



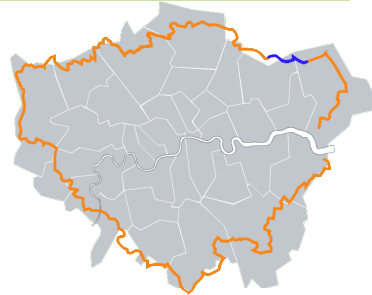
London LOOP
Section 20
Chigwell to Havering-atte-Bower



**Transport
for London**

walk
London

Start: Chigwell (TQ438933)
Station: Chigwell
Finish: Havering-atte-Bower (TQ512932)
Station: Buses from Havering-atte-Bower
Distance: 6 miles (9.7 km)



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 and 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.

V2 : Feb 10

Directions from Chigwell station: Leave the station and turn right onto High Road, the A113. Go through the village past the Chigwell shops on the left and the park on the right. Cross Hainault Road. Pass the Harvester Restaurant 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 up the hill passing the Chigwell Sports Club on the left and Ye Olde Kings Head **A** on the right.

Facing St Mary's church is an ancient timber framed public house named the Kings Head. Ye Olde Kings Head 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.

A little further on is a grammar school. Exactly opposite the school and just before the pedestrian lights turn right to follow the Epping Forest Country Care walk. Go over a stile and into a meadow. Avoiding the bramble, go straight ahead through the open field to the road opposite.

Go over the stile and turn right along the road for a few paces. Cross the road and go through the gap in the hedge to carry on straight ahead through a smaller opening in the bramble to 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 the paddock. Ahead is the farm house in view through the trees.

As the path crosses a meeting of ways just before the house, turn hard right to follow the wide track down the hill. Shortly turn left onto a charming green lane, wide enough 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 paddock. Keep the hedge to the left until it and the track ends. Veer left into the paddock diagonally opposite and if there isn't a path made clear diagonally through the crop turn left to follow the paddocks edge along the bottom, then turn right and head

up the hill towards the top left corner.

About 50 metres before the edge of the paddock turn left through a small gap in the hedge to follow a path right between the hedge and a fence. The steady humming sound of machines in the distance is the Chigwell Row Waterworks, **B** 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 it ends. Here on the right is a stile. Go over it and through the meadow keeping the hedge close on the left to reach another stile. Continue past a house on the left then over a further stile to a smaller meadow, following the left side to the last stile in the corner.

Follow the path 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. To see the chapel, go straight ahead to the main road at Chigwell Row and it is the charming yellow-brick Victorian building **C** 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 to the crossing of paths and continue right to the line of trees beyond.

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 ends continue over the grass towards the road and the Victorian Church beyond. Turn right along the grassed strip just before the A1112, Romford Road and about 30 metres before the grass ends, turn left to 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. Buses here go to Hainault station, Gants Hill station and Ilford station.

To continue, pass through a squeeze stile then through another kissing gate to enter Hainault Country Park. Take the middle of the three faint paths through wild growth to another kissing gate beyond. Follow the path through a short section of trees to open out in a field. Turn left and then right to follow the edge of the field to the bottom left corner. Pass through the kissing gate and continue to go 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.

In 1130 when much of Essex was woodland, Henry I, son of William the Conquer, 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, which soon turns up leftward. Once around the bend, an opening on the right leads to an expanse of open grass. Take this opening to reach Foxburrows Rare Breeds Farm. **D**

To continue, step away from the track here and keep left along the woodland edge to go across the open field aiming for the Millennium Beacon. Walk past the beacon and keep on by the trees until the ground begins to drop again. Now a track on the left enters the wood, soon leading to 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

kissing gate. Walk just left of a tiny grove of trees to enter a long tree belt called the Mile Plantation. The start of this path is marked with a signpost plus way-markers and yellow marked trees into the wood. Once in the trees turn right but after a few metres then left again on a less formal path which keeps safely within the trees until, over a prominent crossing track, it bears left and out into the open. Now the path goes through another tiny grove, drops down over a fairway with a green just to its right.

Ahead and slightly left is a low dark wooden fence which marks the edge of the golf course. Head over to the fence and veer right on the open patch of green between the hedges. Here on the right, is a stile hidden away in foliage about 30 metres down from the fence that opens out to the fields beyond.

Go over the stile and strike out across the paddock diagonally to the lower right side, aiming about 30 metres above the corner. Now on the flat grass strip turn right then quickly left to follow the left side of the adjacent paddock, keeping the ditch on the left. The view over to the left is Romford - a reminder that civilisation isn't far away.

Once at the end of the paddock, turn left to follow the edge of another paddock, keeping the ditch still on the left. The paddock ends at a metalled drive, turn right here and follow the signpost along 'Footpath to Carter Drive'.

Go past a rickety farm area and a house on the right to where the paths divide. Turn left here to shortly join the bridleway 227 to Havering Country Park. Where several paths meet on the edge of the country park, turn hard left up the rise to enjoy expansive panoramic views. About 20 metres after the wooden seat on the right turn right through the wooden barrier **E** 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 through two kissing gates.

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 3000 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.

Keep on ahead past the houses and go between the riding school and church **F** to the green of Havering-atte-Bower.

Nothing now 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 on the site of the old palace stables.

Turn right along the B175, North Road where there are bus stops to Romford (there are no buses on Sundays) or turn left to reach the Royal Oak pub. Section 20 ends here.