



Hendon to Hampstead

Distance: 8½ km=5½ miles

easy walking

Region: Greater London

Date written: 13-may-2010

Author: Thwelder

Date revised: 14-jul-2018

Refreshments: Hendon, Hampstead

Last update: 28-jan-2020

Map: Explorer 173 (London North) or A-Z, both optional

Problems, changes? We depend on your feedback: feedback@fancyfreewalks.org

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Parks, green routes, river, churches, heath, views, historic town

In Brief

This is an amazing walk from outside the North Circular Road to Hampstead, almost entirely along green routes, including extensive heath.



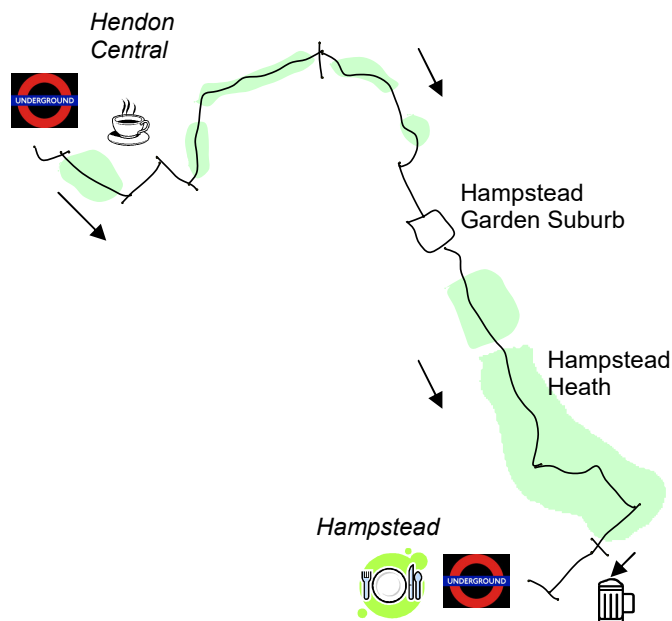
The walk begins at **Hendon Central** underground station and ends at **Hampstead** underground station.



There is no rough walking (except for a bit of mud in winter) and no nettles and dogs are welcome.

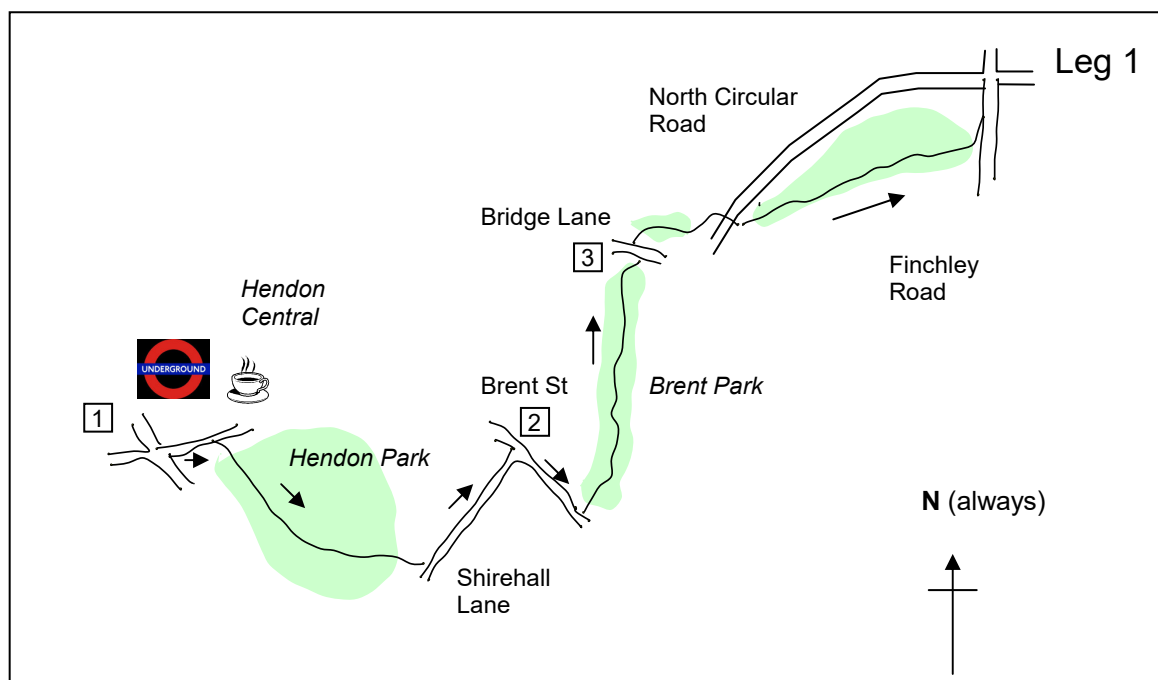



Bird's Eye View



The Walk

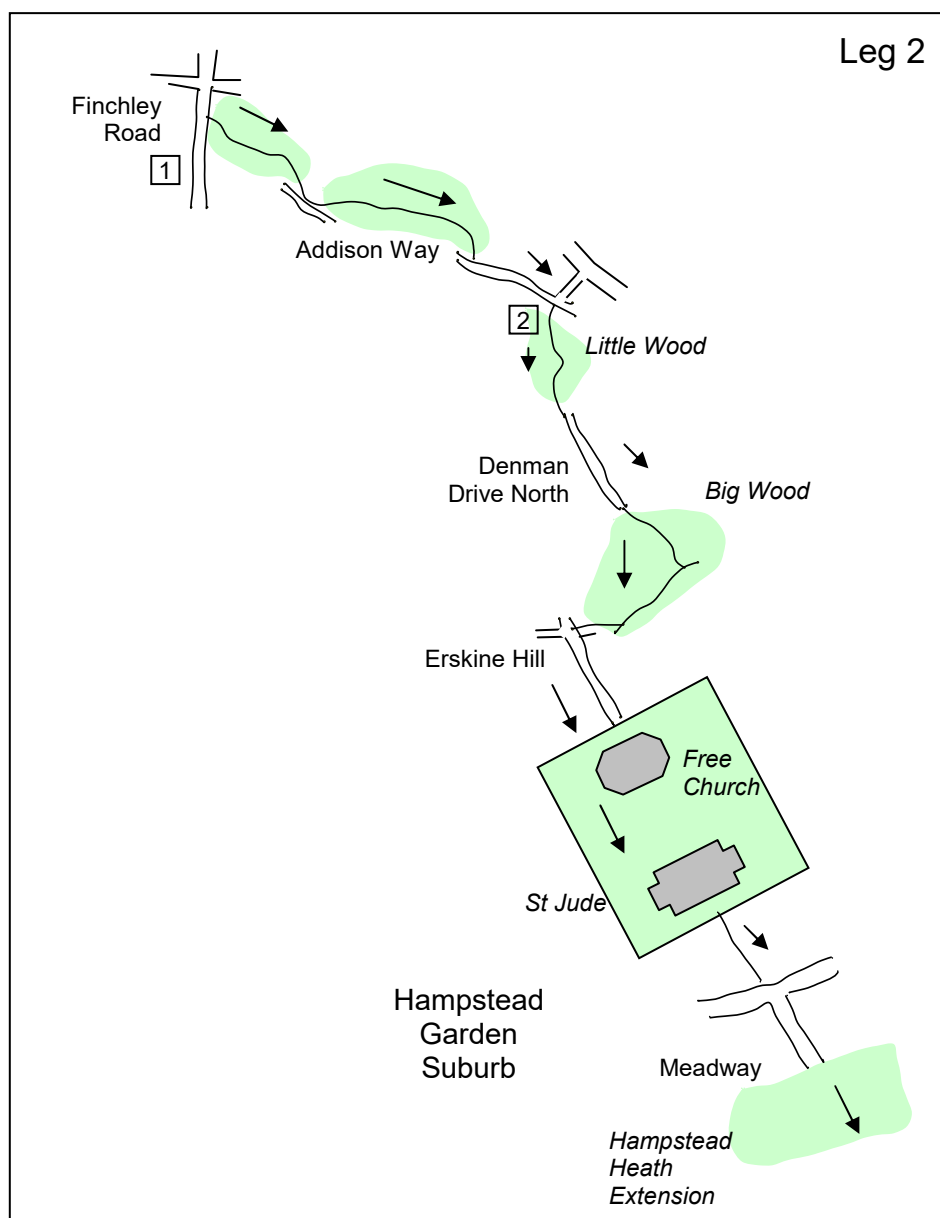
Leg 1: Hendon Central to Finchley Road



- 1** Turn **left** out of the station and immediately **left** at the lights on Queens Road.  Cross the road and shortly turn **right** into Hendon Park. There are toilets and a café here. On the left is a Holocaust Memorial Garden entered under arch with a message wrought in Hebrew. Continue on the central path past the tennis courts. *In the right-hand corner is one of London's great trees, a japanese maple.* At a T-junction go straight over the tarmac path and keep ahead downhill across the grass, aiming for the far left-hand corner. On reaching it, turn **left** on Shirehall Lane.

wc
- 2** At traffic lights, turn **right** into Brent Street. About 50m before reaching the busy North Circular Road, just before a bus stop, turn **left** into the strip of green woodland running beside the River Brent known as Brent Park. Go over a little bridge and turn left. [\[Jan 2020: the bridge has been repaired and is now open!\]](#) Keep to the main path with the river on your left. At a junction, turn **left** following the Capital Ring badge on the winding path. *The Capital Ring, a walking route of about 120 km, planned and signposted by the London boroughs, encircles inner London.* You pass ponds, popular with geese and other waterfowl, with the river still on the left. Where the tarmac path ends, keep **left** to exit the park and turn **left** on Bridge Lane.
- 3** In 30m, turn **right** on a wide tarmac footpath alongside the river. On reaching a grassy space which is a children's playground, turn **right** and go through an underpass beneath the North Circular Road. Keep ahead on a new wide tarmac path beside the river. After some distance, on approaching Finchley Road ahead, keep **left** up to the road and cross it using the traffic lights over to a narrow path on the other side, a fraction right, keeping the North Circular on your left. *Note that you are on part of the Dollis Hill Greenwalk, a 10-mile trek from Moat Mount near Mill Hill to Hampstead Heath Extension.*

Leg 2: Finchley Road to Hampstead Garden Suburb



- 1 Staying on the main path, cross a bridge to eventually reach Addison Way, a pleasant residential road on your right. Don't join Addison Way yet, but veer away to the **left** on a tarmac path through more green space, still with the River Brent on your left, keeping straight ahead at a fingerpost, until the greenway finally curves right to meet Addison Way again. Turn **left** on this leafy road.
- 2 Just before Addison Way meets the busy North Circular Road, turn **right** at a sign on a footpath into the delightful Little Wood. Keep to the tarmac through the wood (on the right is a small amphitheatre). At the end of Little Wood, continue ahead on Denman Drive North. At the end of the road, enter the equally delightful Big Wood.

Big Wood and Little Wood are a Local Nature Reserve. They became open spaces within Hampstead Garden Suburb when it was founded in the early 1900s. The trees date back to the early 1800s. Big Wood is of ancient origin and is host to wild service trees, yellow archangel and bluebells, with occasional hazel coppices.

Follow the main path over a tarmac crossing path through to the centre of the wood where you meet another tarmac crossing path at a marker post. Turn **right** here, thus leaving the Dollis walk. At a T-junction, veer **right** again, continuing past a large wooden gate onto Temple Fortune Hill. At a crossroads, turn sharp **left** into Erskine Hill. At the top is the central square of Hampstead Garden Suburb dominated by two great churches. Cross the grass to the right of the Free Church.

The Free Church, Hampstead Garden Suburb, built 1910-1912 was designed by the great English architect Edwin Lutyens. It was built with the intention that people of all denominations should worship together. It is affiliated to the Baptist Union and a member of the United Reformed Church.

Continue across the grass to the right of St Jude-on-the-Hill.

In contrast to the Free Church, St Jude on the Hill is Anglican Catholic. It is the Parish Church of Hampstead Garden Suburb and, like its close neighbour, was designed by Edwin Lutyens. Building began in 1909, but it was not completed until 1935. It is 200 feet (61m) long externally and the top of the spire is 178 feet (54m) above the ground. The ceiling is barrel-vaulted and domed. The murals and paintings are by Walter Starmer (1877-1961) and the west window is to his design and depicts Saint Jude. (Jude was one of the twelve disciples and no relation to Judas.) Writers associated with St Jude include Evelyn Waugh and C.S. Lewis.

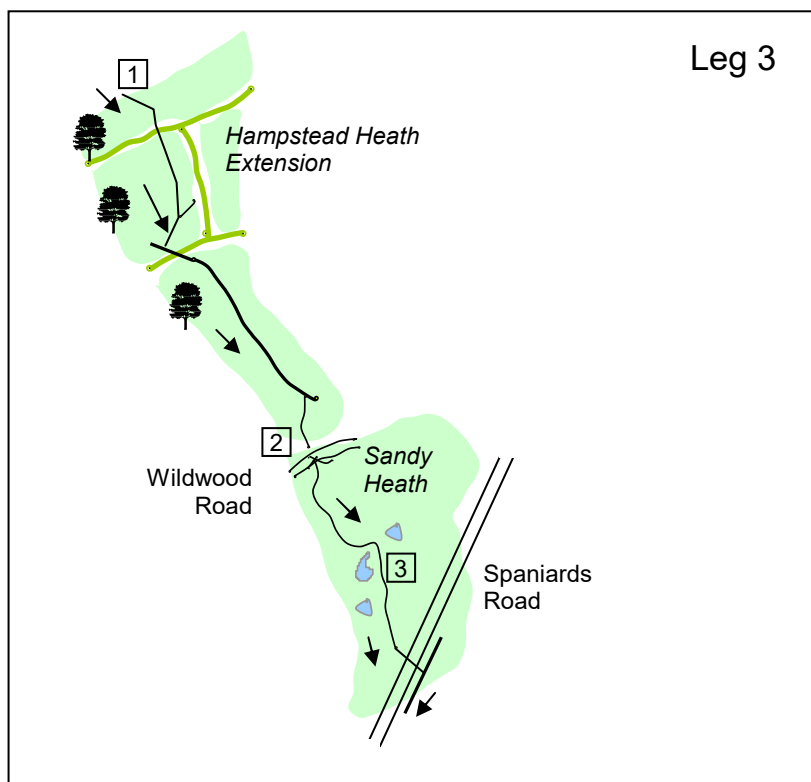
Continue in the same direction opposite the church spire down Heathgate. Go straight over Meadway and continue along the cul-de-sac and exit at the end onto the open space of Hampstead Heath Extension.

Hampstead Garden Suburb was founded in 1907 by Henrietta Barnett to be a model community where all classes of people would live together in attractive surroundings and social harmony. It was intended to be quiet (note – the two churches have no bells), have a low housing density, wide tree-lined roads, no walls – only hedges, woods and public gardens. Nowadays of course the occupants are overwhelmingly upper-middle class.

Leg 3: Hampstead Garden Suburb to Spaniards Road

- 1** **See minimap overleaf.** Head slightly left and go over a bridge in a gap in the trees. Continue across the next big green space (a cricket pitch) staying not far from the left-hand edge, heading for an obvious gap in the trees on the other side. Here you join a stony track between buildings.
wc *There are toilets here.* Follow the wide gravel path, keeping to the main track all the way, passing several ponds on your left. Eventually, the track goes past a historic (dry) drinking fountain on your left and wheels right past a metal barrier to a road, Wildwood Road.
- 2** Cross the road and continue up shallow steps on the other side. In 30m you reach a wide crossing path at the corner of a garden on your right. Go straight over up a fairly steep, knobbly winding path. Keep going uphill all the way till you reach a wide seat (to “James Wilson”) at the top of Sandy Heath. *You are on part of a sandy ridge that stretches from Highgate to Hampstead.* Continue in the same direction on the main path downhill, avoiding all paths that branch away to your left. Your stony track is joined from your right by a wide tarmac path. You soon reach Sandy Heath Pond.
- 3** Go **left** (or right) round the pond to a point immediately across on the opposite reedy bank and continue in the same direction. Now look for a pair of tall oak trees perched on small hillock, inside a ring of wooden rails.

You should pass them close by **on your left**. This is Two Tree Hill and the 300-year old oaks, as you see, are carefully protected. Veer **right** away from the oaks, passing close to a shallow dip on your right where you can see a small pond. [2018: the route was changed in this revision after the new zebra crossing was installed, easing the hazardous crossing of the Spaniards Road.] In 50m, fork **left**, heading for the Spaniards Road which you can hear and see only 100m away. Keep left, heading straight for a flight of steps leading up to a flashing beacon which marks the site of the zebra crossing.

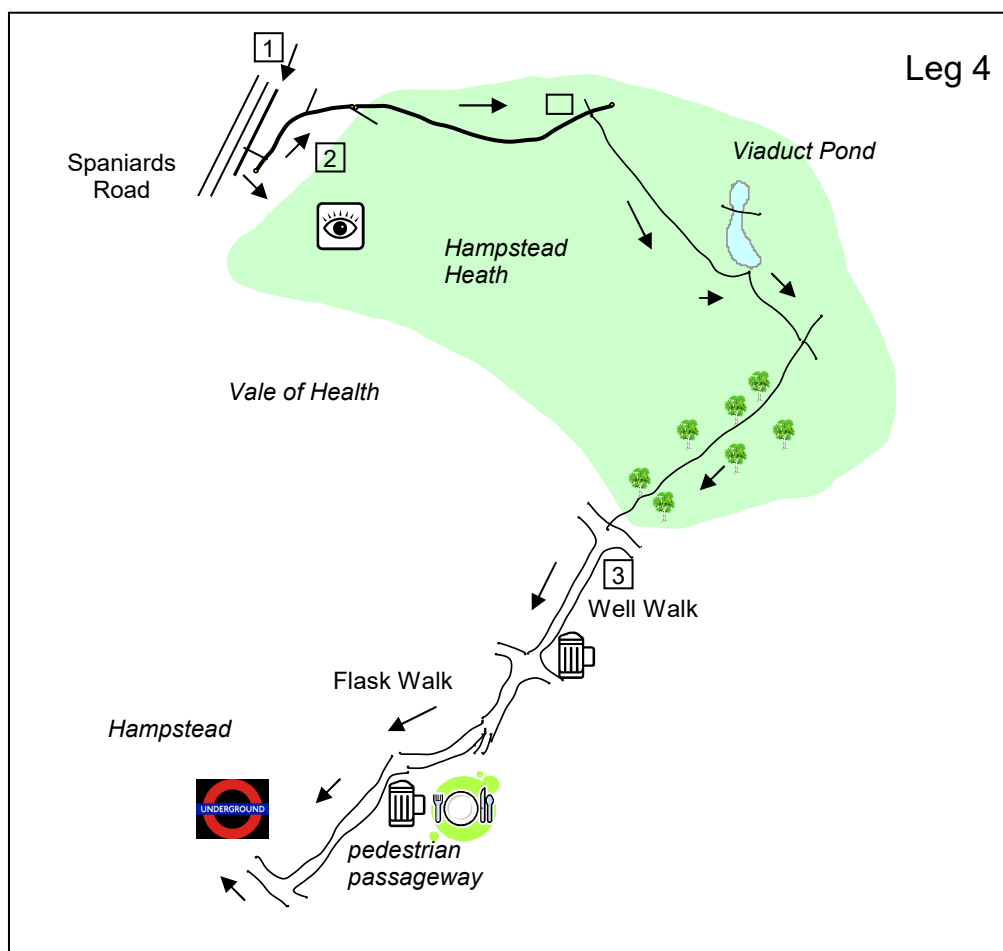


Leg 4: Spaniards Road to Hampstead Village

- 1 **See minimap overleaf.** After the steps and the zebra crossing, cross a cycle path and turn **right** on the excellent wide footway parallel to the road, passing a bus stop and a bench seat. In 200m, just after a group of electricity boxes, turn **left** on a very narrow path down some irregular steps. (This short path is a bit hazardous! There is an easier path a little further along and, as a last resort, you can continue to a sharp left turn by a wooden barrier and a big *Corporation of London* signboard.) Your route is **left** on a very broad track. However, by crossing straight over the track and across a short patch of grass, you reach a bench seat with one of the great secrets of this area – one of the best views in London. You can see across the Vale of Health and across to the tall buildings of the City and Canary Wharf (see the “Skyscrapers” walk in this series). From here, you can easily turn left to regain the broad track.
- 2 Keep to the main wide track as it curves right, avoiding all minor paths off. You pass a drinking fountain which delivers the sweetest water in London. There are toilets on your left – a little black and white timbered house. Just 40m later, at the next junction, take a broad path **right**. In 250m, this path leads down to the aptly-named Viaduct Pond.

With the solid London clay lying underneath the porous sand, the Heath had many springs. Gradually these were dammed to make the many ponds that can now be seen there. The pond and its Viaduct were originally built as a reservoir between 1844 and 1847.

Quickly, by the bank of the pond, turn **right** on a sandy path steeply downhill. On reaching a wide path running in a glorious linden avenue, turn **right**. This leads to East Heath Road in Hampstead Village.



- 3** Continue straight over on Well Walk. *On the left is a house where the painter John Constable once lived.* At the start of Willow Road, fork **right** into Flask Walk. Keep to the wider road, the one with a grassy strip in the centre, preferably using the high footway on the right where all the cottage doors have a different colour. At the end, you pass the excellent *Flask* pub (Yongs) and reach a pedestrianised area, leading to the main road. Turn **right** here just a few hops to Hampstead underground station (the deepest in London) where the walk finishes.



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