Fancy Free Walks *point your feet on a new path*

Wimbledon Common: Three Ways to the Windmill

Distance: 4 km=2½ miles to 6¾ km=4¼ miles easy walking
Region: Greater London date written 8-oct-2009
Author: Thwelder last update 10-jul-2026
Refreshments: Wimbledon Common Windmill, various pubs
Map: Explorer 161 London South *not usually needed*

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

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Woodland, heath, windmill

In Brief

Here are three circular walks on Wimbledon Common, all beginning from three completely different points, but leading to the Windmill and back. So each walk has a *There* section and a *Back* section. Alternatively, you can of course start each circular walk at the Windmill itself, where there is a large free car park.

These walks are perfect for any time. You don't need boots of course. Dogs are welcome and the Common has no nettles to speak of.

Wimbledon and Putney Commons are protected by the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Act of 1871. There are two distinct kinds of terrain: the western slopes which lie on London Clay and support mixed woodland; and the upper eastern and northern parts which constitute a huge area of heathland. The Commons are run by the Clerk and Ranger and two dozen-odd employees and horses. The Conservators handle the annual budget which is paid for by an annual levy on houses near the Commons.

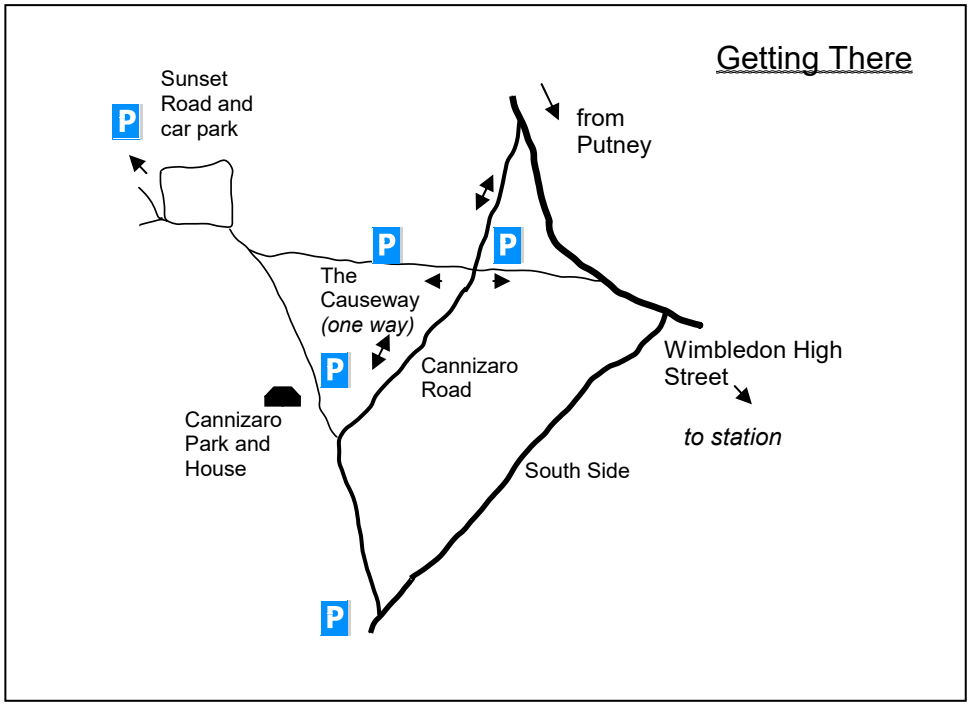
The Windmill café offers a welcome rest from travels over the Common. This is not haute cuisine but the staff keep enough items on the bill of fare to keep the average family, including the youngsters, happy. The soup and crusty bread are delicious. The golf club café/bar is also open to casual visitors.

Wimbledon Windmill was built in 1817 and has been altered and repaired numerous times. It is no longer a working mill but the machinery is on view. The excellent museum is open to visitors weekends until 5pm April to October.

Walk 1: from Wimbledon Village 5 km=3 miles

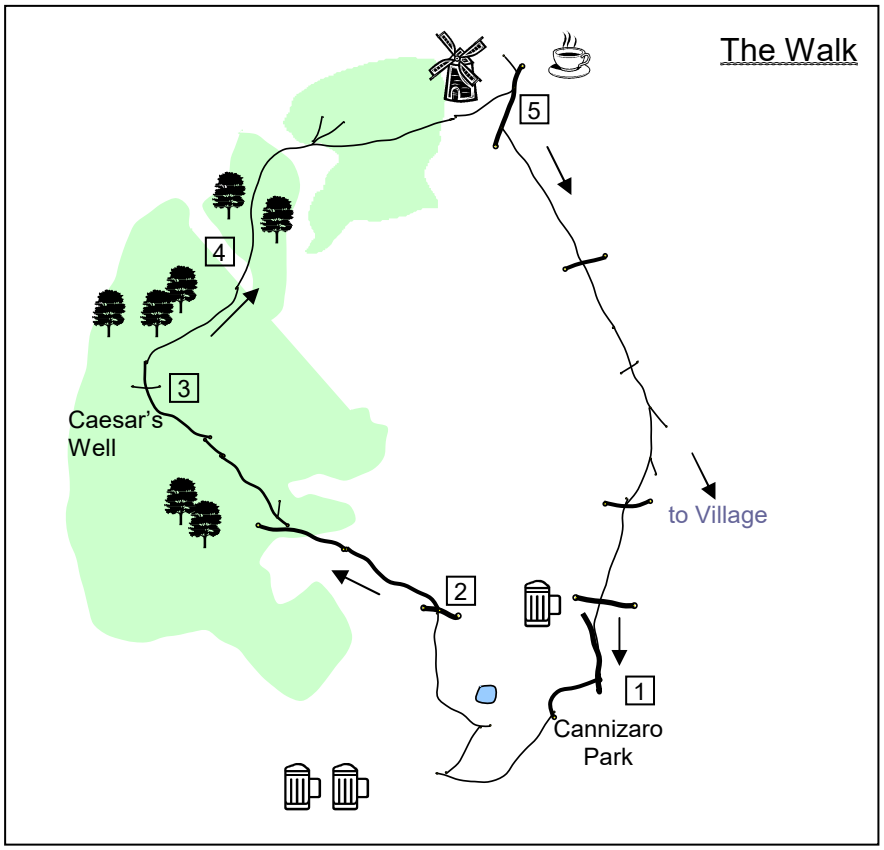
Getting there

By train or Underground: Get out at Wimbledon station. Turn **right** out of the station and walk along Wimbledon Hill Road past the Library and then up the hill to the Village. Alternatively, the 93 bus will take you there. After passing the Dog and Fox and, just before the Rose and Crown, turn **left** onto Southside Common and follow it until the pond Rushmere Pond is on the right. Veer **right**, skirting the pond on your right. After this, head towards the large hotel ahead, Cannizaro, offset from the road to the left of a pink house. The start of the walk is just to the right of the hotel.



By car: There are many good places to park beside the Common, although there are modest parking charges during weekdays. The walk starts at Cannizaro Park, so a good place is on the road outside the Park, postcode **SW19 4UN**. There are also spaces in both parts of The Causeway that lead off Cannizaro Road, w3w:sound.loving.legend. *See the map.* Note that both of them are one-way roads and the only access is from Cannizaro Road. There is also plenty of road parking in Woodhayes Road, opposite or near the pubs mentioned below. Another good place to park is in the car park at the end of Sunset Road or in Sunset Road itself. (Sunset Road is a small road leading across the Common through the white gates at the corner of Camp Road and Camp View, near the golf clubhouse. If you park here, you start the circular walk at a slightly later point.)

For refreshments, there are the excellent *Fox and Grapes* pub in Camp Road, just near Cannizaro Park and the equally excellent *Hand-in-Hand* and *Crooked Billet* pubs just off Woodhayes Road, south of the Park.



There

1 The walk begins at the entrance to Cannizaro Park. This is on West Side Common, just past the imposing entrance to the Cannizaro House *Hotel du Vin*, through metal gates. Go past the little fountain to the large open space of the park. On the right is a white decorative birdcage. Turn **left** here, past the terrace of the hotel.

> *The park was once the garden of the house, originally known as Warren House, built in the 18th century and owned by the Grosvenor and Drax families. George III and William Pitt both stayed there. The new name came about after 1841 when the new owner Francis Plamonte, Count St. Antonio, a Sicilian by birth, inherited the title Duke of Cannizzaro. The house and gardens were sold to Wimbledon (now Merton) Council in 1947 and became a public park. The house, without the garden, was later sold off and is now a hotel. Rather high-class refreshments (at rather upmarket prices) can be taken here.*

On the left is the sunken garden. Turn away from the sunken garden, nearly half **right** across the wide open grassy space, heading for a small group of trees in the centre. After the trees, continue in the same direction, to just beyond a line of silver birches. Join the start of a clear path which meets metal railings on the right and wheels **right** into woods. In 20m at a crossing path go straight ahead down steps. At the bottom, at a T-junction, turn **left**. In 20m turn **right** by a wall. On reaching metal gates, turn **right** into the Italian Garden. Exit by gates at the far end and turn immediately **left** in front of the pond alongside a wooden fence on your left. After the corner of the fence, fork **right** away from the fence, uphill, bearing left to cross a wide track, continuing to a large black noticeboard. Turn **right** here and go out through the back gate, along a track past allotments and out into the Common.

2 Turn **right** on the lane for a few paces and then **left** opposite the golf club-house, between white gates, on a tarmac drive that runs across the Common, Sunset Road. Follow it, either on the drive itself or on a path beside it on the right, past a junction on the right and a small house (*Springwell Cottage*), to a

small car park (an alternative starting point). Avoid a wide track straight ahead by a map of the Common and instead fork **right** past a pair of bins. In 15m fork **left**. This path leads in about 100m to a ring of scots pines known as Caesar's Well. Fork **left** down to the well with its ring of stones.

Caesar's Well, so called from its proximity to Caesar's Camp, was a real well at the head of a spring until it dried up, hence the drain a little lower down where the water now emerges. The current structure dates from 1872.

3 From the well, turn **right** up the slope through a line of pines and then diagonally **left** on a wide stony track leading into trees. In about 100m, cross a sandy horse track. 20m further, you reach another wide sandy horse track with a sunken circular horse exercise area on the left. Veer **right** to cross straight over the track onto a narrow level path, running through thick woodland, with a golf green visible on your right. Avoid all turnings off until in 300m the path comes up to a very wide grassy space.

4 Cross the grassy space, straight ahead but diverging a fraction left towards a path visible in the tree line on the far side, leading into the woods. Take this narrow path through the birchwood. Avoid all crossing paths and branches off and follow the winding path. After 300m, at the other side of the wood, fork **left** to meet another wide grassy strip. Go straight over towards a post on the other side with a green Capital Ring sign and two wide paths leading off. **Ignore both** paths and turn **right** along the edge of the grass on a path which in a few metres goes into the woods. Avoid all minor bracnhing paths left and right. Your path goes down and crosses a flat bridge over a deep valley that carries the stream into Queensmere. It then goes up and finally terminates on the big grass plain near the Windmill buildings. Turn **left** to the Ranger's house and go round the enclosure to the Windmill and the café.

Back

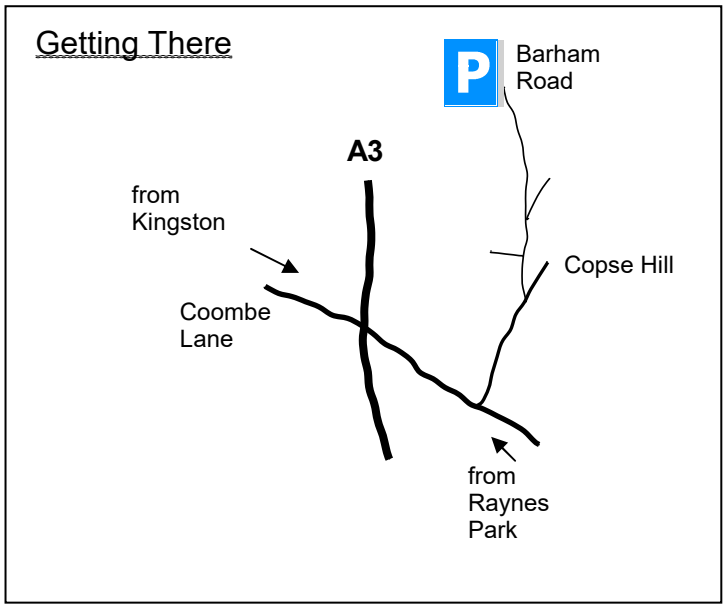
5 Passing the Windmill Museum on your right, turn **right** round the buildings, ignoring the exit for cars, and then go past a large wooden gate onto a wide straight stony drive. (As a short cut, this drive leads back to Springwell Cottage and the small car park.) In 80m, turn **left** between wooden posts on the first wide crossing track that runs along the right-hand edge of a wide grassy space. After nearly 400m, the track crosses a horse track and, about 150m further, another broad path. In nearly 250m the track passes a seat on the right near a junction of several paths to the left and right with thick woodland trees ahead. This is a decision point.

If you are returning via the Village: take either path straight ahead. The path gets gradually closer to the main road (Parkside) and crosses over Cannizaro Road at a junction and soon after comes to the War Memorial. The Village is directly ahead.

If you parked the car in one of the locations suggested at the start of this text, you need to go over to the West side. 20m after the seat turn **right**. Keep to the main twisty path for 300m until you cross a very wide combination of horse track and footpath. Go 50m further to meet a crossing path as you emerge from the trees. Cross over and bear **left** on a path, continuing through dense shrubbery, crossing a minor road. On your right are Cannizaro House and Park where the walk began.

Walk 2: from Beverley Meads 6¾ km=4¼ miles

Getting there

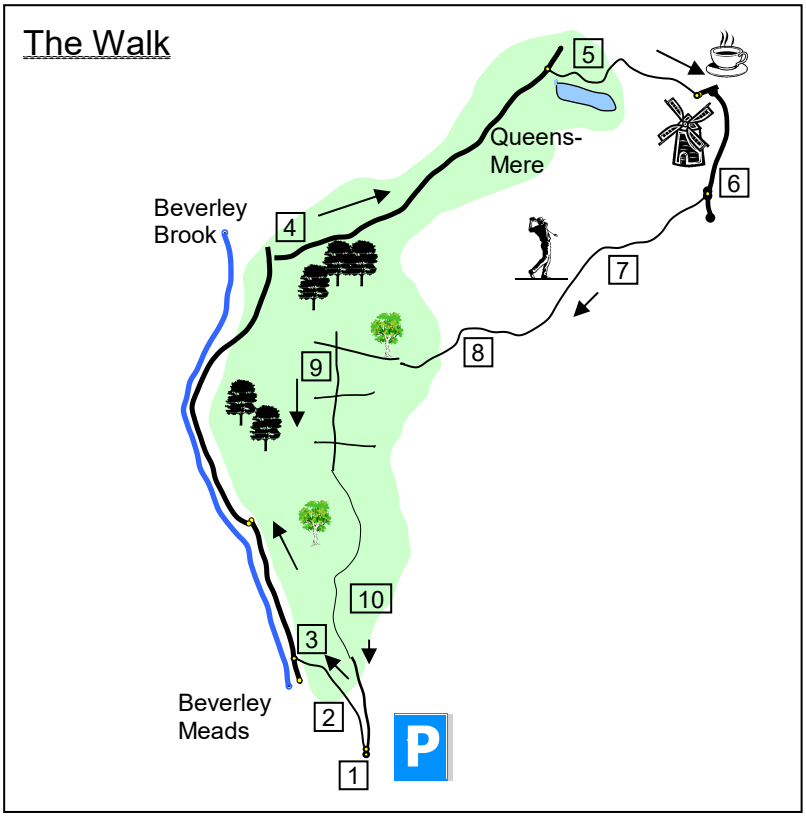


The Beverley Meads car park is at the end of Barham Road in West Wimbledon, postcode **SW20 0ET**, w3w:loud.damp.goat. To get there, go to Combe Lane, which runs between Wimbledon and Kingston and can be accessed from the A3 Kingston Bypass, and turn **north** up Copse Hill from the mini roundabout. Shortly after, fork **left** into Barham Road.

There (**see map overleaf**)

1 With the rugby pitches on your left, go through a gap in the boundary of tall cypresses and across the grass staying near the fence on the right. Go over a wooden bridge into *Fishpond Wood and Beverley Meads Local Nature Reserve*. Veer **left** and follow the path through a large clearing which has a tall, lone silver birch on the right. In 150m, on reaching a strip of woodland and a junction of paths, avoid a right fork leading into another open space and instead fork **left** on a straight path slightly downhill through dark trees. The path shortly passes the remnants of a fence and concrete posts and comes to a junction. Turn sharp **right** here into an area known as *Fishpond Wood*.

2 Follow the path between a bank on the left and a fence on the right. (In wet weather, the muddy sections here are rather trying.) Stay on the path, avoiding two turn-offs on the left, until it bends left by a meadow belonging to Warren Farm. The path finally comes to an end at a junction, just before a notice board. Veer **right** for just 5m to reach another junction of paths. Take the **left**most wide path, i.e. **sharp left**. In 160m, turn **right** at a T-junction with a wide path. Flowing beside the path on your left is the Beverley Brook.



The Beverley Brook runs its short course into the Thames near Barnes. There is a signposted Beverley Brook Walk for exploring its whole length. The name comes from the beavers that used to inhabit it. Recently it has been cleaned up and has regained much of its wildlife.

3 Follow the brook for some distance through woods until you reach a brick bridge over it with a junction of several tracks. Continue straight ahead, still alongside the brook, for another good stretch. Finally you reach a junction with playing fields ahead. Here turn very sharp **right** on a major track. You are now on the *Capital Ring ("CR")*, as you can see from the signs. *The Capital Ring is a circular, mainly green, walking route that circles London. It is 125km (78 miles) long. There's an official guidebook and on-line maps of the 15 sections*. In 20m, fork **left** on a narrow path and at a T-junction turn **left** on a broad track, still on the CR.

4 Stay on the track for some distance. At first, you pass playing fields and a war memorial on the left. At a junction, ignore a right turn, thus leaving the *Capital Ring* and, immediately after, ignore a track left. The track rises gently and meets *Putney Vale Cemetery* on the left. In 150m, ignore a track on the right. In another 150m the track begins to descend. In another 100m or so, the track becomes level and straight and you can see it leading into the distance. In just 20m, where the metal railing bordering the cemetery comes into view on the left, turn **right** at a *No Cycling* sign onto a distinct path. This path leads up to *Queensmere*.

Queensmere is a large beautiful artificial lake deep in the woods. It usually has a large group of mute swans in residence.

5 Turn **left** around the lake. After the first bench (James Beddoe), branch left uphill. The path wheels left away from the lake. At the top, ignore a path right through hollies, then go straight over a cross-path soon bearing **right** under tall oaks. Go past a bench (*Cindy Glage*) to reach suddenly the level grassy area by the car park and windmill.

Back

6 When you are ready to leave, turn **right** around the windmill enclosure **counterclockwise**, turning **left** beside the golf clubhouse on a shingle path. 15m before the next corner (where you can see two doggy bins ahead), fork **right** on a narrower path into trees. Quickly cross straight over a wide track and, 40m later, over another path, just as you come out of the trees onto a wide open space. Keep to the right-hand side, with golf links on your left, for well over 100m, staying in the open, passing two bench seats, until your path goes straight into woodland, where there are two more benches. You come out briefly very close to another golf hole and your path immediately veers **right** back into the wood. You come down to a pond. Veer **right** along a walkway with railings. Your path ascends into the start of a long green open space.

7 Walk the entire length of this green space, either along the left- or the right-hand edge, passing several golf tees and keeping straight on at all junctions. You pass several seats and another golf hole. Aim for some large pines and a grassy bank in the distance. After 300m or so, you cross a very wide path where, in the distance on your left, you can see a small square memorial known as the *KRR Stone*. Go up over the grassy bank, behind the golf hole, passing by a seat. Keep dead straight, passing another golf hole on your left. Walk between the large pines and veer a little to the **right** to the start of another long green open space. Keep to the **right**-hand side of this green space, passing three more benches and reaching a third bench at the very end, opposite a golf hole. Turn sharp **right** behind this bench on a narrow path into woods. In 15m you come to a T-junction with a wide woodland path.

8 Turn sharp **left** on the woodland path and follow it for 150m or so. You see on your right a large circular sunken sandy horse exercise area with wooden railings all round it and two benches. Go round close to the left of the exercise area and take a path down into the deep woods. In 50m a path joins from the left. In 250m more, you come to a crossing path. Turn sharp **left** here.

9 In 100m cross a broad track and continue through an area of fine tall beeches. In nearly 150m, cross another track running beside a ditch. In 40m you go over a two-plank bridge. 70m after the little bridge, just before the path ahead begins to rise a little, fork **left** on a narrower path. In 100m you reach a 4-way junction. Turn **right** here on an even narrower path. Keep going uphill for 100m to reach a wide sandy track with a patch of grass and a seat on your left.

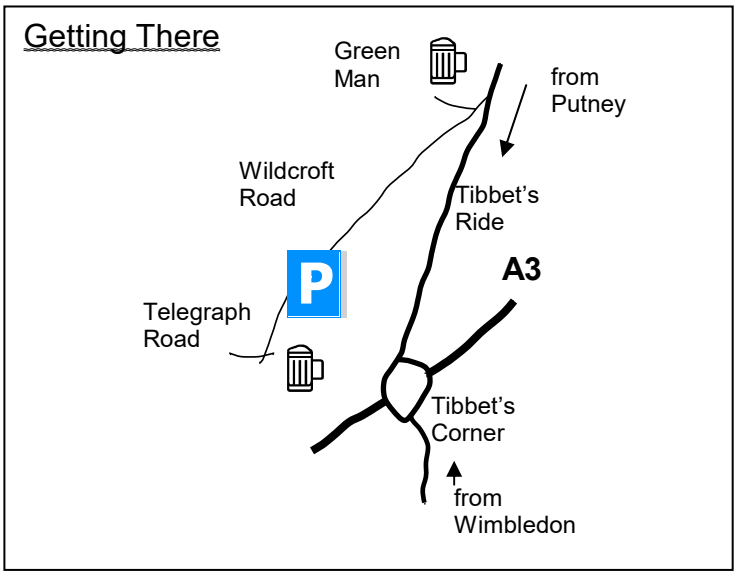
10 Cross over the sunken sandy track, slightly right, and continue on a narrow path. In 3m cross a stony driveway (leading to Warren Farm). In 10m, turn **right** at a T-junction. Continue on the path between fences, with the golf course on your left and a garden of Warren Farm on your right, which very soon gives way to open woodland. On reaching a fence on the right, keep straight on, now between fences again. The path passes a junction with a footpath on the left that runs through the golf course. Soon you have Beverley Meads Nature Reserve on the right and are back at the car park where the walk began.

Walk 3: from Putney Heath 5¼ km=3¼ miles

Getting there

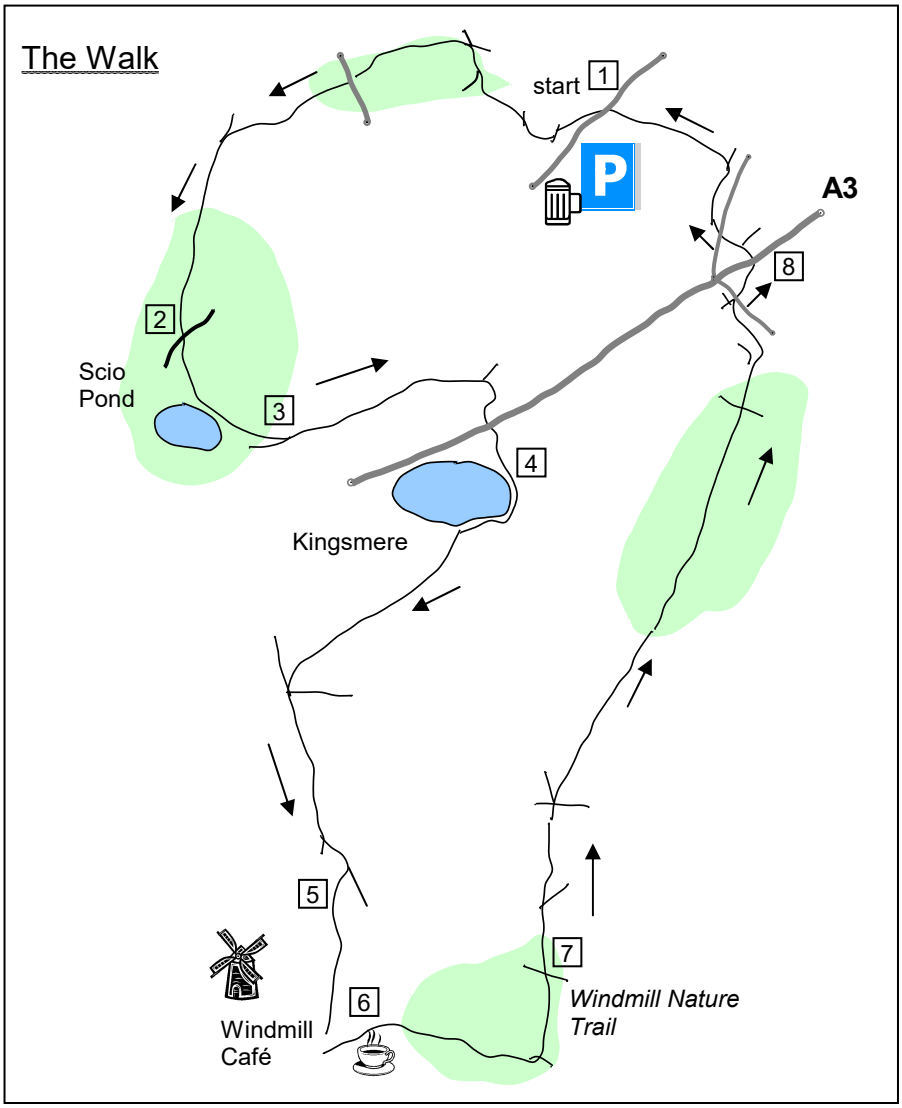
The walk begins in Wildcroft Road, Putney, near the *Telegraph* pub, w3w:stiff.buns.tuck.

By bus from Putney: No. 424: get off at the Telegraph Road bus stop. Nos. 14 or 93: get off opposite the *Green Man* pub on Putney Heath and walk to the end of Wildcroft Road to start the walk.



By car: Park near the far (southern) end of Wildcroft Road, near the cricket ground **postcode SW15 3TU**. There is a long stretch of road here with no yellow lines and loads of parking. To get there, turn off Putney Hill at the green by the *Green Man* and take the left fork. The parking area is some way down, after the start of a fence on the left.

The start is near the Telegraph inn which is a little further down Wildcroft Road on the left. The Telegraph has sold beer since 1856. The inn and the road are named after the admiralty telegraph that stood nearby to convey messages between London and Portsmouth.



There

1 Go past the green metal barrier to the edge of the cricket green and turn **right** round the edge. Before the 6th seat (*Joyce Flood & Zeta*) turn **right** on a good path leading away from the green. In 80m, turn **left** on a wide crossing path. Keep straight ahead over several crossing paths until you reach the corner of a garden fence on the left with a green metal barrier. Keep **left** by the barrier past a small parking area to a white gate and a road, *Telegraph Road*. Cross directly over the road and immediately take the **right** fork into a clearing. Keep left across the clearing to re-enter woods. In 60m, the path meets another path coming from the right. Follow the path over a crossing path and onwards to a large open grassy space on your left, known as the *Frying Pan*, which has seats and a semicircular bank.

2 Keep straight on, over a crossing path, joining a wide path coming from the right. The path, known as the *Scio Ride*, is now a very wide one and eventually meets an even wider track with street lighting coming from the left. At this junction, leave the track and go, fractionally left, on a narrower path ahead by a *no-cycling* sign. On the right is the Scio Pond, a peaceful spot.

These locations relate to nearby Scio House, a nursing home, which in the 1880s was the residence of Mr Eustratios Stephanos Ralli who named it after that Greek island.

3 Continue ahead past the pond and turn **left** at a T-junction with a wide path. Over on the left is a fence and some mansion blocks. Continue ahead with the mansion blocks on your left and, on reaching a clearing, keep **right**. Soon there is a metal fence on the left and a red-brick mansion block. At the next small clearing, keep **right** to join a tarmac path. This path takes you under the A3 road. At the other side, turn **right** and at the end of the slope turn **left** on a path into the woods.

4 Soon, on the right is the large pond *Kingsmere*. Keeping the pond on your right, turn **right** at a T-junction with a wider path, over a small brick bridge. *Kingsmere has an island, usually inhabited by herons*. Keep near the pond side and, just before a seat (*Olive May Carpenter*), fork **left** away from the pond to join a wide path. Follow the wide path through trees. In 300m or so you reach a junction of wide tracks. Avoid the first track sharp left and take the **second** wide track squarely **left**.

5 Stay on the track for 350m until there is a clearing on the right with a seat (*Joyce and George Biggs*). Turn sharp **right** after the seat. *The long hill ahead of you, popular with kite-fliers and, on those rare occasions, tobogganners, was formed from earth dug up whilst excavating Tibbet's Corner underpass.* Stay on the left-hand side of the clearing and in 30m turn **left** on a narrow path into trees. This leads to the open space by the car park and Windmill.

Back

6 With your back to the entrance to the Windmill Museum (near the big toothed wheels) go straight ahead over the grass heading for the old stone water trough on the other side. A few metres to the left of the trough, take the path past a notice board and a post with the Number **1**, indicating the start of the *Windmill Nature Trail*. Take the path past Nos. **2** and **3** over a plank bridge. After No. **4**, turn **left** at No. **5** with the trail past a seat. Go past No. **6**, then over a bridge with rails and keep straight ahead. At No. **8** leave the trail by keeping straight ahead on a narrow path.

7 In 20m, go straight over a broad stony track. Continue on a winding path through birches and young oaks (cleared on the left) until you reach a wide surfaced crossing path with a seat. There are two paths on the other side. Take the **right** of the two paths, the one directly behind the seat. Keep straight ahead on this path for some distance, eventually going through a wood of tall oak trees. The path gets nearer to the main road on the right, passes near to a pond on the right and crosses a track. Finally the path comes very close to the road as the road approaches the big Tibbet's Corner roundabout. Where the path curves round left here, leave the path by turning **right** to the edge of the road and turning **left** down the subway.

8 At a crossing path, turn **right** under the road and ignore a lesser path right under a road. The path curves left over the A3. Ignore a right branch signposted to Wandsworth. Follow the subway path as it goes under the next main road and emerge from the subway via a sloping path up to the roadside. Keep in the same direction past barriers on a stony path under trees with the busy main road to Putney (Tibbet's Ride) close by on your right and an area on your left bordered by dark green fencing. Where the green fencing ends, turn **left** on a wide path with woodland on your right. At the end of the path, turn **left** on the road to the point where the walk began.

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