



## London LOOP

Section 23

Upminster Bridge to Rainham



Transport  
for London

Walk  
London

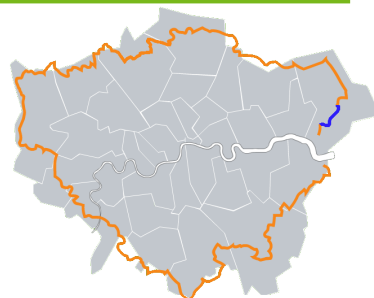
**Start:** Upminster Bridge (TQ550868)

**Station:** Upminster Bridge

**Finish:** Rainham (TQ521820)

**Station:** Rainham

**Distance:** 4 miles (6.4 km)



**Introduction:** This section starts with the fascinating Upminster Windmill and generally follows the River Ingrebourne. You walk through Hornchurch Country Park which has gone through several phases as a farm, military airfield, gravel quarry and rubbish tip, until its acquisition in 1980 by the local authority.

The terrain is almost completely level with tarmac or firm gravel paths and there are no stiles, so all this section is easily accessible.

There are pubs at Upminster Bridge, Hacton Lane, Rainham Road, Rainham village and cafes and toilets at Rainham. There is also a toilet next to Upminster Bridge Station.

There are transport breaks at Upminster Bridge on the Underground and on rail at Rainham as well as buses which are also at Newmarket Way.

V2 : Mar 10

**Directions:** Leave Upminster Bridge station and turn right onto the busy Upminster Road. Go under the railway bridge and past The Windmill pub on the left. Cross Ingrebourne stream and then turn right into Bridge Avenue.

To visit the Upminster Windmill **A** continue along the main road for a short distance. The windmill is on the left. It was built in 1803 by a local farmer and continued to grind wheat and produce flour until 1934. The mill is only open on occasional weekends in spring and summer for guided tours and funds are currently being raised to restore the mill to working order.

Continue along Bridge Avenue to Brookdale Avenue on the left and opposite is Hornchurch Sports Stadium. Go through the black metal gates into the stadium and down the drive.

Enter the car park and turn left towards the tarmac path to the left of the wooden fence. Follow the path along the green open space of Gaynes Parkway with the Ingrebourne stream flowing by on the right. At the triangular crossing of paths keep right and continue close to the stream before crossing it via the footbridge.

The Ingrebourne River is your companion for most of this section of the LOOP. It passes roughly north east to south west through the London Borough of Havering and into the River Thames at Rainham Creek. Much of the river's route is classed as a London site of metropolitan importance because of the wildlife found here.

Turn immediately left once over the bridge and follow the Ingrebourne, now on the left to the busy road called Hacton Lane. Cross here at the pedestrian crossing and continue straight ahead through the wooden gate and follow the path around Hacton Lane play site. Once past the play site, bear left across the open space to join the path on the riverside to follow the Ingrebourne Valley Green Way.

Continue on the tarmac path past a stretch of houses behind fences until reaching an open space to the right with a stretch of grass. Beyond is Newmarket Way.

To leave the LOOP here walk over to Newmarket Way and turn left. Just as

Newmarket Way ends, fork right into Ascot Gardens ignoring Goodwood Avenue. Follow the road as it veers right and turns into Crystal Avenue. Turn left into Vaughan Avenue to find buses to Hornchurch station.

To continue, keep on the path past the footbridge and signpost on the left pointing to Hornchurch car park. Do not go over the bridge, keep ahead. Follow the Green Way track through a metal and wooden gate to enter Hornchurch Country Park.

Hornchurch Country Park is a large area of glades, attractive mature woodland and meadows. It is hard to believe that this park, which was created in 1980 from a huge landfill site, sits on thousands of tons of household and industrial rubbish!

Shortly the path forks left to go past a children's play area on the right. Head to the left away from the tarmac path and follow the fence edge along the bank above the river.

In the foreground is an incongruous concrete pillbox, a reminder that this site was once an RAF airfield. The airfield closed in 1962 but the air raid shelters, gun emplacements, turrets and pillboxes still show evidence of the airfield's defence.

Continue along the tarmac path past the signpost to Albyns Farm Lake and up the incline to enjoy the broadest view of the Ingrebourne Marshes. Keep following the track straight ahead along the bank, ignoring the paths going right until finally the track turns up right to reach the lakeside with Albyns Farm in view across the water. Follow the track around to the left of the lake before turning right up to the farm. Go through the gate and past Albyns Farm, **B** a beautifully kept medieval manor now privately owned. Soon an opening will appear on the left with a path leading into open meadows. Take this path keeping the hedge on the right until it turns into a wooden fence. Turn right through the first opening where after a short way there is a crossing of paths. Turn left on this wide gravel path as it gently climbs to the brow of the hill. Once at the top Rainham comes into view along with the path ahead.

Continue ahead down the hill keeping a close watch for mountain bikes crossing the track and at the junction with the path joining from the right

keep left towards the car park. Just before the car park take the small track to the right and follow it to the road crossing. Cross Rainham Road and follow it past The Albion Steak & Ale opposite to meet a major roundabout at the A1306. Cross back across Rainham Road here at the pedestrian crossing and turn right to follow the path around what is known as Dovers Corner. Cross the A1306 at the next pedestrian crossing and turn right on the other side. Follow the path around to the left and go over the Ingrebourne River one more time. Continue past the large Tesco on the left.

For buses to Barking Station, Hornchurch Town Centre and Lakeside Shopping Centre turn left into Viking Way. Otherwise continue over Viking Way to Rainham Station.

Once past the Tesco petrol station the unexpectedly attractive village of Rainham comes into view. This peaceful place with the Bell Inn on the left and The New Angel Inn opposite, is a perfect retreat away from the noisy roads. Before heading through the village to the station it is well worth taking a moment to go over the footbridge opposite the Bell Inn to discover Rainham Creek Open Space. **C**

Right up to the 19th century Rainham Creek was navigable for sailing barges and Rainham became an important place for shipbuilding as the creek connected to the Thames. A wealthy sea captain, John Harle not only owned the wharves here, but used the profits to have the handsome Rainham Hall built in 1729.

To keep going onto Section 24 of the LOOP to the Thames and Coldharbour Point continue past Rainham station.