

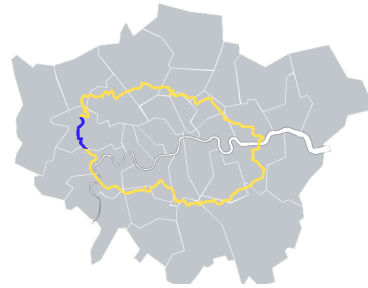


Capital Ring
Section 8
Osterley Lock to Greenford

Version 2 : June 2010



Start: Osterley Lock (TQ158788)
Station: Boston Manor
Finish: Greenford (TQ149839)
Station: Greenford
Distance: 5.5 miles (8.8 km)



Introduction: This is a very green walk along the Grand Union Canal towpath, beside the River Brent and through a series of parks and open spaces.

It's mostly level walking, on firm towpaths and tracks and grass or earth, but may be muddy in wet weather. There are some short slopes.

The route follows the Grand Union Canal and its locks at Hanwell, by the Wharncliffe Viaduct, Brent Lodge Park and Perivale Park.

There are pubs or cafes at Boston Manor, Hanwell, Brent Lodge Park, Greenford and Westway Cross and there are public toilets at Brent Lodge Park.

There are public transport links on National Rail at Hanwell, Greenford and South Greenford, underground at Boston Manor and Greenford, as well as buses along the way.

Directions from Boston Manor station: From Boston Manor Station, on the Heathrow branch of the Piccadilly Line, turn left along Boston Road for 350m, then left again opposite the Harvester pub along a broad path. Cross a road and keep ahead to pass through a kissing gate, then bear left. Follow this path ahead for 200m (it might be muddy after wet weather), ignoring turns as it descends between trees to the Grand Union Canal where the section starts. Turn right along the towpath to Osterley Lock, and keep ahead.

Directions from Osterley Lock: Cross a long footbridge, where the River Brent flows off to the right.

This part of the Grand Union Canal makes use of the River Brent as much as possible, though some artificial 'cuts' have been made to provide a straighter route, as here. The Grand Union Canal links London with Birmingham, a distance of 145 miles (232km). It opened in 1805 as the Grand Junction Canal, but gained its present name after a merger in 1929 with other waterways.

Follow the towpath for three quarters of a mile (1.2km). Just before Hanwell Bottom Lock **A** an alleyway to the right leads to the Fox Inn. The Capital Ring continues then leaves the canal after the first (bottom) lock, bearing right to follow the River Brent, together with the Brent River Park Walk.

There are six locks altogether in the Hanwell flight, taking the canal up 16m in a third of a mile. After 600m is the historic stone Hanwell Bridge. There has been a bridge at this point since at least the 14th century, but the present bridge dates from 1762, with several later widenings.

The path dips under the bridge, but as it is sometimes under water, on occasions walkers have diverted onto the Uxbridge Road and crossed at the traffic lights on the right.

On the far side of Uxbridge Road, stay beside the river, on the grass of a sports field.

Ahead is the impressive Wharncliffe Viaduct **B** built in 1838 by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the great Victorian engineer, to carry the Great Western

Railway from London to Bristol. It is named after its sponsor, Lord Wharncliffe, whose coat of arms can be seen at the centre. Queen Victoria had her royal train stopped on top so that she could admire the view.

Follow the path across the Brent, then bear left under the viaduct to enter Churchfields Recreation Ground.

The link to Hanwell Station follows the tarmac path ahead uphill. At the top, turn right along a broader path and follow this for 150m to the road. Keep ahead and turn left along a road called Golden Manor, then right along Campbell Road, which leads to Hanwell Station.

Continuing along the Capital Ring, turn sharp left down a slope and follow the left side of the field, with the river now on your left and the spire of St Mary's, the parish church of Hanwell, up to your right.

Pass through the gate into Brent Lodge Park, formerly the grounds of a mansion home of the rectors of St Mary's. The broad path ahead leads to a seasonal café, toilets, a children's zoo, the Brent River Park Visitor Centre and the stables from the former house.

However, the Capital Ring climbs the steps on your left by the signpost, then follows the left hand side of the field, with the river still to the left. To the right is the Millennium Maze, opened in 2000 on the site of a former bowling green. The route now snakes along the field edge, in company with the river bends.

The route passes through a copse then descend steps to a wide gap in a fence. Keep ahead then go left across the river. Immediately turn right, then shortly follow the left fork beside a sports field. Continue along the main path in this direction for 500m, as the path leads away from the river, between bushes and hedgerows through the Brent Valley Golf Course.

Soon after the golf course, at a path junction, bear right to return to, and cross over, the river, with the houses of Elthorne Heights ahead. Immediately turn left, then follow the path as it winds behind a reed-filled inlet.

Stay close to the river, ignoring a ramped track leading up to the right. Soon, beside a weir with rushing water and just before a lovely avenue of willows, turn right up steps. Then turn left to follow the edge of Bitterns Field, **C** a reclaimed landfill site. At the far end, go down more steps and continue beside the river to Greenford Bridge at Ruislip Road East.

The facilities of Greenford town centre with pub and cafés, lie a few hundred yards to your left. The route continues across the road, there is a pedestrian crossing 130m to the right. Here the Capital Ring heads northwards - turn left, then immediately sharp right at a grassy area into Costons Lane. Follow the road as it bends left, then shortly cross over to enter Perivale Park.

Follow the main path as it angles through Perivale Park, bearing left over Costons Brook, then left again beside a golf course.

Just before a park exit, turn right inside the park to pass a bowling green. **D** Then after some tennis courts bear half left by some huts along a path leading to a car park. Cross over this and keep ahead to the road.

The dual carriageway ahead is the A40 Western Avenue, the main road from London to Oxford. Cross it by the footbridge - there is a ramp and steps. To the right lies South Greenford Station. On the far side of the A40 turn left along a side road, then shortly right into Cayton Road. At its end, past the last house, turn right along a footpath that follows around three sides of a sports field.

On the far side, turn right along Bennetts Avenue, which swings left to reach Greenford Road. Turn right, passing under two bridges — the first carries the Paddington to Greenford trains, the second is used by the Central Line. Section 8 ends at the crossroads, with the Westway Cross Shopping Park **E** on the right, where Section 9 starts.

For Greenford Station, turn left across Greenford Road then keep ahead along Rockware Avenue. The station is to the left at the far end.