, sometimes on the path and sometimes on grass, crossing a culvert and two boardwalks. When you reach a small crisscrossed footbridge, keep ahead through the bracken with the small watercourse on the left. The broad grass track soon ends at a white railing with fence posts.

Bear left at the railing and head towards a large old water pump on a plinth in the trees. Continue on through the trees to emerge at Chestnut Avenue, with a single row of horse chestnut and four rows of lime trees which are from an earlier planting of 1622, during the reign of James I.

Did you know?

This mile-long avenue was conceived by Sir Christopher Wren. The horse chestnut trees in Chestnut Avenue flower in the late spring.

To visit the Diana Fountain, turn left and walk along Chestnut Avenue. There are toilets beyond the Fountain to the left.

To continue cross directly over Chestnut Avenue and keep on through the trees to emerge at another white railing. It is here that the watercourse emerges from the other side of the road after it

has been diverted underground. To meet up with this watercourse again as it disappears under the fence ahead, continue on the path just to its left then turn right to go through an unobtrusive wooden gate leading to the Waterhouse Woodland Gardens. For toilets, turn right to reach The Pheasantry Welcome Centre.

Turn left to follow the winding path with the waterway on the right, go straight on at the first intersection and bearing right at the second. The path eventually ends at a fenced area where there is a gate to exit. On emerging at the clearing of trees, go straight to meet another gate leading into the next section of the Waterhouse Woodland Gardens beside the little keeper's hut.

Follow the path straight ahead past two junctions on the left, and bear right at the fork. Go over a footbridge to reach a small lily pond and beyond it a cottage called River Lodge. Follow the path rightward around the pond and continue past River Lodge.

Keep straight on beside the fence line on the broad track through the trees. Go through the wooden gate to reach a crossing path known as Cobbler's Walk.

The route goes right here but it is worth making a short diversion leftward to see the Longford River. This is actually a canal, dug by hand over nine months in 1639 and it was an outstanding feat of engineering for its day.

To continue turn right and go through the gate to expose the vast open fields then turn left to follow the small path beside the fence line. Keep on this path as it heads to the bottom corner then turns right to pass nearby to Upper Lodge and meet the paved park road.

Turn left at the roadside and follow it until it makes a left turn. Bear right here onto the paved path and keep ahead, passing a small pond to the left.

At the end of the path exit Bushy Park through the metal gate and continue along the gravel track to meet Laurel Road on the left and Kings Drive ahead. Follow this road on its right to meet the busier Hampton Road ahead.

If you want to get a bus back to Kingston from here, cross the road and turn left to find the bus stop - route 285 (the R68 will take you to Twickenham and Richmond).

To continue, cross Hampton Road and take King's Road ahead, then first left into Connaught Road. *To continue, cross Wellington Road.*

For Fullwell station, turn right at Wellington Road and right into Clonmel Road, taking the footpath almost immediately on your left, which leads to Fullwell station.

PJM Section 11 Fulwell to Hatton Cross

Leg 19 Fulwell to Hatton Cross

6.89 miles (0.34 mi from Fulwell station, 0.12 mi to Hatton Cross station)

Leave the station on the south side (by platform 2) and turn right alongside the railway. At the end of the path, bear right then left along Wellington Road. Take the third right, which is Burton's Road.

Head straight down Burton's Road almost opposite. The road crosses a railway line and then continues following the trees of Fulwell Golf Course on the right.

Eventually Burton's Road ends to join up with the busy Uxbridge Road. Cross over Burton's Road here and a few metres along is a metal gate on the right. Go through the gate and follow the path, forking left and then right to reach an overgrown playing field, and continue in the same direction towards the large building of the golf club. Bear right onto a gravel track which follows a green metal picket fence line.

Keep on the track as it turns into a paved path and veers right around the car park. Exit the golf club by the metal gate to meet Staines Road. Cross Staines Road and turn right. (From the bus stops on Staines Road you can get routes 290 or 490 to Twickenham).

Turn left into Court Close Avenue and then right into River Meads Avenue. Take the next left onto Bye Ways and then right along Willow Way to arrive at Hospital Bridge Road.

Turn left and follow the roadside as it goes over the River Crane. Once over the river, turn left a short distance along to enter Crane Park.

Leave the path and trek left across the grass to find another path following close to the river's edge. Bear right and follow the Crane flowing on the left as the route goes through a subway under the Great Chertsey Road. Once through, the track divides. Take the track veering left to continue close to the river's edge. Keep alongside the river, bearing left at every fork.

After a while the River Crane splits and the track goes rightwards up the short incline to expose a very interesting structure known as the Shot Tower.

Did you know?

The Shot Tower is a listed building and the remaining skeleton of an ancient gunpowder mill which was built in 1766. With 87 steps to the top of the tower, fabulous views of the tree canopy and beyond can be seen.

Keep alongside the river until a tarmac track joins from the right and you see a footbridge on the left. Bear left onto the track (not over the footbridge and not along the path between wooden fences). Eventually the path veers right to leave the park and arrives at the roadside of the A314 Hanworth Road. Turn right and continue until a pedestrian crossing enables you to cross. Follow the roadside as it passes the defunct Duke of York pub on the right and Hounslow Cemetery on the left and then heads over the railway line.

Just after crossing Simpson Road turn immediately left into the open recreation ground and follow its left edge to the bottom corner. Take the track through the trees in the corner.

Go past a stile and bear right along the wide grassed track into the open space of Hounslow Heath Nature Reserve.

Did you know?

Hounslow Heath is the last surviving remnant of a once huge heath that covered most of south-west Middlesex.

The path goes slightly left and soon a small bench comes into view. Turn left shortly before the bench to follow the broad grass track as it goes over several crossings of tracks and then eventually reaches a T junction. Turn right here.

Follow the track straight on until eventually the country becomes more open on the right. When the main track starts to diverge from the trees on the left, take the track going slightly left through the trees, and then turn left past a kissing gate and left again to follow the bottom of the gully with a golf course above on the right. Go straight ahead, ignoring the track leading off to the left.

Continue through a small section of trees and over a footbridge. Ignore the path left and continue, to meet the metal barrier and bridge going over the River Crane. Turn right once over the bridge to follow the path, always keeping the Crane close by on the right.

Keep along this path for some time until it eventually stops at a road bridge. Turn left just before the bridge and exit the woods via the metal barriers. This road is Staines Road and to the left here is a petrol station. Cross directly over Staines Road, turn right and then just before the bridge

turn left between the metal barriers to enter Donkey Wood. Follow the path as it goes over two footbridges over a weir.

Follow the main path rightward as it goes over another wooden footbridge and continues. The path opens into a clearing with a lone bench and then the River Crane comes into view on the right. The path soon becomes a wooden boardwalk leading over a swampy part beside the Crane. At the end of the boardwalk continue over a small metal footbridge, through a kissing gate and then under a road bridge. Turn immediately left up the steps to the roadside, at the top of the steps turn left again to cross the bridge and the river.

Go through the gap in the fence to the left into a wooded area with the river on the left. Eventually the path opens out at the busy roadside of the A30 Great South West Road.

Turn left along the A30 until you get to traffic lights. Cross here. *To continue to the next section turn right.*

For Hatton Cross station, turn left and continue along the other side of the road to the next junction – Hatton Cross station is just across the road.

TFL Section 10 Hatton Cross to Hayes & Harlington

3.5 miles (6 kilometres).

PJM Section 12 Hatton Cross to West Drayton

7.33 miles (0.12 mi from Hatton Cross station, 0.16 mi to West Drayton station)

Leg 20 Hatton Cross to Hayes & Harlington

4.29 miles (0.12 mi from Hatton Cross station, 0.17 mi to Hayes & Harlington station)

Introduction.

Despite the heavy traffic in this area and the multitude of planes arriving and leaving Heathrow, this shorter LOOP section includes much pleasant walking.

It is entirely on level ground, except for a spiral ramp onto the firm canal towpath. There is also a narrow rough path beside the River Crane.

Much of the route runs alongside the River Crane and a canal towpath taking in the former grounds of the Earl of Berkeley's mansion and the lush meadows of Cranford Park.

There are pubs and cafes at Hayes, and public toilets at Cranford Park Information Centre [except it's never open].

Directions.

From Hatton Cross tube station, leave by the exit on the right leading to the Great South West Road, A30 (on the opposite side to the bus station). Once at the roadside of this busy dual carriageway turn left and cross at the pedestrian lights.

Continue straight ahead alongside the dual carriageway. The impressive British Airways hangers soon come into view on the left at Heathrow, one of the world's busiest airports.

The Eastern Perimeter service road comes in from the left to run parallel with the A30, with the footpath separating the two. Where the service road begins to curve away from the footpath again, cross over and follow the service road to the left of the large concrete wall.

Once at the small roundabout, continue straight ahead, ignoring the road to the left. Walk through the red and white barriers and continue over the small bridge which goes over the quietly flowing River Crane. After a few metres turn left to enter the River Crane Park.

Did you know?

The park and water meadows provide an important habitat for wildlife and the area is managed to maintain the sites diversity. Nesting, roosting and hibernating sites have been provided for birds, bats, amphibians and reptiles. Despite the low-flying aircraft overhead there is a chance that you will catch a glimpse of a kingfisher or a green woodpecker.

Continue straight ahead through the barriers and past the Crane Bank information sign on the left. Following the reed-filled River Crane on the left, keep to the gravel path as it veers around to the left and then to the right passing occasional benches along the way. Go through the second barrier before turning left onto the gravel path in the open space.

The path soon veers right around trees to meet a third metal barrier on the left. Go through this barrier and leave the park between the houses. At the road, turn left and then immediately right along Waye Avenue, and right again at the far end. All of these houses have double-glazed windows because they are right under the flight path of Heathrow Airport.

Turn left at the small three-way junction to meet the A4, Bath Road. Buses on Bath Road run to Hounslow West and Hounslow East tube stations, Southall station and Greenford tube station.

To continue, cross Bath Road via the crossing. Once on the other side, turn left and keep straight ahead along the Bath Road. Cross straight over the High Street and continue over Cranford Bridge.

Did you know?

The lands of the former parish of Cranford once surrounded this area on both sides of the River Crane. There was a bridge at this particular crossing of Bath Road before 1274 and it was considered a 'principal highway' in 1593. This lovely brick three-arched bridge was built in 1776.

Where the green railings end (just before the slip road) turn right and enter under the arch into the Berkeley Meadows. Follow the path past the children's play area. On the right is the River Crane again under a single arch brick bridge.

At the end of the grass strip go through the green kissing gate. Cross the road (Cranford Lane) carefully on the tight bend then turn right to follow the road. At the concrete kerb a few metres along turn left into the trees.

Fork right and follow the small path which ambles through the trees and over a small sleeper bridge. Then veer left and follow the Crane flowing on the right. Soon the path widens into a broad grassy strip and then opens into a large open field which is Cranford Park.

Did you know?

Cranford Park was where the Berkeley family had their ancestral home from 1618-1918, in Cranford Manor House. In 1945 the decrepit house was demolished and the 180 acre park came under the management of Hounslow Council.

Follow the grass edge along to the right, parallel to the river. When you reach a fork, whose right branch leads to a footbridge which goes over the Crane, take the left branch which goes diagonally across the open field towards the left end of wooden fences.

Did you know?

To the left of the fence is the 18th Century ha-ha, a sunken wall and ditch that separated the gardens of the Earl of Berkeley's mansion from his 1,000-acre park. These types of 'walls' were created to give the impression from the main house of a continuous strip of land beyond the boundary.

Go through the gate and across the car park. Straight ahead is the ancient 16th century church of St. Dunstan's, with beautiful Georgian brickwork and some interesting graves.

Did you know?

A church has stood here since the Saxon times and was once the chapel of the Knights Templar. The Berkeley family claimed ownership of this church by placing the Berkeley coat-of-arms in stone on the east end. The tower of flint is topped by brick and the whole nave was rebuilt in brick by the Dowager Duchess of Berkeley after a fire in 1710. Nearby is all that remains of a curved 17th century crinkle crinkle wall (also known as a serpentine wall). These walls were built only one brick thick to save materials but because of its shape they were very strong and durable.

Turn left in front of the church and go straight ahead through the kissing gate. Immediately on the left is the information centre for Cranford Country Park (probably closed).

Did you know?

The beautifully restored 18th century stable blocks here are a reminder of what once was the headquarters of the Berkeley Hunt. This is the most impressive and complete part of the remaining buildings of Cranford Park House and gives some idea of the scale of the property.

Go through the further archway of the stables and continue straight ahead to pass under the M4 via the St. Dunstan's subway.

Did you know?

In 1960 plans were made to route the M4 through the Parish, severing St. Dunstan's Church from the north of the Parish. Failed campaigning by the church to have the M4 re-routed ended in this pedestrian sub-way being built to enable parishioners to attend church.

On the other side of the subway, turn immediately right and follow the path which passes through a pleasant area of young woodland known as Dog Kennel Covert. Take the fork leftward to veer away from the M4. Keep following the gravel path straight ahead, ignoring all other grass paths.

Leave the park through the kissing gate and head straight up the small Watersplash Lane.

Turn right at the main road (North Hyde Road) and follow it to the large roundabout. At the first set of traffic lights cross North Hyde Road by the pedestrian crossing then follow the footpath and cycle path as it bears straight up the hill beside the dual carriageway (not through the underpass), crossing over the famous Grand Union Canal.

Did you know?

This canal opened in 1805 and began as the Grand Junction Canal, flowing to join the Thames at Brentford (on the right) and towards Birmingham (on the left).

Turn left after crossing the Grand Union Canal to follow the ramp as it winds down to the canal towpath.

For a very short diversion, if you turn left here you will see the gleaming whiteness of Bull's Bridge. In 1794, long before the main line of the Grand Junction Canal was complete, a branch

from this point to Paddington was agreed to be created so London could join directly with the national canal network.

Turn right at the bottom of the ramp to follow the canal towards Birmingham. Go under the railway bridge. Continue as the path veers up over a brick bridge and then back down onto the towpath.

Did you know?

The smell of burnt coffee used to linger in the air - not surprisingly as the Nestle Coffee Factory was here on the left. This factory opened in 1938, one year after the world's first instant coffee was invented by Nestle. It has now been demolished.

This section ends at the road bridge that crosses the canal. *The next section, to Uxbridge, continues along the towpath.*

To leave the LOOP, take the steps up to the road to meet the Old Crown Pub. Turn left and go over the canal via the bridge and continue straight ahead through the roundabout. Hayes & Harlington station is on the left.

TFL Loop 11 Hayes & Harlington to Uxbridge

7.5 miles (12 kilometres)

Leg 21 Hayes & Harlington to West Drayton

3.38 miles (0.17 mi from Hayes & Harlington station, 0.16 miles to West Drayton station)

Introduction.

This is a good section for enthusiasts of waterside walking, as over two-thirds follows canal, river or lake. It's also an easy walk on mostly level ground with a few short climbs. Footpaths along the River Colne can be muddy and uneven.

The walk starts at Hayes & Harlington station (with trains from Paddington) and finishes at Uxbridge on the Tube; along the route there is a station at West Drayton on the line from Paddington.

Points of interest on this walk are the Grand Union Canal and Little Britain Lake.

There are cafes and pubs along the route, but no public toilets.

Directions.

Leave the station, and turn right down Station Road. Go straight over the mini roundabout, cross the Grand Union Canal bridge then turn right at the end of the bridge into Western View. Take the steps on the right which lead down to the towpath of the Grand Union Canal and the London LOOP. Turn right at the bottom of the steps and go back under the bridge.

Did you know?

The picturesque Grand Union Canal links London to Birmingham, which supposedly has more canals than Venice! It's the longest single canal in Britain stretching 135 miles.

Keep following the towpath. On the right is a traditional cast-iron milepost saying 'Braunston 87 miles.'

Did you know?

The reason behind the mileposts was to tell approaching boaters the distances to the end of the canal and to assist in the collection of tolls. The GJC letters on the milepost stands for the Grand

Junction Canal, the original title of the ambitious 93 mile long canal approved by Act of Parliament in 1793 to link Braunston in Northamptonshire with Brentford in London.

Keep following the path under a modern brick bridge.

Further along on the right is the entrance to Lake Farm Country Park - home and sanctuary to wildlife such as birds, butterflies and insects on 60 acres of open meadow.

Continue under another modern brick bridge which has Dawley Road running over it, and then under another older bridge. About a hundred yards along is another milepost (facing away from you) saying 'Braunston 86 miles.'

At the milepost turn right, through a metal kissing gate and follow the path straight ahead. This leads into Stockley Park, the home of some of the country's highest hi-tech companies.

Did you know?

Stockley Park was created in the 1980s from old brickfields which were used as a dumping ground. Today it consists of a business park, country park and golf course. Over 140,000 trees and shrubs have been planted to establish the wooded areas. You will see goat or 'pussy' willow as you walk down the path. The catkins were used as Easter decorations on Palm Sunday to represent the palm fronds thrown in front of Jesus as he rode into Jerusalem.

At the Furzeground Way road, cross straight over and turn left past the hedge. Follow the path round to the right along the avenue of lime trees. At the break in the avenue, where a track crosses it, keep going up the avenue of trees. At the next fork, turn right to leave the avenue.

At the junction of several paths take the second left into the business area, between a modern building on the left and an equally modern golf club house on the right. Immediately past the club house on the right, and just before a car park, take the fork to the right.

Keep following the path with the golf course on the right. Ignore the next right hand fork and keep going straight ahead. Follow the path over the 'A'-frame bridge crossing Stockley Road. Take the track straight up the hill.

Did you know?

The small hill on the right is known as the Viewpoint - for obvious reasons. From it there are amazing views across Colne Valley.

Pass the brow of the hill and branch left, follow the gravel path heading around to the left. Keep following the path back into the trees. Fork left and follow a line of trees on the right. Bear right before the last tree in the line. At the next fork, bear right twice to reach metal kissing gates which lead onto Horton Road and into an industrial area.

Turn right and follow the road around. Keep going across Stone Close and Crown Way on the right. Turn left onto Horton Bridge Road, past the defunct Brickmakers Arms (a reminder of the trade that once flourished here) and at the bridge, head down the steps on the right, back onto the Grand Union towpath.

Did you know?

To avoid cutting off all the roads, lanes and paths, many bridges were built. Horton Bridge is number 193. They were numbered from Birmingham, so it's the 193rd bridge from that end of the canal - an average of a bridge every two thirds of a mile.

To leave the LOOP turn right at the next bridge (through the kissing gate) and up onto Horton Road. Turn left onto the High Street, and cross the canal bridge. At the mini roundabout is a sign for West Drayton Rail station - the entrance is left here. Bus 350 will take you back to Hayes & Harlington from here, or 222, U1, U3 and U5 to Uxbridge (U3 also goes to Heathrow Central).

PJM Section 13 West Drayton to Denham

8.09 miles (0.16 mi from West Drayton station, 0.86 mi to Denham station)

Leg 22 West Drayton to Uxbridge

4.69 miles (0.16 mi from West Drayton station, 0.46 mi to Uxbridge station)

Turn right out of the station. Go straight ahead past the mini-roundabout. Turn right immediately after the canal, then down the steps and right again onto the towpath.

Continue along the towpath under the bridge, and the next one too (bridge 191). Soon after passing the large Tesco superstore on your right, cross the canal using the black bridge, which leads up another canal known as the 'Slough Arm.' This five-mile branch was virtually the last canal to be built in this country in 1882. It was needed to transport bricks from the brickfields of the area.

From the bridge, the Packet Boat Marina can be seen on the right. Keep following the Slough Arm (ignoring the first footbridge across the canal) which up ahead crosses over Fray's River via an aqueduct. At the second footbridge, take the path up the bank to cross the canal and follow the twisting footpath into Colne Valley Regional Park away from the water ahead through the trees.

Did you know?

On the other side of the footbridge is a canal-side granite obelisk. It is one of the many coal tax markers that can be seen on the main trading routes into London and giving a warning that you are due to pay tax on the coal you are bringing in. The tax was introduced in 1667 to help rebuild the city after the Great Fire.

Keep the river to the left and follow the path through wild woodland and across Packet Boat Lane.

Did you know?

The lake ahead is called 'Little Britain' because it's apparently shaped a bit like the British Isles and is part of a complex of attractive lakes with islands set between the River Colne and Fray's River. It's also home to herons - the symbol of the Colne Valley Regional Park.

Keep following the path on the left-hand side past the carpark to reach a metal barrier. Go over the bridge on the left, crossing the River Colne, and in the process leave London and arrive in Buckinghamshire!

Turn right and continue for a while on the path, keeping the river close by on the right. This path goes over two wooden bridges and past a weir before reaching a set of steps. Take the steps which lead up to Iver Lane.

Carefully cross Iver Lane then go right over the bridge across the river. At the end of the bridge take a hairpin left, signed 'Public Footpath.' Follow the path down to River Colne so it is on the left and a metal fence is on the right.

Follow the path along the river until eventually reaching Longbridge Way. At the end of Longbridge Way, cross over Cowley Mill Road and go down the appropriately named Culvert Lane. Keep following the road which leads back to the Grand Union Canal. Take a left along the towpath.

Did you know?

Today the majority of canal boats are holiday cruisers custom-built for the purpose, but until the 1950s the sight of a 'pleasure boat' was still unusual. Working boats were the norm, and most of the boat population were baffled by the idea that their commercial working waterways would become a place of leisure.

Keep following the towpath. This section ends just under the second bridge. *The next section, Uxbridge to Harefield West, continues along the towpath.*

To leave the LOOP, turn left up the steps and left over the bridge onto Oxford Road. Cross over Sanderson Road and bear left up High Street. Keep following the High Street over Harefield Road and then straight on ahead into the pedestrianised area, and after a few hundred yards on the left are the Uxbridge tube and bus stations.

TFL Section 12 Uxbridge to Harefield West

4.5 miles (7 kilometres).

Leg 23 Uxbridge to Denham

4.33 miles (0.46 mi from Uxbridge station, 0.86 mi to Denham station)

Introduction.

This section follows the Grand Union Canal for most of the way. It is dominated by water which makes it the bluest section of the London LOOP. There are lots of interesting things to see along the way including locks, narrow boats, canalside pubs and a tearoom.

This is an easy walk on mainly firm and level towpaths. There are three small canal bridges to cross and one short stretch on rough track.

The walk starts at Uxbridge tube station and finishes at Harefield with buses which return to Uxbridge station; mid-route there are buses at South Harefield.

There is a cafe and public toilets at Colne Park Visitor Centre and other cafes and pubs along the way.

Directions.

Leave Uxbridge station straight ahead through the main exit to arrive on the pedestrian High Street.

Did you know?

Uxbridge - its name is Saxon in origin - is a very old town and one of the most important market towns of Middlesex. The Market House directly across the road was the location for a major corn market for west Middlesex which the prosperous town depended on until the 19th century. A Market House has stood here since 1561 and the original occupied half the width of the High Street. It was removed in 1785 and the current one was built further back in order to widen the road.

Turn right and follow High Street straight ahead. Cross Harefield Road and continue down the hill to cross over Sanderson Road via the pedestrian crossing, passing the Parexel office building on your right.

Did you know?

During the Civil War, Uxbridge was an important fort for Parliamentary troops. In 1644 an attempt at a peace treaty was negotiated in Place House which is now the aptly named Crown and Treaty pub.

Continue straight over the bridge which arches over the Grand Union Canal. Turn immediately right on the other side into the Swan and Bottle car park. Turn right down the steps to meet the Grand Union Canal towpath; at the bottom of the steps turn left to join the LOOP route and the start of this section.

Did you know?

The Grand Union Canal was born in 1789 to link London and Birmingham and it became one of the busiest canals in the country. The first route however was an incredible 280 miles and the tedious journey made it impossible for one boat to do the whole journey!

Walk along the canal towpath and cross the canal at Uxbridge Lock via the small white brick Turnover Bridge. Continue along the towpath passing the lock cottage and a few metres along on the left is the site of Kings Mill.

Did you know?

Flour has been milled on this site for a thousand years. A local milkman and farmer called William King bought the mill in the late 19th century and the brand of bread, Kingsmill, is named after him.

Continue past the small sign stating that Braunston is 81 miles away. Before passing under the A40 Western Avenue road bridge notice the waters of the River Colne on the left. The river provided the power for the Kings Mill. Sweep in to join the canal from the left.

Go over the small arched bridge to cross the canal and continue along the towpath. Glimpses of the reed filled River Colne can be seen on the left running broadly parallel to the canal.

The gravel track on the left is to Denham Country Park, for the Colne Valley Park Visitor Centre. If you want to visit, follow it for about half mile, where there are toilets and refreshments. Otherwise continue straight ahead.

Keep along the towpath to meet Denham Lock and in the lock cottage is Fran's Tea Garden which has a beautiful garden setting.

Did you know?

At about 11 feet, Denham Deep Lock has the greatest drop of any lock on the Grand Union. The canal is on a short aqueduct over Fray's River so it was built deep enough in order not to affect the water supplies which powered the mills further down the river.

Keep along the canal towpath to meet a white bridge number 182. Climb the steep slope to cross the canal once again. Then turn left onto the wide gravel track on the other side parallel to the canal.

Continue along the sometimes muddy broad track past the lakes and popular fishing spots. Follow the track as it veers left and exposes the grand dark brick arches of a railway overpass. Pass under to return to the canal. A larger expanse of water appears on the right and a sailing club is situated across the water. Continue along the track beside the lake and then follow it as it veers right past Harefield Marina.

Keep left on the main track past a branch to the right. Continue on the gravel path it widens and you get to a metal gate on the left. Turn left immediately after it and follow the path as it veers right. Keep straight ahead on the path, parallel to the track you just left. Towards the end it bends left and then right to emerge onto Moorhall Road.

To leave the LOOP at this point turn right at the roadside and follow the footpath to meet the bus stop. Bus route 331 from here goes to Ruislip, Uxbridge and Denham stations. A little further along is the Busy Bee cafe.

To continue on the LOOP, turn left at the roadside and continue past Widewater Place on the right. Go over the bridge to once again meet up with the Grand Union Canal. A little further over the bridge is the Bear on the Barge pub. *To continue, turn left as the bridge ends and step down to meet the canal towpath again.*

For Denham station, carry on straight ahead along the road into Denham. Take the first turning left into Savay Lane. Take the footpath right, after No. 22. When you see the railway viaduct, fork left. The station is on the right.

PJM Section 14 Denham to Moor Park

Leg 24 Denham to Moor Park

7.97 miles (0.86 mi from Denham station, 0.46 mi to Moor Park station)

Leave the station down the steps from platform 2. Turn left under the viaduct, and bear right at the first intersection. Keep straight ahead to the end of the path, then turn left. At the main road, turn right. Keep on the pavement until you have passed the Bear on the Barge. Then, just before the canal, go down the steps on the right to the towpath.

Turn left at the water's edge and double back under the bridge to meet Widewater Lock. Continue on the towpath past the lock, passing under a small decrepit bridge and past another lake on the left. After a while Black Jacks Lock and its house appear.

Did you know?

Black Jacks Mill is in a beautiful setting on an island between two waterways and you can see the water flowing beneath it as you continue past. The present mill building, now a restaurant, dates from 1879, but a mill was recorded here in the Domesday Book. Legend says it was named after a slave who was bought and sold with the land. With his donkey and cart, Jack delivered the flour which had been ground in the mill.

Staying on the towpath, cross over the footbridge where the weir rushes beneath. The canal dips left and right to finally join the Coy Carp Inn on the left. Go up the ramp here to meet the roadside and turn right to go over the bridge. After the road veers left cross the road to meet what was once the grand home of the mill owner and where this section ends. *To continue on the next section (Harefield West to Moor Park) turn left onto Summerhouse Lane.*

To leave the LOOP go straight ahead up the hill. Cross straight over Barrington Drive and continue to meet Shelley Lane. Where there is a bus stop in a lay-by for route U9 going to Uxbridge station, which runs on Mondays to Saturdays only.

If you arrive here on a Sunday and need a bus, keep straight ahead up the hill along Park Lane for about a mile to meet Harefield Village. At the junction just ahead of you are bus stops for the 331 service which goes to Uxbridge station or in the other direction to Northwood station.

TFL Section 13 Harefield West to Moor Park

5 miles (8 kilometres).

Introduction.

This is a very pleasant section keeping away from settlements, going through remote countryside and luxuriant woodland.

It is an easy walk mainly on rough paths, tracks and grass. There is a steep hill soon after the start, otherwise the path is fairly level with some gentle slopes.

The walk starts at Harefield West, which can be reached by bus from Uxbridge station and finishes at Moor Park station on the Metropolitan Line.

The route goes away from the Grand Union Canal that the previous two sections followed and goes through parks and wood. Highlights are the ancient Park and Bishop's Woods and the Ye Olde Greene Manne pub with its connections to Dick Turpin and Moor Park Mansion.

There are cafes and pubs at Harefield West, Woodcock Hill and Batchworth Heath, but no public toilets until Moor Park.

Directions.

To start this section from Uxbridge station: Take bus U9 to Harefield West (Belfry Avenue) where there is a turnaround bay. Turn right onto Park Lane and follow the road down the hill. Cross over Barrington Drive and take the next right onto Summerhouse Lane to join the LOOP.

If you are walking on a Sunday (when bus U9 doesn't run) take bus 331 from Uxbridge or Northwood stations and get off at Harefield, The Green and walk the mile down Park Lane.

Did you know?

The grand house on the corner here at one time belonged to the owner of a copper mill. Copper from the mill which once stood further down the road and across the canal was used to protect the wooden hulls of boats when the canal arrived. Legend has it that the copper orb on the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral was made at the mill.

Continue along Summerhouse Lane and soon the Grand Union Canal can be seen on the left. Take the first road on the right, Bellevue Terrace, to turn away from the canal. Ignore the gravel path, which turns left, and instead head straight up the hill to follow close to the row of houses (with beautifully kept gardens) on the left. Keep along this track to eventually reach Parkwood Farm Kennels.

Go through the metal barrier between the metal fence on the left and the wooden gate on the right and follow the small track into Park Wood.

The track takes a steep climb up the hill through trees and lush growth of ferns. Ignore the path on the right, instead keep straight ahead. Go over the footbridge and soon meadows will open out on the left. Keep on ahead and then go through the barriers to meet the roadside.

Cross the road to join the footpath and turn left. Go past the entrance to the Harefield Nursing Centre (on your left) and after a couple of bungalows (on your right) turn right into the narrow Plough Lane. Walk to the end of the lane and then go over the stile just to the left of the metal gate to reach the open fields of White Heath Farm.

Head off straight ahead in the same direction across the fields to meet a footbridge and stile. Cross into the next field and continue straight ahead close to the hedge on the left bordering Cripps House Farm. At the end of this field is another stile; go over it and take a moment to take in the tranquil undulating fields.

As this field sweeps down the hillside, head toward the bottom left corner. Find the small trail leading through blackberry bushes to expose another stile and little footbridge. Go through to the next field and head straight on up the hill beside the remnant of an old field boundary to the left.

At the top of the field take a moment to look back and admire the lovely view. Then continue on over a stile to meet the bottom left corner of another field. Carry straight on to the top left hand corner of the field then continue on the broad gravel driveway straight ahead to meet Harefield Road.

Just before the road, take the path on the right between the houses and the field.

Keep on the path parallel to Harefield Road until you reach The Rose & Crown pub. Directly opposite the pub car park is a public footpath. Cross the road and follow this path to the end where it opens out into a vast meadow. Look beyond the fields to see Batchworth Park Golf Club. This 140 acre golf course is an exclusive private members club with no less than five lakes. It was specially designed by internationally renowned course architect Dave Thomas.

Strike out across the meadow veering down to the bottom right hand corner. Go through the gap and continue straight on to follow the hedge on the right as the meadow slopes down the hill. Keep on ahead as the meadow climbs the hill after the wide clearing between the trees on the right. The next block of trees is Bishop's Wood Country Park. Turn right less than 100 metres from the end of the meadow onto a track leading into the forest. The path leads into Bishop's Wood.

Did you know?

The ancient woodlands on the slopes of Bishop's Wood have a varied mix of soils, including clay with flints. There are extensive areas of conifer but mature oak and beech with hazel and horn beam coppice are also found here. Over 42 species of birds have been recorded in the wood.

Once at a wooden gate, go through the gap on the left, then bear left onto the wider track and follow it. Continue straight ahead following the track as it dips down to meet a footbridge over a stream (which may be dry). Do not go over the stream, instead turn left immediately before the footbridge, and follow the modest path.

Follow close to the stream before crossing it via a small footbridge. Turn left and walk along the forest edge with the open field seen through the trees on the left. The track then veers away from the open field and heads through the trees.

Keep along the most prominent track. When you come to a track on the left, turn onto it. Continue along this track for some time and soon a fence line can be seen off to the right along the same direction as the route.

The track comes out at a pylon where the track turns left just before it. Keep on this enclosed track through the bush and directly under a second pylon. The track then leaves the trees to emerge at a grass clearing. Follow the path across the grass to arrive at a crossing track.

The reed filled lily pond of Batchworth Heath is just off the route to the left. Across the road directly ahead is Ye Olde Greene Manne pub.

Did you know?

Ye Olde Greene Manne pub dates back to 1728 and it was supposedly visited by Dick Turpin. The story goes, he vacated the premises through a rear window as the Bow Street Runners were enquiring of his whereabouts at the front.

To leave the LOOP at this point turn right at the crossing track to meet the roadside of White Hill and a bus stop on the left. Take a 331 bus to Northwood Hills, Ruislip, Rickmansworth, or Uxbridge tube stations, or Denham railway station.

To continue, keep ahead and cross the A404 Batchworth Heath Hill opposite Ye Olde Greene Manne and turn right toward the more modest Prince of Wales pub. A little way past the pub look across the road to see a post about a metre high by the roadside.

Did you know?

This cast iron column is a 'coal-post' at the boundary into the district. Goods were measured here in Victorian times. Imagine this spot with queues of people, many with cart loads of coal, wine, clothing and food, haggling with the taxman.

Turn left here at the 'public footpath' sign. Enter into the trees and follow the small path.

Did you know?

This footpath was once the boundary line between Middlesex and Hertfordshire and follows in line with the coal-post seen earlier.

When the footpath meets an old track, turn left, then immediately right, to continue straight on. Notice the weather-worn paving stones that have been left in piles littering the area.

Keep on the path under the power lines. It eventually comes out between wooden fence boundaries between houses to Kewferry Road. Turn left here and keep ahead to meet Batchworth Lane at the end. Cross straight over Batchworth Lane and continue straight ahead down Bedford Road.

This area is Moor Park Estate and it was Lord Leverhulme, the soap manufacturer, who purchased the Mansion and estate in 1919. He formed the Moor Park Golf Club, creating three golf courses and also developed its grounds this far south.

Go past Heathside Road on the right and then as the road swings left just after the electricity pylon turn right onto the public footpath. Go over a small footbridge and at the next road veer slightly left. Take a brief moment to admire the lovely homes [if you can find any that are “lovely”] here before following the footpath sign 'Number 51 Hampermill Lane 1 mile'.

The path soon comes to an open section and then to a road. Cross here into the narrow road opposite and then go under the railway line. Turn immediately left once out from under the bridge. Go through the metal barrier and you can see on the left how close the tube line is. Here you have come to a branching of paths, where section 13 ends. *You can carry on with the next section to Hatch End by branching right here.*

Head to Moor Park tube station by carrying straight on ahead through the trees. Keep close to the railway line and on emerging from the trees the entrance to the tube station is on the left

TFL Section 14 Moor Park to Hatch End

3.8 miles (6.1 kilometres).

PJM Section 15 Moor Park to Carpenders Park

5.99 miles (0.46 mi from Moor Park station, 0.71 mi to Carpenders Park station)

Leg 25 Moor Park to Hatch End

5.1 miles (0.46 mi from Moor Park station, 0.69 mi to Hatch End station)

Introduction.

This is an easy walking, very green and quite short LOOP section through woodland with little roadwalking. It crosses farmland around the community of Pinnerwood, where you walk between charming cottages with well-kept ponds and lawns.

Walking is mainly on rough paths, tracks and grass, which may be muddy at times. There are two stiles and four kissing gates and some short steep slopes, but generally gently undulating.

The walk starts close to Moor Park station on the Metropolitan line and ends at Hatch End station with trains to Euston and Harrow & Wealdstone.

The highlights of this walk are the Old Furze Wood, the 97 hectare Oxhey Wood nature reserve and Pinnerwood House, home of the famous Victorian author Bulwer-Lytton. On clear days there are some great views.

There are public toilets at the start at Moor Park, and pubs and cafes at Moor Park and Hatch End.

Directions.

If starting from Moor Park station, leave through the ticket barriers but don't take the obvious exit straight ahead. Instead turn immediately right to retrace your steps back through the subway and past the platform steps to the exit, signposted 'Sandy Lodge'. Leave the back of the station by the stairs. Once outside at the end of a small road a sign will be visible for a public footpath through the trees on the right.

Take this gravel track through the leafy trees while keeping close to the railway line. Coming into open grass, keep ahead to meet the metal barrier by the houses. Don't go through, but turn sharp left to join the start of this section of the London LOOP.

Follow the broad grass track leading towards the electricity pylons in the distance. The track goes just to the left of the first electricity pylon and then veers left. Follow it next to Sandy Lodge Golf Course.

Bear left onto another track, then, turn right onto a rich sandy terracotta track. Follow it up the short rise and continue straight on across a fairway, aiming for the left-most of two paths through a short section of trees on the other side. Once you emerge from the trees, keep straight ahead and slightly to the left over another section of the course to meet another footpath post.

The route soon enters another stretch of trees and then emerges onto Sandy Lodge Lane. Cross the road here and follow it to the junction of Sandy Lane / Hampermill Lane. Take a moment to admire the views north across the Colne Valley.

Did you know?

Lord Leverhulme, the soap magnate, who once owned Moor Park Estate, undertook development in 1922 of 288 acres which spread to this exclusive area of Moor Park. It is now a designated Conservation Area.

This area has distinct sloping and undulating landforms that tumble down to the River Colne. It has been suggested that this river was named by the Celts who were here before the Romans, but the name Colne may well have originated from Colonia, meaning a Roman Settlement.

The LOOP continues across the road and slightly to the left, but use the traffic island to the right by the petrol station to get across this busy road. Retrace your steps now on the other side of the road. Just past the junction turn right onto a very obscure footpath among the trees, which is marked by a low wooden post.

Follow the small track through lush ferns up the hill, passing a house on the left, to meet a cross-path a short way in. Turn right and follow the path. Veer left at the next fork. When you reach open grassland, strike out straight ahead across this public land toward the houses in the distance.

As a children's playground comes into view on the left, bear right to find a metal kissing gate. Exit the grounds through the space between houses to meet Ashburnham Drive. Turn right onto the path alongside the road and continue to reach a T-junction at the end, which is Hayling Road.

There are buses to Bushey station from here but these are not run by Transport for London and your Oyster card may not be valid.

To continue, turn left and cross Hayling Road at the traffic island, then turn first right onto Nairn Green. Continue to the end of this road to meet the trees. This section of trees is called Old Furze Field.

Did you know?

Furze, also known as gorse, is a very spiny and dense evergreen shrub with fragrant golden-yellow flowers and the name suggests its former condition. It flowers all year, hence the expression, 'when gorse is out of blossom, kissing's out of fashion'.

Follow the footpath into the woods. At the T-junction of paths turn left here and keep on the path along the bottom of the woods. The track soon veers right over a small footbridge and up the hill.

After a while you come to a tree in the middle of a small clearing and paths leading off left and right, ignore them and keep on ahead. Eventually road traffic can be heard in the distance off to the right and then the path bends left away from the traffic noise, and soon a house emerges ahead. Follow the path to the right beside the house, to come out to the road side of Oxhey Drive.

Cross directly over the road and continue through the metal barriers, back into the woods. Keep straight ahead on this track and carry on over a crossing track. Soon there is a wider crossing track to go over, before keeping on through the trees of Oxhey Woods.

Did you know?

Oxhey Woods is a 97-hectare Nature Reserve. It separates South Oxhey and Northwood these days, but it was almost certainly once part of a great expanse of Ancient Woodland that lay between the river Colne and the Thames in prehistoric times.

Soon traffic can be heard in the distance. The path shortly opens out to Prestwick Road.

Cross the road at the traffic island and head straight back into the trees.

Keep going along the path, bearing left at the intersection. Over to the right are curious small tables and seats made out of tree trunks.

Continue straight ahead and soon the path widens out to a broad track. Follow this track straight ahead. Continue up the incline and, after a cross-track, before the path descends in a sweeping curve around to the right, bear left onto a smaller path through the trees of Nanscot Woods. Follow the path across two ditches, on through the woods, bearing right away from the houses, and then left at the T-junction of paths.

The picketed metal fence line seen to the right through the trees is the border to Pinner Hill Golf Club. Keep straight ahead along the path ignoring all other side paths, and keeping the fence on your right.

A short stretch of houses soon appears through the trees on the left. The woods abruptly stop and the path passes through a kissing gate and opens out onto a field. Keep left here to follow the footpath sign along the top of the field, keeping close to the hedge on the left.

Continue through the next field to meet a ruined wooden kissing gate. Exit the field here and then turn immediately right to follow the right edge of another field down to the farm buildings.

Did you know?

This farm has 120 acres of grass devoted to grazing and hay making. Known as Pinnerwood Arabian Stud, it was founded in the 1960s for horse breeding.

Next to the farm building, pass through a metal kissing gate into the farm area, then right to find a footpath sign. Follow the path and exit the farm through another kissing gate to reach the bottom of a concrete driveway.

Continue along the driveway as it veers slightly around to the right and soon the listed early 18th century Pinnerwood House comes into view on the right. Continue along the drive to get

another view of the house over its pond and then still further along is the entrance drive with the sign to confirm its name.

Did you know?

The early 18th century Pinnerwood House was the home to the famous author Edward Bulwer-Lytton in the 1830s. This popular novelist was best known for *The Last Days of Pompeii* and *Zanoni*. He was also a politician who achieved cabinet office, and when he died in 1873 he was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Follow the concrete drive leftward, and less than 100 metres along turn left to follow the footpath beside the metal gate. Go over the stile and cross the field diagonally, aiming for the middle of the far side.

Go over the stile and then over the little wooden footbridge. Carry on in the same direction as previously to the bottom far corner of the next field. Go through a kissing gate into the next field, and carry on along the field edge beside the back gardens of houses. *To continue on the next section to Elstree, keep ahead along the field edge.*

To leave the LOOP go over the stile. Less than 100 metres from the edge of this field is a stile leading through a gap in the houses to reach Hatch End station.

Follow the path as it goes straight over the top of a small suburban road and then immediately turn left through another gap in the houses to reach Grimmsdyke Road. Follow this road around to the right and left and continue along to reach the main road which is Uxbridge Road.

Turn left here to go through Hatch End town centre, passing The Moon and Sixpence pub along the way. Go over Westfield Park to reach a bus stop and a short way along on the left is Hatch End station.

TFL Section 15 Hatch End to Elstree

10 miles (16 kilometres).

Leg 26 Hatch End to Carpenders Park

2.28 miles (0.69 mi from Hatch End station, 0.71 mi to Carpenders Park station)

Introduction.

This longer section follows the green belt on the fringe of Greater London crossing the Hertfordshire border several times. It goes through picturesque woodland and pastures, and is easy walking on mostly level ground with a few longish slopes and some field edge, farmland and woodland path walking.

The highlights of this walk are Grim's Ditch (the mansion of W S Gilbert, of Gilbert and Sullivan fame - now Grim's Dyke Hotel), Bentley Priory with its World War II connections, and the Roman Watling Street.

There are many stiles and kissing gates. The sections more suitable for the less mobile and pushchairs include Bentley Priory Open Space, Grove Fields and Aldenham Country Park.

The walk starts at Hatch End (or from Hatch End station on the line from Euston) and ends at Elstree & Borehamwood station with trains to King's Cross and Luton. There is a cafe and public toilets at Aldenham Country Park, as well as pubs along the way.

Directions.

Leave the station and at the junction with Uxbridge Road go right. Turn right down Grimmsdyke Road and continue passing both entrances to Hillview Road. At the junction of Wessex

Drive (on your left) continue along Grimsdyke Road as it bends right. As it bends left, turn right down the footpath and follow the LOOP signpost leading to the public footpath towards Pinner Wood Farm and Little Oxhey Lane on the right. Go over the stile and turn right into the field to join the LOOP.

Follow the fence along to the corner of the field where there is a stile.

From this point until the point X below, the path may be very overgrown. You may find it easiest to turn left before the stile, proceed along the edge of the field to the far corner, turn right past some large tree trunks, and make your way to another stile on your left.

To follow the regular route, go over the stile in the corner of the field and into the wood. Go right at the first junction and left at the second. Proceed, keeping the paying field, and later residential fences, on the right. Continue straight ahead, passing over Colburn Avenue, following the fence between the houses and farmland until the corner of the fence. Turn sharp right here and then left at the end of Sylvia Avenue, towards a stile in the fence. This is point X. Cross it and stride out across the field towards the electricity pylon on the other side in the right hand corner. Pick up the track to the right of the pylon and head through the metal kissing gate to enter Hertfordshire.

Proceed between the playing fields and the railway line fence to reach Little Oxhey Lane; cross it. *To continue on the next leg turn right.*

To reach Carpenders Park station, carry on straight ahead alongside the railway line. Keep going along Woodhall Lane. At the end, turn right, and shortly you will reach Carpenders Park station on the right.

PJM Section 16 Carpenders Park to Elstree & Borehamwood

Leg 27 Carpenders Park to Elstree & Borehamwood

8.87 miles (0.81 mi from Carpenders Park station, 0.14 mi to Elstree & Borehamwood station)

Leave the station on the west side, by platform 1. Go up the steps and advance to the main road. Then turn left. Turn left into Woodhall Lane. Keep on Woodhall Lane until it diverges away from the railway line. Then go straight ahead along the footpath alongside the railway. Turn left when you get to Little Oxhey Lane.

Continue over the railway bridge, pass St. George's Drive, Harrow Way and Romilly Drive, and reach the busy junction with Oxhey Lane.

Cross Oxhey Lane via the island at the lights, and go past the gate opposite. A newly restored path climbs the hill alongside a fence to reach another kissing gate in the hedge which borders Grim's Dyke Golf Course. Once on the course, skirt left around one of the greens and continue up the hill following the white topped posts with trees to the left. Coming to the top, go left, keeping the green keepers barns to the right, to find a track named Ass House Lane, leading on. Before the end of the lane (which leads onto Old Redding) turn sharp left onto a path that's just inside the edge of the wood.

Did you know?

Grim's Dyke or Ditch, which the Saxons named after the devil, or Grim, crosses here. Archaeologists believe this ditch was made in the late Iron Age / early Roman period which means it is at least 2,000 years old. The ditch may have been constructed to separate two estates to prevent stock from straying, but it does not seem to have had a defensive purpose. When the Saxons came across these linear earthworks which stretch across the Chiltern Hills, they didn't understand their origin and so associated them with the devil.

Turn right over a culvert, with a pond on your left and continue on to an access road. Cross the access road to take a path into the wood, continuing past groves of rhododendron to the partially drained Grimsdyke Lake.

Did you know?

The artificial lake and surrounding land were once luxurious ornamental gardens owned by Sir William Gilbert of Gilbert and Sullivan fame. Tragically, this is where Sir William died in 1911, helping a young female house guest who had got into difficulties while swimming. Lady Gilbert had the lake drained and closed. Gilbert had always said he would like to die on a summer's day in his own garden and sadly he had his wish.

The beautiful fully restored house, now Grim's Dyke Hotel, was built for Gilbert by the famous architect Norman Shaw in 1872 in the Tudor Style. Highly secretive work was done here during World War II. Explore the area further to see the giant redwood trees and other plantings of specimen trees from Gilbert's time.

Keep the lake to the left, and at the end of the lake where the path splits go right, up the bank and then left, beside a ditch and then over a boardwalk, and into the woods of Harrow Weald Common.

Did you know?

The odd undulating ground here is due to gravel having been extracted from the Common for building. The coming of the railway provided access to more convenient and alternative sites and so the practice died out here.

Keep on the path. In due course it bends right, leads down a slope and heads to a gap in the hedge onto Old Redding road; cross it and enter the car park opposite. There's a picnic area here and some wonderful panoramic views across London. To continue, leave the car park and go right, passing a pub named 'The Case is Altered' [evidently a corruption of *la casa alta*, the high house].

Past the pub at the traffic island, cross Old Redding and go through the gate onto Harrow Weald Common and go straight ahead. The raised path leads through woodland to a junction of paths. Go left and then immediately right, passing quaint cottages built for the servants of Grimsdyke House. The path leads along the edge of the wood then continues into it, going over several boardwalks. At a junction of paths after two small footbridges go right.

Go straight on at the next junction, crossing over undulating ground and up a bank and steps to Common Road. Bus 258 to Harrow & Wealdstone or Harrow-on-the-Hill stations stops just to the right on this road.

Cross Common Road with care and go through a wooden gate opposite. Proceed along the concrete path.

Did you know?

Glenthorne Open Space has remained undisturbed for nearly a lifetime. The land was requisitioned in 1940 for the expansion of the RAF's HO at Bentley Priory. The development never took place, but the land remained in RAF hands until recently. Ministry fencing still bars the public to this day.

Go through the kissing gate and on to Bentley Priory Open Space. The concrete path bears left then runs parallel with security fencing.

Did you know?

Beyond the security fence a glimpse can be caught of Bentley Priory, the elegant mansion once used as headquarters of Fighter Command in World War II. The famous 'Battle of Britain' was ultimately directed from here, delivering Hitler's first tactical defeat which arguably saved the

nation from invasion. The Priory, no longer an RAF base, is now home to the Battle of Britain Museum with the rest of the mansion being turned into residential flats.

At the information board go left, through the kissing gate and straight ahead to reach Priory Drive. Turn right onto Priory Drive and follow it around to the left to reach the busy road called The Common. Cross it and enter Warren Lane opposite.

At the bus stops at The Common, bus 142 will take you to Stanmore Tube station on the Jubilee line.

Enter the car park to the left of Warren Lane and head for the LOOP fingerpost in the right corner. Take the right-hand of the two paths which crosses an access road and eventually meets Warren Lane again. Cross over and take the path to the left of the cricket ground. Follow this path into the wood.

Bear left and go between two ponds and then right, following the larger or 'Brewery Pond'. In a clearing, 100 metres before the end of the pond bear left through a line of trees towards the houses, until you meet a metalled track. Go left along it, turn right past staggered barriers and bear left onto the picturesque Little Common.

Before a band of trees with a pond beyond, turn left. Take the leftmost of two gravel paths to another larger pond. The pond is called Caesar's Pond as it was thought the Romans dug it. Walk around it clockwise to meet Wood Lane, go left and then left again into Warren Lane.

At the junction of small lanes take the first right. Go past the few houses to reach a set of metal gates. Go left and then immediately right through a gate onto a small path that follows closely along the hospital fence. Between the first and second stiles, bear left down the gravel road with fields on either side. The road bears right; follow it for 10 metres then go left by a metal gate, up a path, to a gap in the hedge.

After a kissing gate, proceed straight ahead across the field, with the M1 Motorway on the right, to the far right hand corner. Go past another metal kissing gate and onto the concrete path past the gas pumping station to meet Elstree Road. Go right, passing under the M1 flyover, to reach a large roundabout.

Cross North Western Avenue (Watford by-pass) on the right-hand side of the roundabout and proceed ahead along Elstree Road again. Just past Bhageecha on the right, cross the road (which has now become Watford Road) and go through a kissing gate to enter Aldenham Country Park, and turn right. Keep the impressive reservoir to the left and follow the path passing Aldenham Sailing Club to reach an access road on the right.

Here, if you wish, you can stray to your left a bit from the LOOP to the dam that ensures the reservoir remains full.

Did you know?

The dam was originally built by French prisoners of war in about 1795 to dispel concerns by local mill-owners that the Grand Junction Canal would lower the level of the nearby rivers and take their trade away. There are refreshments and toilets here.

Continuing onwards, go right to reach Aldenham Road. Cross it and go through the gap opposite and a kissing gate into the fields. Proceed on the right of the marker posts to reach another metal kissing gate and then straight ahead, over the open field and through a wooden kissing gate to reach Elstree Hill North with Watling Street to the left.

Did you know?

Of vital strategic and commercial importance to the Romans who built it, Watling Street once ran from Dover, through London, to Wroxeter in Shropshire, a distance of 250 miles.

Cross Elstree Hill North with care and go left, then right, into Allum Lane. After 20 metres go left through a kissing gate and proceed along the path. Keep on the path as it bends right, across the open field towards a line of poplar trees at the top.

Continue into Elstree Golf Course. Head diagonally to the left of the small mound. Turn right onto the gravel path and follow it across the golf course. Bear left to pick up a smaller path leading through trees and then turn right onto a wider gravel path through the wood to reach Allum Lane again.

Go left, cross over the road at the traffic island and continue along Allum Lane, passing Lodge Avenue, to Deacon's Hill Road where this section ends.

To reach Elstree & Borehamwood station, continue along Allum Lane and over the rail bridge to the pedestrian traffic lights, and then go down the steps to the station on the right

TFL Section 16 Elstree (Allum Lane) to Cockfosters

10 miles (16 kilometres).

PJM Section 17 Elstree & Borehamwood to High Barnet

Leg 28 Elstree & Borehamwood to High Barnet

7.80 miles (0.14 mi from Elstree & Borehamwood station, 0.28 mi to High Barnet station)

Introduction.

This is the longest section of the London LOOP and is very pleasant despite a high proportion of road walking, taking in some attractive open spaces and commons in North London.

Points of interest are Dollis Brook, Moat Mount (site of the 1471 Battle of Barnet during the Wars of the Roses) and Livingstone Cottage, where the famous explorer of that name lived in the 1850s.

It's mainly level walking on rough paths, tracks and grass. There is one longish steep ascent and several fairly gentle ascents and descents. There are two stiles.

There are pubs and cafes at Borehamwood, Barnet, Hadley and Cockfosters and public toilets at Barnet and Trent Park.

There are few opportunities to leave this section of the LOOP, but it does pass very close to High Barnet station on the northern line, about two-thirds of the way round.

Directions.

From Elstree & Borehamwood station, leave the car park using the steps on the left by the taxi rank. Turn left to go over the railway bridge, then left again at the petrol station into Deacon's Hill Road to join the LOOP.

After a steep climb to the top of Deacon's Hill Road, turn left at the T-junction on to Barnet Lane, the A411; after about 500 metres on the left are two brick built breather vents where the railway runs right under the field.

Enjoy the views northward while climbing the hill to eventually reach a small red post box on the other side of the road. Cross here and take the path on the right just past the post box, immediately before Bay's Hill Cottage. Continue along the path and just past the enormous log barrier are the old oak woodlands of Scratchwood Open Space.

Did you know?

Incredibly this oak woodland has been here since the last Ice Age. Notice the hornbeams and hazel beneath the oak, and the invasive rhododendron and sycamore. The wood is now being actively managed, mostly by volunteers.

Turn left at the T junction and follow the path downhill. Cross the stream and follow the path out of the wood and into the open area used for flying model aircraft. Go into more scrubby woodland then through the kissing gate at the end of the wood and out on to an open grassy field.

To leave the LOOP here, turn left for the bus stop on the A1 that serves Elstree & Borehamwood and Edgware stations.

To continue, turn right down the edge of the open space and take the right-hand of the two paths into scrub woodland at the second of two stand-alone oak trees. The path dips and rises to emerge in an open meadow that reaches the A1 Barnet Way. Turn right and after 600 metres cross under the A1 using the pedestrian underpass. Then turn left to return back up beside the A1.

Walk straight on for 400 metres and take the next right (after the golf course) into Moat Mount Open Space. Follow the broad path straight ahead, carrying straight on when the track turns left. A short way into the wood turn left to find some steps. Once down the steps, bear right and follow the path along a little stream up through the woods.

Follow the steep sided valley uphill and turn right through the kissing gate at the top to join a fenced way between open fields. Go through a kissing gate, bear left and take the path to the left of the farm track down the hill, enjoying the open views across Mote End Farm along the way. Climb the hill again to the corner of Barnet Gate Wood.

Fork right along the edge of the wood and carry straight on to meet Hendon Wood Lane via another kissing gate. Cross the road and turn right along the pavement. Follow this road for about 700 metres and at the top of the rise, after passing the houses and just beyond the black metal gates, turn left through a kissing gate into Totteridge Fields.

The Totteridge Fields Nature Reserve is managed by the London Wildlife Trust for Barnet Council, and is special for its rich variety of flowers, grasses, insects and traditional hay meadows of a bygone age. The six-spot burnet moths which live here are bright red and fly in broad daylight.

Follow the left-hand hedge through two fields and turn left at the T junction. Follow the edge of the playing fields round to the right and, halfway round, go over a footbridge and past the kissing stiles into meadows again. Keep the hedge and the Dollis Brook to the left.

These fields are managed under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme by a tenant farmer. Please keep to the path and respect the grazing livestock.

Do not go over the first footbridge, but bear right along the left edge of the field. The path then goes over two small footbridges and through a series of kissing gates until reaching a junction with a path over the Dollis Brook via a gate and narrow metal footbridge.

Cross the footbridge and turn right towards the houses of Barnet just a field away. Keep straight ahead on the broad expanse of grass with the houses on the left and brook on the right. As you approach the end, aim towards the right-hand corner.

Go through a gap in the trees, turn right and then left, emerging onto two more expanses of grass. Carry on as before, with the houses on the left and the trees and brook on the right. After a while you join a tarmac path, still going in the same general direction until finally reaching Barnet Lane.

Cross Barnet Lane and turn in to the left of the Table Tennis Centre. Beyond the car park, go through the gap in the hedge and turn left beside the green metal fence. Turn right at the T-junction to meet Grasvenor Avenue at the top and then turn left.

The stadium straight ahead is the former home to the 'Bees' - Barnet FC, but they now play their games elsewhere.

Continue along Grasvenor Avenue to join Fairfield Way and carry on to Barnet Hill, the A1000 main road and the Great North Road. *To continue, turn right under the railway bridge.*

To leave the LOOP here, head up the hill to the left and over a pedestrian crossing to High Barnet station, or alternatively catch one of the nearby buses.

PJM Section 18 High Barnet to Cockfosters

Leg 29 High Barnet to Cockfosters

4.18 miles (0.28 mi from High Barnet station)

On leaving the station, turn left up the station approach road. Cross the main road, turn left and go down the hill and under the railway bridge.

Cross the main road at the pedestrian lights and turn sharply left up Potters Lane then use the footpath on the opposite side of the road. As the road bends to the right, and just before the houses start on the left, cross back over the road, turning left down a bank using the steps and follow the grass track and later the tarmac path along the right edge of the meadow. Go through the trees, turn right along the residential road and continue down Meadway.

Cross the road and turn left into Burnside Close. Follow the path around the back of the houses, then at the bottom of another road go left via a kissing gate into King George's Fields.

Did you know?

This refreshing hillside of open fields was acquired as public open space in the 1930s to celebrate the reign of King George . Before the railway extended suburbia to these parts of North London, the grassy fields surrounded by thick old hedgerows seen here were typical.

After about 300 metres the path leads you to the left through the gap in the hedge. Follow the path right, up the hill. Go through the kissing gate by the LOOP information board and cross Hadley Green Road.

Turn right along the grass verge and enjoy wandering past the beautifully kept 18th century houses.

Did you know?

A bit further along is Livingstone Cottage where the famous explorer lived in the 1850s after returning from his first African trip. Dr Livingstone vanished whilst exploring Africa and an expedition had to be sent to find him.

As the green ends, follow the road as it bears right past a low run of mellow brick almshouses, founded here in 1612, and the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, which dates back to the 12th century.

Go through the white gates to enter into Chase Country and Monken Hadley Common.

Did you know?

This historic area was once a great royal hunting forest with some 3,000 deer. Queen Elizabeth and other sovereigns hunted here, but now it is a gateway to the new Watling Chase Community Forest.

Follow the path beside the road past two huge cedar trees. Just beyond a big mansion, Hadley Hurst, cross and enter the woods. Very soon go right along a woodland path parallel to the road, that eventually rejoins the road, now the quieter Bakers Hill which continues as the tarmac road runs

out. At the bottom of the hill is the information board for the Pymmes Brook Trail. Cross the railway bridge then fork right to follow the path downhill through beech woods. Keep following the track until it crosses a stream via a little four-pillared bridge.

Did you know?

It is well worth diverting left here over a plank footbridge for a surprise view over Beech Hill Lake. This was created around 1880 by Charles Jack, as a feature in the grounds of his home. The locals still call it 'Jacks Lake'.

Keep straight ahead on the track and to the edge of the common at Games Road.

One of the first large buildings on the right is a conference centre and was once a prisoner of war camp and a place for interrogation during World War II.

Keep going straight ahead and leave the common by the white gates. Turn right into Chalk Lane just beyond The Cock Inn pub then immediately fork left. Turn left at Christ Church Cockfosters to follow the lane to Cockfosters Road. Cockfosters station is almost opposite but there is an entrance on this side of the road to the right. *The next section, to Enfield Lock, continues past the station.*

TFL Section 17 Cockfosters to Enfield Lock

9.5 miles (15 kilometres).

PJM Section 19 Cockfosters to Turkey Street

7.86 miles (0.04 mi to Turkey Street station)

Leg 30 Cockfosters to Gordon Hill

5.89 miles (0.60 mi to Gordon Hill station)

Introduction.

This is a long and rural section through an area alive with history. It goes by Trent Park, once the home of the Sassoon family, whose mansion across the lake is now part of Middlesex University, through the farmland of Enfield Chase and Hilly Fields Park and the Forty Hall Estate.

There are several gentle ups and downs, and two high-stepped footbridges. The walk is mostly on rough paths, tracks and grassland, and there are five stiles. Some sections are suitable for the less mobile and for pushchairs, these include Trent Park, Forty Hall and Albany Park.

There are pubs and cafes at Trent Park, Forty Hall, Clay Hill, Turkey Street and Enfield Lock, and public toilets at both ends of Trent Park and at Forty Hall.

There is a National Rail station at Turkey Street and several bus routes along the way.

This section ends at the footbridge over the Brook near Enfield Lock Station - not Enfield Lock itself. The lock itself can be found in Section 18 of the LOOP.

Directions.

Leave Cockfosters station by the exit to the carpark. Cross the entrance road to the carpark, and go through the green metal gate. Follow the narrow grass strip between the carpark and the cemetery. Go through the gap in the bushes, then after about 25 metres turn left and cross the ditch.

Go across the top of the fields to enter Church Wood on the other side. Soon there is a T-junction in the paths, turn left here and follow the path out of the wood then cross the field, keeping to the right hand edge to the road ahead.

Did you know?

This area was once Enfield Chase, a 12th century royal hunting forest. Enfield's woodland was described in the Domesday Book as providing food for four thousand swine! This was a measure of the woodland's great size.

Turn right at the road, then fork left past the little obelisk. Enter the car park where there are toilets and a cafe. A little to the left there is a LOOP information board.

At the LOOP information board take the path to the left into the pleasant Oak Wood - an odd name for a wood that's mostly birch! This area is Trent Country Park. The park has country walks, bird watching and nature study.

Follow the path downhill to the bottom edge of the wood, then bear right. Continue following the broad path to the edge of the wood, then out of the wood. Before the next wood, turn left. Follow the path past a lake on the right, and after a few hundred metres the red bricks of Trent House may be seen through the trees on the right (depending upon the time of year).

Keep following the track up the hill and into the woods. Just before the track bends right, fork left. As the path curves to the left, the enclosed area on the right become visible.

Did you know?

This is Camlet Moat, a small moated island and Scheduled Ancient Monument. It is thought to have been the seat of Geoffrey de Mandeville during the reign of William the Conqueror. Excavations carried out by Sir Philip Sassoon in the 1920s discovered stone foundations, oak beams thought to be from the drawbridge and Roman shoes and daggers.

Follow the path to the edge of the wood and then turn right. Go through the kissing gate about 20 metres along. Look left along the woodland edge from the kissing gate to see the 20 metre tall Sassoon's Obelisk erected in 1702.

Turn left at the road and walk for about 100 metres. Cross at the lay-by and go through the kissing gate. [The track that goes left at this point is a cycle track that is in the course of construction. It runs alongside (and occasionally on top of) the route for several miles as far as the point **Y** (see below). Rather than assiduously following the route described here, you may find it easier just to walk along the cycle track.] Head off down the hill to the Jubilee Path.

Did you know?

This rural area is a working farm estate, much of it is owned by the London Borough of Enfield. Please remember to follow the country code at all times. This path is known locally as the Jubilee Path, because it was opened in the Queen's Jubilee year, 1977.

At the bottom of the hill turn right and follow Salmon's Brook. Keep following the path until you come to a bridge. Cross over Salmon's Brook then turn immediately right and through a kissing gate. Keep following the field edge with the brook close by now on the right. The path leads through several fields before it bears round to the left to follow the tree line up the hill.

Did you know?

The hill straight ahead is called Cuckold's Hill. A 'Cuckold' was a man whose wife had been unfaithful. It is an Elizabethan word for a Cuckoo - which lays her eggs in other birds' nests.

Head towards newly planted woodland known as Brooke Wood, and go through the kissing gate just before the brow of the hill. Follow the path through young trees towards the road, and walk straight ahead, keeping parallel with the hedge for about 150 metres until you reach a stile. Cross The Ridgeway road here and turn right continuing along The Ridgeway on the other side of the road.

A few hundred metres further on is a bus stop for route 313 which goes to Enfield or Potters Bar.

Turn left down Rectory Farm Road just beyond the Royal Chace Hotel and immediately opposite the bus stop on the other side of the road. [Point Y is along this next stretch. Turn left if you have come along the cycle track.] Follow the drive to the sheds, bear right behind them and continue, crossing the bridge over Turkey Brook. Follow the track up the hill, pass under the railway bridge and turn right at the T-junction. After some glasshouses on the right, take a woodland path on the right into Hilly Fields Park.

Did you know?

This part of London was once a mass of glasshouses that produced huge quantities of tomatoes and cucumbers for all the country. These glasshouses are the few left. They now produce water plants for gardens.

Follow the path into the woods, keeping the cricket ground on the left. Once past the cricket ground, turn left onto a path alongside the cricket ground that soon emerges at the top of an open field on the right. Walk along the top then turn right onto a metalled path on the far side. Go down the hill and cross Turkey Brook at its most charming part. *To continue on the next leg, bear left to follow the brook through Hilly Fields.*

To reach Gordon Hill station, after the bridge carry on straight ahead up a narrower path. At the top, turn left along a single-track road. Go up the steps on the right into the cemetery. At the T junction, turn right. Take the second turning left and carry on to the exit. Cross the road, turn right onto the pavement of Lavender Gardens and follow it round to the left. Turn right onto Rendlesham Gardens, and the station is straight ahead.

Leg 31 Gordon Hill to Turkey Street

3.16 miles (0.60 mi from Gordon Hill station, 0.04 mi to Turkey Street station)

Cross the main road in front of the station and the grass triangle beyond it. Turn left onto the pavement along the far side of Lavender Gardens. After a right bend, cross Lavender Gardens and enter the cemetery. Keep straight ahead downhill. Take the third turning right, before a band of trees on the right. Turn left onto a narrow path. Leave the cemetery down a flight of steps and turn left. After a brief descent turn down the tarmac path on the right. At the bottom of the slope, turn sharp right alongside Turkey Brook.

Keep on the path alongside the brook until you meet Clay Hill road and the welcome sight of the Rose & Crown Pub opposite. Cross the road, and take the path ahead just right of the pub, keeping open grass on the right and the Turkey Brook close on the left. Follow the sign saying Mile & a Quarter Footpath, leading to Forty Hall down a small slope.

Keep straight ahead and use Turkey Brook on the left as a guide. Keep ahead towards Forty Hall. Fork left to follow a long fishing pond on the right and rhododendrons lining the path.

Did you know?

The ponds are next to the site of the Elsynge Palace, a favourite haunt of Queen Elizabeth when she wanted to be out of the city. The ponds you have walked past may well have kept the palace supplied with fish.

Just beyond the ponds, up to the right, is the 17th century Forty Hall, which now includes a museum; the house and gardens are worth a visit. There is also a cafe and toilets. Reach it by turning right at the end of the fish ponds and following the lime tree avenue.

The LOOP continues beside the brook until you come to a cross-roads with a small footbridge on the left. Carry straight on to the roadside.

Did you know?

Local legend says that at this spot, Maidens Bridge, Sir Walter Raleigh spread his cloak over a puddle so the Queen could cross without getting her feet wet. This dramatic act of gallantry suggested that he had completely lost his head over her; unfortunately for Raleigh he later did - he was beheaded!

Cross the road and find the tarmac path to the left of the school car park. Carry on following the tarmac path over the New River, which dives under Turkey Brook at this point.

Once at the main road, use the metal footbridge on your left to cross.

For buses towards Enfield or Turnpike Lane Tube station use the bus stop 150 metres ahead at the bottom of the footbridge.

For the LOOP, turn left on the other side, then right after a few metres to follow the tarmac path that runs alongside the cemetery.

At the road go under the railway bridge, then turn left at a T-junction, into Winnington Road which leads to Turkey Street. *To continue turn right into Turkey Street.*

Turkey Street station is left at this junction.

PJM Section 20 Turkey Street to Chingford

5.86 miles (0.04 mi from Turkey Street station, 0.18 mi to Chingford station)

Leg 32 Turkey Street to Enfield Lock

1.22 miles (0.04 mi from Turkey Street station, 0.24 mi to Enfield Lock station)

Bear right out of the station, walk down Teal Close and turn left along Turkey Street.

Follow Turkey Street to meet Hertford Road at the end. Cross Hertford Road at the crossing a few metres to the right, turn right, and then take the first left down St. Stephen's Road, which curves around to the right.

Turn immediately left past a bollard onto the Prince of Wales Footpath.

Once again the LOOP follows Turkey Brook - look out for mute swans swimming on it.

Did you know?

There is an ancient belief that swans mate for life and it is said that if one of the pair dies the other will die of a broken heart, singing as it does so. That is why a 'Swan Song' is a performer's last performance.

Keep following the brook through Albany Park. If there's a flash of blue and orange it's a kingfisher whizzing by! They certainly live the high life as their home is a burrow in the riverbank, where the smelly remains of their fishy snacks are to be found. [For some reason has been diverted away from the edge of Albany Park. Either you can follow the diversion by keeping on the path that runs alongside the diversion, or you can follow the original course by going left at the T junction and over a footbridge at both the start and end of the diversion.]

At the other side of the park cross the steep railway bridge, once on the other side, and after a few metres cross the brook via another bridge. This is the end of this section.

To get to Enfield Lock station walk ahead to the end of Bradley Road, turn left and the station will be in sight on the left. Turn right for a bus stop - bus 121 will take you to Enfield and Oakwood stations.

TLF Section 18 Enfield Lock to Chingford

4 miles (6.5 kilometres).

Leg 33 Enfield Lock to Chingford

5.11 miles (0.24 mi from Enfield Lock station, 0.18 mi to Chingford station)

Introduction.

You're in green surroundings nearly all the way in this shorter section, beside the gentle current of London's waterways and through the wooded countryside.

The terrain is mostly flat but a stiff climb into the Sewardstone Hills is rewarded with a magnificent view across north London. In Epping Forest you encounter another fairly steep climb up to Hawk Wood.

The surface is mostly rough paths, tracks and grass; there are nine stiles. The section from Enfield Lock station to Swan and Pike Pool is suitable for the less mobile and pushchairs.

Points of interest are Enfield Small Arms Factory, King George V Reservoir, Sewardstone Marsh Nature Reserve, the Scout Headquarters at Gilwell Park and Yardley and Hawk Woods. There are cafes and public toilets at Enfield Lock and Chingford.

National Rail services run from Enfield Lock and Chingford, and there are several bus routes along the way.

This section starts at the footbridge over Turkey Brook near Enfield Lock station - not at Enfield Lock itself.

Directions.

Leave Enfield Lock station turning right at the exit, then after about 15 metres take the first right into Bradley Road. Walk to the end of this road to meet Turkey Brook. Turn left onto the brook path before the bridge to join this section of the LOOP.

Cross Newbury Avenue and keep following the brook reaching a path leading to a bridge on the right and the school playing fields to the left. Take the bridge to cross over Mollison Avenue.

Did you know?

From the top of the bridge the Sewardstone Hills can be seen, and a bit further to the right, in the Lea Valley Regional Park are the waters of King George V Reservoir which was completed in 1913. The reservoir was recently emptied for the first time in 96 years so engineers could carry out necessary maintenance work.

Once over the bridge, follow the path straight ahead to reach Enfield Lock. The LOOP meets up with the Lea Valley Walk here, another of the seven Walk London routes.

Did you know?

In the distance, across the car park, lies a converted factory. This was once the Royal Small Arms Factory where the famous Lee Enfield rifle was once made - and named after the River Lee Navigation and the Enfield Factory. The first machinery came from America but soon the factory was producing better designs of their own. The British Army fought through the Boer War and two World Wars with the rifle.

Walk over the River Lee Navigation then turn immediately right through the barrier and onto the towpath. Follow this over the footbridge and turn left past Swan and Pike Pool through the car park to meet the footpath straight ahead which bends right alongside the River Lea.

Ignore the first bridge on your left. Continue ahead, alongside the river, via the large concrete bridge and a short distance further on cross two bridges across different sections of the river.

Follow the LOOP fingerpost into Sewardstone Marsh Nature Reserve. Stay on the wide right hand path as it bends right, then left through lush green growth.

Ignore the path joining from the left and continue along the main path straight ahead over a culvert. The path leaves the Marsh via a metal barrier to arrive at the end of a residential street called Godwin Close. Walk along Godwin Close up to Sewardstone Road and turn right. An hourly bus 505 goes from here to Chingford or Harlow on Mondays to Saturdays. It is not run by Transport for London so your Oyster card will not be valid on this service.

After 40 metres cross the road to the stile opposite Sewardstone Close then cross the stile into the field. Cross the field diagonally and go through a kissing gate before taking a tarmac track straight ahead towards the tree covered hill. There is also a stunning view over the waters of the Lea Valley below.

Did you know?

King George V Reservoir supplies over a quarter of London's water. There are actually two reservoirs here, the other being the William Girling, named after the Chairman of the Metropolitan Water Board.

Follow the track uphill as it turns first right and then left past a cemetery. Reach a stile on the right. Cross over into the narrow band of woods.

Did you know?

Yellow archangel and wild garlic can be found growing here. The Saxons are here too, as the name 'garlic' actually comes from the Anglo-Saxon garleac.

Cross a stile at the end of the wood and follow the fence on the left to reach another stile. Walk up the sleeper steps and cross the next field's perimeter track. Cross the field diagonally, aiming for a point about one third of the way along the right-hand side. Cross the perimeter track again and pass between a couple of posts to enter Epping Forest, once the haunt of Dick Turpin and numerous other Highwaymen. A short way in, take the small track to the left.

After around 200 metres turn right onto a track leading to Bury Road. Cross Bury Road and carry on along the path opposite which bends to the left and runs parallel to the road (and may be muddy). Continue to Gilwell Lane.

Did you know?

You are now at Gilwell Park, the home of Scouting in the UK. The organisation has fired the imagination of children from all over the world, and Gilwell Park has seen millions of them. Gilwell Park contains a large white 17th century building which is Grade listed; it combines outdoor activities with conference facilities and guest accommodation.

Turn right into Gilwell Lane towards the Scout Association Headquarters and walk right to the end of the road to the large gates. Follow the path round to the left, past the gates, then after around 35 metres take the unmade path straight ahead past the vehicle barrier. In 80 metres, bear right on the grass lane. After a while the lane drops and, half way down the slope, follow the waymarker turning onto a narrow path to the left. This comes out onto Yardley Hill.

Follow the hilly path straight down to the bottom of the valley. At the bottom bear right twice and left once in quick succession. Cross a stream and take the grassy track up the other side. Keep climbing the hill to the trees at the top, then turn left through The Hawk Wood. Follow the path through the wood with the golf course up on the right.

Did you know?

All golfers on this course are forced by an ancient law to wear bright red whilst playing golf so that everyone else can see and avoid them. They must still do that!

Once past the golf course the route returns to Bury Road. Cross the road and turn right to join the horse ride which runs parallel to the road. After 400 metres there is a Corporation of London sign and Chingford Plain opens out.

Go right then left onto the path alongside the carparks, then cross the car parks to join the pavement along Bury Road to reach Chingford Golf Course Club House and cafe and the end of this section. *To continue, turn left after the club house.*

To get to Chingford station, continue along Bury Road to the T-junction. Turn right into Rangers Road and after about 60 metres on the left is Chingford rail and bus station.

TFL Section 19 Chingford to Chigwell

4 miles (6.5 kilometres).

PJM Section 21 Chingford to Grange Hill

6.14 miles (0.18 mi from Chingford station, 1.05 mi to Grange Hill station)

Leg 34 Chingford to Buckhurst Hill

2.73 miles (0.18 mi from Chingford station, 0.64 mi to Buckhurst Hill station)

Introduction.

This shortish section will take you through the open spaces of Epping Forest and the meadows of the Roding Valley Meadows Nature Reserve.

It's easy walking but some parts of Epping Forest may be muddy. There is one gentle climb near the start, and part of the route is on pavements and tarmac paths. Some parts of Roding Valley Meadows Local Nature area are accessible for the less mobile and pushchairs.

The highlights are Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge and the magnificent ancient oaks in Epping Forest.

There are pubs and cafes at Chingford, Epping New Road, High Road, Woodford Green, Loughton Way and Chigwell. Public toilets are available at Chingford, Linder's Field Nature Reserve and Roding Valley Recreation Area.

There are underground stations at Buckhurst Hill, and Chigwell and several bus routes along the way.

Directions.

Exit Chingford station onto Station Road and turn right. Cross Beresford Road on the right and then cross left over Rangers Road (the continuation of Station Road) to Bury Road opposite.

Almost immediately, and before the clubhouse of the Royal Epping Forest Golf Course, look out for the London LOOP waymarkers. Turn right onto the gravel path which leads onto Chingford Plain.

After a short distance the gravel track ends and the path turns sharp left over a small bridge. Do not follow the path, instead turn right and take the wide grass strip straight up the hill to pass between the trees.

Did you know?

Once through the trees you emerge in front of a white timber-framed Elizabethan building which is Queen Elizabeth's Royal Hunting Lodge. Built for King Henry VIII in 1543, Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge is the only remaining timber-framed hunting lodge left standing in England. This unique historic building is open, free to the public, courtesy of the City of London. Please check opening times before visiting.

Continue straight on to arrive at the drinking fountain, turning right towards the road. Opposite the Butler's Retreat cafe, cross Rangers Road and turn immediately left to follow a path parallel with the road. Walk beneath the magnificent veteran oaks, which are at least 450 years old, and continue on the often muddy path to meet a broad gravel track.

Cross the track and carry on along the path opposite to cross the culvert over the stream. Follow the path straight ahead to the open grassy space of The Warren.

Continue straight up the hill of The Warren to the trees in the distance. Take a moment to glance back for superb views of Chingford Plain.

Near the top of the hill, go diagonally right towards The Warren Wood pub. Cross Epping New Road and pick up the path opposite, which leads up through the meadow. Carry straight on into a stretch of woods. Emerge beside a cricket ground, with flats on the right. Follow the right edge of the cricket field to reach High Road.

To leave the LOOP here use bus route 20 to reach Debden station, Loughton station or Walthamstow Central stations.

To continue cross over High Road and bear left taking to the grass of Roebuck Green between two roads. The green drops downhill with a faint path through to the grass. For a short stretch you will need to walk along North End Road. When the path ends, just before The Stables, cross over North End road and take the byway between houses, signed to Buckhurst Hill.

You will shortly come to a T-junction, go left and find a well-concealed path running just right of a house garage. The path curves right through a kissing gate then reveals itself as a fine old green track, dropping into Roding Valley with a tree line to its left.

The path goes straight with trees on either side and passes Linder's Field Local Nature Reserve on the right before gently descending to a kissing gate.

Did you know?

Half of this 3.6 hectare wildlife site is ancient woodland, and is particularly notable for bluebells and wild service trees while two small ponds host communities of toads, common frog and smooth newt.

Go through the wooden kissing gate into a field. Keeping the hedge on your left descend towards the railway bridge. Go through the metal kissing gate and over the footbridge crossing the Central line. On the other side of the railway, the route emerges between houses on the corner of Thaxted Road. *To continue on the LOOP turn left along Thaxted Road.*

To leave the LOOP at this point, follow the road straight ahead and turn right into Blackmore Road before meeting up with Loughton Way. Bus 167 will take you to Buckhurst Hill and Ilford from here, or to walk to Buckhurst Hill station turn right here and keep on for a little over half a mile to the traffic lights at Palmerston Road. Turn right here, cross the railway bridge and turn left for the station.

Leg 35 Buckhurst Hill to Chigwell

2.97 miles (0.64 mi from Buckhurst Hill station, 0.24 mi to Chigwell station)

Leave the station by the main exit on platform 2, turn right onto Victoria Road, and right again over the railway lines. After passing both ends of Roding View, turn left into Blackmore Road. Turn left into Thaxted Road and follow it round to the right.

After passing Blackmore Road you reach an open green area on the right known as Green Walk. Take the pedestrian path to reach the road signed both Valley Hill and Loughton Way. Cross the road and continue down Green Walk to reach Bradwell Road. Cross it to enter the Roding Recreation Area. Go straight on passing playing fields to reach a T-junction of paths at a large lake. This lake was excavated to provide the nearby M11 motorway with gravel.

Turn right at the lake and proceed straight on, then left as the path skirts around the water's edge. Follow the path as it bears away from the lake and then over an arched concrete footbridge over the River Roding. On the other side of the footbridge turn left on a path beside the Roding into Roding Valley Meadows Nature Reserve.

Did you know?

The Roding Meadows Nature Reserve constitutes the largest surviving area of traditional river flood-plain grassland in Essex. They have probably looked much the same for the last 1,000 years. Comprising 56.6 hectares (140 acres) the meadows are home to over 250 wild flowers, grasses and rushes as well as birds such as kingfishers and kestrels, and animals like the water vole.

Coming into open grass, just after a wooden kissing gate, branch right, heading up the gentle slope, and turn right onto a track.

Go through the nature reserve car park and bear left on the road beyond. Coming up to the main road, turn left and cross the M11.

Keep on along the road, Chigwell Rise, crossing to the other footway if the opportunity arises for the views it offers across the Roding Valley.

This section ends at the junction of Chigwell Rise and Chigwell High Road. *The next section continues to the left.*

To reach Chigwell station turn right at the junction with Chigwell High Road. Continue past the shops and Chigwell station soon becomes visible across the road.

TFL Section 20 Chigwell to Havering-atte-Bower

6 miles (9.7 kilometres).

Leg 36 Chigwell to Grange Hill

2.19 miles (0.24 mi from Chigwell station, 1.05 mi to Grange Hill station)

Introduction.

This section is one of the most rural sections of the whole LOOP, being almost entirely in open country, woodland or undulating farmland.

Points of interest are the country parks at Hainault with its lake and Havering Country Park with the pleasant village of Havering-atte-Bower, from which the London borough takes its name, at the end.

The terrain is generally level with some gentle slopes and six stiles. It is mostly on rough paths or tracks and on grass; some fields may be ploughed.

There are pubs and cafes at Chigwell, Chigwell Row, Havering-atte-Bower, and public toilets at Hainault Forest Country Park and Havering-atte-Bower.

There are tube stations at Chigwell and Grange Hill and buses along the route.

The bus service to and from Havering-atte-Bower is infrequent and doesn't run on Sundays - please check the timetable before travelling. Other buses are available miles from the end of this section of the LOOP.

Directions.

Leave Chigwell station and turn right onto High Road. Go through the village past the Chigwell shops on the left and the park on the right. Cross Hainault Road, then go over the aptly named Chigwell Brook and over Courtland Drive.

Join the main LOOP route as it comes down the hill from the left on Chigwell Rise to meet the mini roundabout. Continue straight ahead.

Go up the hill passing the Chigwell Sports Club and St. Mary's Church on the left and Ye Olde Kings Head on the right.

Did you know?

Facing St. Mary's church is an ancient timber-framed public house named the Kings Head. Ye Olde Kings Head (now also a restaurant) has the title of being the most famous pub in Essex. Its impressive facade inspired Charles Dickens to include it in his novel Barnaby Rudge. It was also the favoured watering hole of the legendary 18th century highwayman, Dick Turpin, who started his criminal career, it is said, poaching deer from the nearby forests of Hainault and Epping.

Just past the pub and restaurant are pedestrian crossing lights. Turn right here to follow the Epping Forest Country Care walk. Go through the gate and into a meadow. Avoiding the brambles, go straight ahead through the open field to the road opposite.

Go through the kissing gate and turn right along the road for a few paces. Cross Vicarage Lane and go through the gap in the hedge and turn right, reaching a smaller opening in the brambles and an open field beyond.

Follow the field edge around to the left and through another gap in the hedge. Follow the permissive path and head around to the left along the edge of another field. Ahead are farm buildings possibly visible through the trees.

As the path crosses a meeting of ways shortly before the buildings, turn hard right to follow the wide track down the hill. *At the bottom, to continue on the next leg, turn left.*

To get to Grange Hill station, carry straight on. Keep straight on when the main track bends left, and keep going up the hill. The track deteriorates and then improves. Eventually you reach Vicarage Lane again. Turn right. On the next bend turn left, then bear right along the boundary between two fields. When you reach the wood, turn left into it. Follow the path to the end. Turn right along the road, and Grange Hill station is on the left.

PJM Section 22 Grange Hill to Harold Wood

Leg 37 Grange Hill to Harold Wood

11.77 miles (1.05 mi from Grange Hill station)

Turn right out of the station. Take the footpath on the left, immediately after the entrance to Chigwell Cemetery. Follow this path all the way to the end. When it emerges from the woods, turn right and go along the edge of two fields in succession, towards a pair of houses. Pass between the houses, and turn right along the road. On the next bend, go down the driveway on the left. At the

end, carry on along the path downhill. This becomes a farm track. Keep straight ahead until it starts to rise. Then turn right.

This is a charming green lane, with enough width between its hedges to have been a drove way.

Follow the track as it begins to climb the rise ahead and, at another crossing of ways, turn right to hike along the left edge of a field. Keep the hedge to the left until it and the track end. Veer left diagonally across the field towards a metal fence.

Bear right alongside the fence. The steady humming sound of machines in the distance is the Chigwell Water Treatment Works, situated on the other side of the fence.

The path comes out at the gates and entrance drive to the waterworks. Cross the drive and continue on the path around the fence line to the left until you reach a stile on the right. Go over it and through the meadow, keeping the hedge close on the left to reach a wooden gate.

Continue past a house on the left, then over another stile.

Follow the path alongside the green fence, and then between a quaint fence line on the left with a beloved vegetable garden behind, and a hedge on the right to the foot of a small lane called Chapel Lane. Go straight ahead to the main road at Chigwell Row. The chapel is the charming yellow-brick Victorian building on the right.

Turn left along the main road here, which is Lambourne Road, and cross carefully after about 20 metres to follow the concrete path to the open space through the wooden kissing gate. Keep on the path straight ahead past the playing courts then bear right to the line of trees beyond.

Did you know?

Chigwell Row Wood owes its survival to the far-sighted Victorian inhabitants of Chigwell. Concerned that tree clearance in the area would deprive them of a place to walk and exercise, they set up a charity to ensure its survival. It's now managed by the staff and volunteers at Epping Forest Country Care.

Turn left to follow the path with the trees on the right and when the path bends left again go straight on then turn right into the trees. At the first intersection turn left. Keep straight ahead until you reach a kissing gate by the Romford Road. Go through the kissing gate. Once on the road side cross carefully.

To leave the LOOP at this point, turn left once across the road to reach the bus stop. Bus 150 from here goes to Gants Hill, Hainault and Ilford stations.

To continue, pass through a squeeze stile to enter Hainault Forest Country Park. Go through a kissing gate and follow the middle of the three faint paths through wild growth. Keep on the main path until you reach another kissing gate.

Pass through the kissing gate then turn left then right over a major gravel track. Continue straight ahead along the track which is also a horse ride. As the track drops through young birch woodland, ignore the paths that go left or right, to end up at a lake.

Did you know?

In 1130 when much of Essex was woodland, Henry I, son of William the Conqueror, designated this area The Royal Forest of Essex. It was used exclusively for the kingly sport of hunting. Hainault Forest Country Park is a surviving fragment of that vast verdant landscape, as in 1851 Parliament gave its consent to land being drained and fenced, and 100,000 trees were felled. Fortunately, Hainault Forest has now been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Turn left along the track by the waterside. Once around a right bend, you have an expanse of open grass on the left. If you want to visit Foxburrows Rare Breeds Farm carry straight on.

To continue, step away from the track here and keep left uphill along the woodland edge. Keep by the trees until the ground begins to drop again. About a third of the way down, take a track on the left through the wood. On emerging, when the main track bends left uphill, keep straight on to reach the main track along the park boundary, with a golf course beyond it.

Turn left onto the surfaced track and climb with the golf course visible through the fence on the right. When the track levels out at the top of the incline, turn right and enter the Hainault Forest Golf Course through the broken kissing gate. Cross the fairway and walk just left of a group of trees to enter a long tree belt called the Mile Plantation.

Follow the rough path and turn right at the next junction, then bear left onto a less formal path. Keep following this path through the trees, some marked with yellow paint. After a cross-track, then path bears left and emerges from the wood. Pass a green on your right and cross a fairway. Go through a gap in the band of trees, and bear right past a grey bench. Ahead there is a hedge which marks the edge of the golf course. Walk past another green to a kissing gate.

Go through the kissing gate and strike out across the field diagonally, aiming for the corner. After another kissing gate, cross the culvert and bear left so that the boundary ditch is on the left. Keeping the ditch on your left, turn left at the edge of the field into another field.

The field ends with a stile and gate leading to a metalled drive, turn right here and follow the drive (Lodge Lane) past the farm and bungalow.

Turn left at the first junction, and carry straight on along bridleway 277 to Havering Country Park. Where several paths meet on the edge of the country park, turn hard left up the rise (Clockhouse Lane) to enjoy expansive panoramic views.

About 20 metres after the wooden seat on the right, turn right through the wooden barrier into the forest which is Havering Country Park. Follow the slowly rising path (Wellingtonia Avenue) straight ahead through the forest, crossing a horse ride and passing two kissing gates.

Did you know?

Havering Country Park has a rich and varied landscape with splendid views over the woods and meadows of Essex's countryside. The giant sequoia trees that line both sides of the Avenue were planted in the 19th century. Their towering reddish trunks may look impressive, but these American immigrants are small compared to those that grow in its native Californian hills which can grow to 300 feet (90 metres) high, have a trunk diameter of 35 feet (10 metres) and live for 3,000 years or more. They are the largest living things on Earth.

Continue along the path and once through the wooden gate and at the five way path, carry on straight, following the sign to the village. Enjoy the distinct smell of the pine trees where tiny goldcrest and firecrest birds feed and nest before exiting Havering Country Park beside the metal gate. Here on the right is an information board about the park, and on the left is an amazing view over miles of Roding Valley countryside.

Go past the houses and between the riding school and church to the green of Havering-atte-Bower.

Did you know?

Nothing remains of an important royal house that once stood at Havering-atte-Bower. Edward the Confessor started things off nearly a thousand years ago by establishing a holy retreat here. Later, William The Conqueror and King John built hunting lodges.

Slowly, a large Royal Palace grew in a haphazard manner over the next 600 years, with Charles I being the last monarch to stay there. The palace stood where Havering-atte-Bower green is now. A Victorian church stands where the original chapel once stood and stables are on the site of the old palace stables.

Turn left on North Road to The Royal Oak pub where this section ends.

Or turn right where there is a bus stop for route 375 to Romford (buses run about every hours and do not run on Sundays).

If you want to walk to get other buses, continue past the bus stop and follow Orange Tree Hill and Havering Road south for miles to Chase Cross. At the major traffic-light controlled junction turn right onto Chase Cross Road and you will soon see the bus stop for route 103 which provides regular and daily buses to Romford station.

TFL Section 21 Havering-atte-Bower (Royal Oak pub) to Harold Wood

4.3 miles (6.9 kilometres).

Introduction.

From the attractive village of Havering-atte-Bower this section first passes through high-lying, undulating farmland, to reach Noak Hill. It then follows a narrow green strip through the suburb of Harold Hill, which lies beside Carter's and Paine's Brooks. These streams flow into the River Ingrebourne, which itself joins the Thames at Rainham Creek.

This section has generally fairly level walking, mostly on rough paths, tracks and grass and there are five stiles. The section through Central Park is suitable for people with limited mobility and pushchairs.

There are pubs at Havering-atte-Bower, Noak Hill and Harold Wood, and public toilets at Havering-atte-Bower.

There is a National Rail station at Harold Wood, and buses serving Havering- -Bower, Noak Hill, Harold Hill and Harold Wood.

Directions.

To reach the start of this section of the LOOP, take bus route 375 to Havering-atte-Bower from Romford. Get off the bus at Havering Green. This is an infrequent bus service, so check the timetable before you travel - the bus starts from Romford station. On Sundays, when this route doesn't run, take bus 103 to Chase Cross where it is a mile walk to the start of this section - walk forward from alighting the bus and turn left at the traffic lights on to Havering Road which continues to Orange Tree Road. Turn left into North Road.

Take the LOOP route which goes down the hill of North Road and past The Royal Oak pub on the left.

Did you know?

Casual visitors to Havering-atte-Bower may be surprised to discover that this pleasant little village was once the ancient seat of kings and the site of a vast Royal Palace, of which not a stone remains. The location of the palace was the site of the present village green.

Just beyond The Royal Oak is a sign on the right pointing to 'Footpath number 7 to Paternoster Row 1¾ miles'. Follow the sign along the obscure path that squeezes between a brick garage and a wooden fence.

Follow the path to the open fields, and squeeze through the gate. Follow the fence line on the right through the next two fields. Ignore the track in the right hand corner of the field which heads up to the right towards Round House Farm. Instead turn left and continue along the field edge down the hill, keeping the fence line still on the right.

Did you know?

You can't fail to notice the strange round building on the right called the 'Round house'. It was once the home of Joseph Hardwick Pemberton (1852-1926), a true giant in the world of rose breeding.

After about 200 metres down from the corner of the field, turn right to go through a kissing gate and over a footbridge. Go through the bramble and into the open field beyond.

Continue straight ahead over the brow of the field to the far side. From here, keep on straight ahead through the next field passing on the right side of an isolated tree to the woodland beyond.

At the woodlands edge stands an iron gatepost. It once marked the entrance to the grand residence of Pyrgo.

Did you know?

These days nothing remains of the house save this one rusting sentinel defying time. In its heyday Pyrgo House was home and playground for King Henry VIII's daughters Mary and Elizabeth who as children grew up happily together [a little unlikely, since there was an age difference of 17 years] here.

Turn right and go up the rise, passing the woodland edge on the left to the end. Turn left here to follow footpath 7 along the edge of the trees. After a short drop and rise, bear left towards another field. Turn right along the edge of this field. Standing on a ridge now, the views are impressive as the meadows drop to the south.

Did you know?

You are looking over Foxburrow Wood. This ancient woodland, with its massive hornbeams is home to many woodland birds including the increasingly rare mistle thrush and the colourful great spotted woodpecker. Foxburrow Wood is an important site for nature conservation.

At the corner of the field turn left towards the left corner of a small wood opposite.

Continue straight ahead, keeping the trees to the right along 'footpath number 7' as the signpost in the corner of the wood reassures. At the field's corner, turn left then after about 400 metres turn right to go over a rotten footbridge.

Keep along the hedge with the ditch to the left, keeping an eye out for pheasants roaming free. At the end of the field go over the stile in the left corner and turn right onto a quiet lane called Paternoster Row. Go past the cottages and continue until about 20 metres before Widdrington Farm where this road ends.

Go over the stile to the left and follow the track which passes over Carter's Brook. At the end, go over a stile and turn left to follow the roadside of Cummings Hall Lane to the main road ahead which is Noak Hill Road.

To leave the LOOP at this point, there is a bus stop opposite The Dear's Rest pub - route 294 will take you to Romford station and the 256 to Emerson Park and Hornchurch stations.

To continue, turn left into Noak Hill Road, passing The Dear's Rest pub to reach Tees Drive, (the next road on the right). Turn right and go down Tees Drive on the left-hand side, passing Wincanton Road and Wrexham Road on the right.

Continue past Priory Road and immediately find an obscure path in the trees with Carter's Brook on the left. [So obscure that it's probably not worth bothering with. You'll probably do better just to keep going along Tees Drive.] As the path heads to the end of Tees Drive cross left to go over the brook on Whitchurch Road and then right to continue following the brook now on the right.

Did you know?

Harold Hill and Harold Wood probably derive their names from various connections with King Harold Godwinson (Harold II), who was defeated by William the Conqueror in 1066 at the Battle of Hastings.

Cross the next road Dagnam Park Drive (bus 174 goes to Romford from here) and continue straight ahead through the gates into Central Park. Keep on the tarmac path as it turns right then left to rejoin the brook (now Paine's Brook), flowing on the right. Pass the children's play area on the right, bear right at the roundabout, and follow the path to the right of the car park to leave Central Park and arrive at Petersfield Avenue.

Cross here and continue straight ahead, with the brook still on the right, to yet another road crossing (St. Neot's Road) then pass another playground on the left before the path veers left and then turns right through a gate to reach a crossing point of the big dual carriageway of Colchester Road, the A12.

This is a fast road so we advise that you turn right to reach a pedestrian crossing about 500 metres further down and then walk back to re-join the route. [Hardly necessary. There are plenty of gaps in the traffic.]

Once on the other side of the A12, turn left at the crossing point and then right to enter a field. Once on the other side of the field, follow the track in the left corner. The track becomes enclosed and veers around the Paine's Brook Play Area (the brook has changed its name since we joined it!) before opening out to Church Road.

Cross the road and turn right onto the footpath of Church Road, crossing the brook and continuing straight ahead before turning down Queens Park Road (the next road on the left). Follow the road as it turns right through a car barrier.

At the end of Queens Park Road, turn left along Station Road and go past the King Harold pub (on the right). Keep on past the shops on the right and then turn left at the end of Station Road.

The entrance to Harold Wood station is just on the left and is where this section ends. To continue on to Section 22 to Upminster Bridge, follow the signs past Harold Wood station.

TFL Section 22 Harold Wood to Upminster Bridge

4 miles (6.9 kilometres).

PJM Section 23 Harold Wood to Rainham

8.99 miles

Leg 38 Harold Wood to Upminster Bridge

4.40 miles

Introduction.

This fairly short section goes through Pages Wood - a superb new community woodland of 74 hectares, as well as other woods, the riverside of the Ingrebourne and expansive pasture. The highlights include Upminster Windmill and the wooden artworks in Pages Wood.

The terrain is almost completely level with one or two short gentle slopes. It's mostly on footpaths, tracks and grass, often with rough surfaces. There is a more accessible section from Harold Wood to Hall Lane. There are pubs and cafes at Harold Wood and Upminster Bridge.

There are buses at Southend Arterial Road, Hall Lane and Wingletye Lane if needed.

Directions.

Exit Harold Wood station by the stairs at the end of the platform to join the LOOP route which passes the station's main exit.

Once outside the station and on Gubbins Lane turn left then left again into Oak Road. Follow the road straight ahead past Athelstan Road and Ethelburga Road - lots of Saxon names here - and then go down Archibald Road, the third street on the right.

Go through the metal barrier onto the gravel road passing the houses on the right and the Ingrebourne River flowing by on the left. Continue on the short stretch of tarmac road to the busier Squirrels Heath Road and turn right.

After a short distance turn left into the modest Brinsmead Road (use the pedestrian lights just ahead of you to cross the road) which leads to Harold Wood Park.

Go through the gate and turn immediately right onto the path. Just before the car park turn left to follow the tarmac path along the avenue of trees, passing tennis courts on the right.

At the T junction turn left and go past the children's playground on the right. A footbridge comes into view on the right. Go over the Ingrebourne River via the wooden footbridge to enter Pages Wood. Turn right and follow the gravel path.

Did you know?

Crossing the River Ingrebourne into Pages Wood you get a warm welcome from the rainbow arch over the bridge! [oh no you don't] Pages Wood, which also includes Mount Pleasant Farm, is a new 74 hectare community woodland with over 100,000 trees planted in 2001.

Continue along the path ignoring all the paths turning left until reaching a T-junction of ways. Turn left here then right over the bridge and onto the permissive footpath. Continue straight ahead on the gravel path among the young trees on either side until it veers left, up towards the car park.

Did you know?

Along the two miles of accessible paths created for walkers, cyclists and horses you can't help notice the fascinating wooden works of art created by the sculptor Andy Frost, including the 'Welcome' rainbow arch. There are also squirrel picnic tables, as well as a fox and duck bench.

Bear right onto the path along the right side of the car park to leave the park.

Cross the busy Hall Lane carefully and turn right onto the footpath. Continue to the road junction and bear left along the pavement to follow Hall Lane as it veers around to the right and over the busy Southend Arterial Road. Continue past the Strawberry Farm, quietly situated just before Bird Lane.

Where the houses begin on the left-hand side (just past the bus stop) bear left keeping the high hedge on your right. At the end of the hedge cross Avon Road, turn right and cross Hall Lane at the mini roundabout.

To leave the walk at this point there is a bus stop on the other side of River Drive. The buses go to Upminster Bridge station and Romford station.

To continue, enter River Drive and continue to the end. Squeeze through the wooden posts to drop into the dense woodland. Come out of the woods into a short open space before entering another section of dark trees towards a footbridge.

Go over the Ingrebourne River via the footbridge and kissing gate, and continue straight ahead over another smaller footbridge to the large open field beyond. Turn left here to follow the bottom edge of the field to the corner where the playing fields of Emerson Park School are just beyond.

Go through the kissing gate and across the footbridge and walk ahead with the playing field fence to the right. Where the fence ends, turn briefly left, then right, to continue along the foot of open fields, with the lush grass of Upminster Golf Course just visible through the trees to the left.

Coming to the second hedge line, turn right beside it. Then, at the hedge corner, cross a footbridge and head left towards houses. Just before reaching them, this newly created right of way turns right again to climb up out of the Ingrebourne valley, with the open field on the right. At the top of the rise, pause and look back over the Ingrebourne.

Did you know?

If there are no trees in the way, on the horizon is the unmistakable outline of a windmill. It is considered to be one of the finest examples of a 'Smock' windmill remaining in England. The name comes from the supposed resemblance to the smock once worn by farmers. Upminster Mill was built in 1803 by James Noakes, a local farmer. It is now owned by the London Borough of Havering.

Here by the LOOP post, turn left into the narrow path between garden fences to the corner of Lee Gardens Avenue. Follow the road straight ahead past the houses to meet Wingletye Lane. Head up the hill and go over the railway bridge.

On the other side of the railway, turn immediately left into Minster Way. Continue along this road as it veers right to meet Upminster Road and Upminster Bridge station, where this section ends.

The next section continues left along Upminster Road.

TFL Section 23 Upminster Bridge to Rainham

4 miles (6.4 kilometres).

Leg 39 Upminster Bridge to Rainham

4.59 miles

Introduction.

This section starts with the fascinating Upminster Windmill and generally follows the River Ingrebourne.

You walk through Hornchurch Country Park which has gone through several phases as a farm, military airfield, gravel quarry and rubbish tip, until its acquisition in 1980 by the local authority. The terrain is almost completely level with tarmac or firm gravel paths and there are no stiles, so all this section is very accessible.

There are pubs at Upminster Bridge, Hacton Lane, Rainham Road, Rainham village, and cafes and toilets at Rainham and Hornchurch Country Park. There is also a toilet next to Upminster Bridge station.

Directions.

Leave Upminster Bridge station and turn right onto the busy Upminster Road.

Go under the railway bridge and past The Windmill pub on the left. Cross Ingrebourne River and then turn right into Bridge Avenue.

To visit the Upminster Windmill continue along the main road for a short distance. The windmill is on the left.

Did you know?

Upminster Windmill was built in 1803 by a local farmer and continued to grind wheat and produce flour until 1934. The mill is only open on occasional weekends in spring and summer for guided tours, and funds are currently being raised to restore the mill to working order.

Continue along Bridge Avenue to Brookdale Avenue on the left and opposite is Hornchurch Stadium. Go through the black metal gates into the stadium and down the drive.

Enter the car park and turn left towards the tarmac path to the left of the wooden fence. Follow the path along the green open space of Gaynes Parkway with the Ingrebourne stream flowing by on the right.

At the triangular crossing of paths keep right, and continue close to the stream before crossing it via the footbridge.

Did you know?

The Ingrebourne River is your companion for most of this section of the LOOP. It passes roughly north east to south west through the London Borough of Havering and into the River Thames at Rainham Creek. Much of the river's route is classed as a London site of metropolitan importance because of the wildlife found here.

Turn immediately left once over the bridge and follow the Ingrebourne, now on the left, to the busy road called Hacton Lane. Cross here at the pedestrian crossing and continue straight ahead through the wooden gate and follow the path around Hacton Parkway Play Area.

Once past the play site, join the path on the riverside and follow the Ingrebourne Valley Greenway.

Continue on the tarmac path, past a stretch of houses behind fences, until reaching an open space to the right with a stretch of grass. Beyond is Newmarket Way.

Keep on the path past the footbridge and signpost on the left pointing to Hornchurch car park. Do not go over the bridge, keep ahead. Follow the Green Way track through a metal or over a footbridge to enter Hornchurch Country Park.

Did you know?

Hornchurch Country Park is a large area of glades, attractive mature woodland and meadows. It is hard to believe that this park, which was created in 1980 from a huge landfill site, sits on thousands of tons of household and industrial rubbish!

Shortly the path forks left to go past a children's play area on the right. Head to the left, away from the main path, and follow the fence edge along the bank above the river, shortly joining another broader tarmac path.

Did you know?

The concrete pillbox is a reminder that this site was once an RAF airfield. The airfield closed in 1962, but the air raid shelters, gun emplacements, turrets and pillboxes still show evidence of the airfield's defence.

Continue along the tarmac path, taking the left fork to Albyns Farm Lake. Keep following the track straight ahead along the bank, past a pillbox on the left, ignoring the paths going right, until finally the track turns up right to reach the lakeside with Albyns Farm in view across the water.

Follow the track around to the left of the lake before turning right up to the farm. Go through the gate and past Albyns Farm, a beautifully-kept medieval manor now privately owned.

Soon an opening will appear on the left, with a path leading into open meadows. Take this path, keeping the hedge on the right to the end of the tarmac. Turn right through the opening and then immediately left. Keep on this wide gravel path as it gently climbs to the brow of the hill. Once at the top Rainham comes into view, along with the south bank of the Thames.

Continue ahead down the hill keeping a close watch for mountain bikes crossing the track and, at the junction with the path joining from the right, keep left towards the car park. Just before the car park take the turn right and head to the road.

To leave the walk here, bus 103 will take you from the bus stops to Rainham or Romford stations.

Turn left along Rainham Road, following it past The Albion to meet a major roundabout at the A1306, New Road. Follow the path round to the left at what is known as Dovers Corner.

Cross the A1306 at the next pedestrian crossing and turn right on the other side. Follow the path around to the left and go over the Ingrebourne River one more time. Continue past the large Tesco on the left.

Continue over Viking Way towards Rainham village and the station.

Once past the Tesco petrol station, the unexpectedly attractive village of Rainham comes into view along Bridge Road. This peaceful place, with the defunct Bell pub on the left and the New Angel Inn opposite, is a perfect retreat away from noisy roads.

Before heading through the village to the station, it is well worth taking a moment to go over the footbridge opposite The Bell to discover Rainham Creekside Park.

Did you know?

Right up to the 19th century Rainham Creek was navigable for sailing barges, and Rainham became an important place for shipbuilding, as the creek connected to the Thames. A wealthy sea captain, John Harle not only owned the wharves here, but used the profits to have the handsome Rainham Hall built in 1729.

To reach the station, head along Bridge Road and, where it bends left, carry straight on along the path. From the bus stop by the War Memorial you can get buses to Barking, Elm Park, Dagenham East and Romford stations.

This section ends at Rainham station.

To keep going onto the next section, the final section of the LOOP to the Thames and Coldharbour Point, continue over the level crossing.

TFL Section 24 Rainham to Purfleet

5 miles (9 kilometres).

PJM Section 24 Rainham to Purfleet

Leg 40 Rainham to Purfleet

5.15 miles

Introduction.

This final section of the LOOP starts at Rainham station and continues to the end of the LOOP at Purfleet.

The first part is mainly on roads [no it isn't], but soon meets the Thames with views across the river to Erith, where Section 1 of the London LOOP begins.

Points of interest are the ancient river ferry crossing point, Rainham, Wennington and Aveley Marshes, the Second World War concrete barges and the RSPB visitor's centre.

The walk is almost entirely level, with one or two short gentle slopes, on mostly hard surface with some grass. There are no stiles but there are some high steps. There is access for wheelchairs and pushchairs from the Coldharbour Riverside car park to the RSPB visitor's centre.

There is a cafe with toilets at the RSPB site, and pubs and cafes at Rainham and Purfleet [no pubs in Purfleet], but no public toilets. Public transport is only available at Rainham and Purfleet, so be prepared to do the full five miles of this section.

Directions.

Leave Rainham station by the main building, turn right and go over the level crossing. Alternatively, leave the station from platform 1.

Cross the Channel Tunnel Rail Link by the footbridge. On the far side the Rainham Marshes appear on the left with the A13 in the distance. From the bridge, go down the long ramp straight ahead into the marshes.

At the bottom, carry straight on along the path that runs parallel to the road, surrounded by marshland and high grasses. The path emerges at the double roundabout under the A13, Thames Gateway. Cross straight ahead over the sliproad. Continue under the flyover to the next roundabout and keep ahead by crossing another sliproad.

Did you know?

In the distance to the right are two massive wind turbines standing at 85 metres high. This is Europe's first urban wind park and the turbines generate all the electricity required to power Ford's Dagenham Diesel Centre, the equivalent of 2,000 homes for a year.

Carry straight on over the footbridge into the marshes, and then immediately turn right along the gravel path, which runs parallel to the road. Follow this path round to the left and then right over another footbridge. Cross the road and continue to the next road. Cross this as well, and then turn left up a ramp.

On reaching our old friend the River Thames (and the concrete flood wall with a plaque commemorating the ancient ferry crossing), carry straight on along the tarmac path. Across the other side of the Thames, over the flood defence wall, the wharf of Erith can be seen, which is where the London LOOP begins.

Continue along the path past the factory and the concrete flood barrier on the left. Shortly you reach a car park.

Did you know?

In the bay to the right lay the abandoned World War II concrete barges originally built to support the D-Day landings.

From here the broad, surfaced riverside path eventually leads to Coldharbour Point with its beacon used by ships navigating the Thames. Continue along the path with the river to the right, and after a while evidence of re-worked landfill appears on the left. Eventually it reaches a small car park and a junction of ways.

Either turn right out of the carpark, or continue straight on down a slight incline taking a sharp right hand turn at the bottom. The former route (upper path) provides the better view; the latter route (lower path) provides a better surface for walking on.

Did you know?

The Rainham Marshes site straddles the boundary between the London and Essex regions of the Thames Gateway. Together with Wennington Marshes and Aveley Marshes, this area is the largest remaining wetlands in the Thames Estuary. Aveley Marshes is one of a few ancient landscapes left in London. Formerly used as a shooting range, this reserve has a wide diversity of bird life and has one of the highest densities of water voles in the UK. It was bought from the Ministry of Defence in July 2000.

The paths merge, and then split, and finally merge again just before the RSPB Education & Environment Centre. Bear right at the centre, over the footbridge, then right to join a path running through Purfleet's riverside gardens.

Follow the river until, beneath the cream terraces of The Royal Hotel, a path bears left up to the London Road. Turn right, cross at the nearby island and follow the road to Purfleet station.

You have now reached the end of this section and the end of the London LOOP.