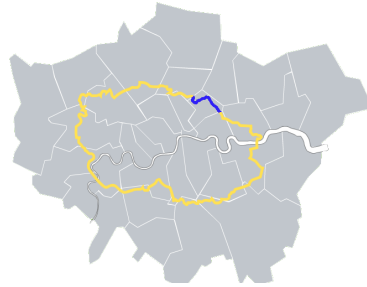




**Capital Ring**  
Section 13  
Stoke Newington to Hackney Wick

Version 1 : July 2009



**Start:** Stamford Hill (TQ336867)  
**Station:** Stoke Newington  
**Finish:** Hackney Wick (TQ373845)  
**Station:** Hackney Wick  
**Distance:** 4 miles (6.4 km)

**Introduction:** This easy section is dominated by the Lee Navigation waterway. The walk traces the expansion of Stoke Newington over the last 150 years before going into a nature reserve at Springfield Park. The rest of the route follows the River Lea as it winds its way towards the Thames; there's plenty of history and wildlife to keep you interested on your walk.

The terrain is almost entirely level with some short slopes. The walk is mainly on the towpath and is narrow and rough in some places. There are steps in Springfield Park (with an alternative, fairly steep, ramp route) and some of the canal footbridges have steep slopes.

As this is the site for the Olympic park, major work is going on in the area and there may be diversions at times, which will be signed.

There is a way marked link to the train station at Clapton.

There are pubs and cafés at Stoke Newington, Springfield Park, Lea Bridge Road and Hackney Wick, with public toilets at Springfield Park and Hackney Wick.

**Directions:** Section 13 starts at the junction of Stamford Hill and Cazenove Road.

Continue along Cazenove Road and follow the signs along Kyverdale Road and Filey Avenue until you get to Upper Clapton Road. Turn left and cross at the zebra crossing, then turn right and immediately left into Springfield. **A** Keep ahead through the gate into Springfield Park.

There are great views of Walthamstow Marshes as you enter Springfield Park. To your left there is a café, toilets and an information point in the 19th century Springfield Mansion.

Springfield Park, opened to the public in 1905, has been designated as London's first Regionally Important Geological Site – RIGS – and is on the English Register of Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest. The Park landforms tell a fascinating story about the geological history of the Lea Valley. The name comes from the series of springs that arise in the area from the combination of sand, gravel and London clay.

With the pond on the right, head down the Park and go down a short flight of steps to a wooded area. There is a bandstand over to the far left. Pass the tennis courts on the left and go towards the river, leaving the Park at a metal gate. Turn left and then right over a pedestrian bridge over the River Lea.

For centuries the River Lea formed the boundary between Essex and Middlesex. Now it forms the boundary between the boroughs of Hackney and Waltham Forest. Over that time the spelling of the river has caused problems as originally it was Ley, a field covered with grass. Acts of Parliament called it Lee although it appeared as Lea on many maps. There were disputes about the spelling for a long time and to settle them it was decided that the natural aspects of the river, such as river itself, would be LEA and manmade features such as the canal would be LEE.

On the left as you cross the bridge is Springfield Marina, created in 1970 by excavating silt from a meander (a bend) in the old river course. It offers moorings and services for travelling narrowboats.

For the next 3 miles (4.8km) the route joins the Lea Valley Walk which

follows the river for 50 miles (80km) from Luton to Island Gardens on the Isle of Dogs.

The path passes Walthamstow Marsh on the left with the river on the right.

The marsh was a summer meadow, Lammas Land. The word Lammas comes from the mass of our Lady the Virgin Mary and in medieval farming practice from spring – from Lady Day (25th March) until late summer, the marsh vegetation was allowed to grow and was then cut for hay. After that until the next spring, local custom allowed cows and horses to be turned out to graze on the marsh. This system would have given a good quality winter fodder for livestock from the meadow flowers growing there.

Follow a sandy track under the railway arches with Walthamstow Marsh Nature Reserve on your left.

A plaque on the railway arches commemorates A V Roe's first all-British powered flight in 1909. His 'Yellow Terror' tri-plane was built under these arches and flew an historic 900 feet across the Marsh. His inspiration for doing this had been the flight of the Wright brothers from Paris to London in 1903.

Continue on to the black 'King's Head' footbridge **B** on the right. Cross the bridge and turn left at the end. Beyond the bridge, the weir to your left separates the flow of the old River Lea from the canalised section of the Lee Navigation.

From the park on the right there is a link to Clapton Station. To stay on the route, keep beside the river to pass under Lea Bridge Road.

Follow the towpath signage to Middlesex Filter Beds by crossing over the cobbled bridge by the weir keeper's cottage.

The Middlesex Filter Beds were built by East London Waterworks Company in 1852. They were built to remove impurities from the river Lea and thus provide an improved quality of water to East London. Along with the sister Filter Beds on the Essex side of the River Lea the site produced an average daily supply of 42.5 million gallons of water. The filter beds went out of use

in 1969 and since 1988 have been managed as a wildlife reserve where there are more than 200 species of plants including cuckoo flower and purple loosestrife and birds such as reed warblers and greater spotted and green woodpeckers.

Two artworks can also be found here: one, Nature's Throne, is nicknamed 'Ackney Enge', **C** Hackney's own version of Stone Henge, made up of the granite blocks that formed the foundations of the engine house which housed the beam engine. The other, Rise and Shine Magic Fish, is the heads and tails of three giant ceramic fish that pop up out of a shallow pond.

Continue along the towpath to follow a section of the river known as the Hackney Cut; a cut is a separate navigable section of a river.

Continue along the towpath between the River Lee Navigation and Hackney Marshes to a bridge that gives a good view of the Marshes to the left and Clapton Park to the right.

The Guinness Book of Records lists Hackney Marshes as having the largest collection of football pitches in the world – amazingly more than 80 - and the area is known as the home of English 'Sunday Soccer'.

Continue along the towpath under Marshgate Bridge and alongside a wooded area. On the left is a long avenue of mature London Plane trees; beyond is Wick Woodland, planted in 1996 as a community project; you can enter from the towpath and enjoy a circular walk between a mix of native trees.

Towards the end of the towpath there may be diversions because of work for the site of the Olympic Park.

Continue under the A102M motorway and the railway line to finally reach Carpenters Road Bridge where section 13 ends. Follow the signs to Hackney Wick Station or continue on Section 14 to Beckton District Park.