



## London LOOP

Section 5

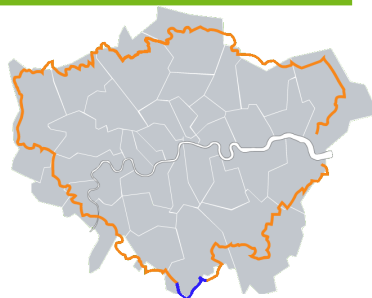
Hamsey Green, Croydon to Coulsdon South Station



Transport  
for London

Walk  
London

**Start:** Hamsey Green (TQ350595)  
**Station:** West Croydon (and then by bus to Limsfield Road)  
**Finish:** Coulsdon South station (TQ298590)  
**Station:** Coulsdon South  
**Distance:** 6 miles (9.6 km)



**Introduction:** This very attractive section features in quick succession four commons - Riddlesdown, Kenley Common, Coulsdon Common and Farthing Downs - the latter providing a long ridge walk with fine views and grazing cattle.

Other points of interest include Happy Valley and its rare yellow rattle plant and Devilsden Wood.

It is mostly on level ground with three long climbs (two of them very steep with steps). The terrain is mainly rough tracks, footpaths and grassy fields.

There are pubs and cafes at Hamsey Green, Godstone Road, Kenley Aerodrome, Coulsdon Common and Coulsdon South and an occasional kiosk at Farthing Downs. There are public toilets at Farthing Downs.

V1 : April 10

**Directions:** From the information board on Hamsey Green, near the Good Companions public house follow Tithepit Shaw Lane for 400 metres. Where the road bends left go through the gate and take the path straight ahead across the fields towards Riddlesdown passing a trig point (a concrete block used for surveying) on the left. About 200 metres later, turn sharp left into the valley, keeping the hedge on the right.

The steep tree covered meadow here is home to the rare chalkhill blue butterfly.

Pass through a gate and turn left onto a sloping path which joins a Roman road. Go over the railway bridge and down onto Godstone Road.

The Quarry at the foot of Riddlesdown is about 200 years old and was working up until 1967.

Cross the main road, turn left and then turn right into Old Barn Lane. Go over the railway bridge and continue up New Barn Lane and up the stone steps at the end. Turn right up the wooden steps onto Kenley Common.

In Twelve Acre on Kenley Common, the pyramidal orchid thrives here. These commons came into the City of London's care as a result of the 1878 legislation in response to concern at the rapid disappearance of open spaces in Greater London.

Keep going up the hill along the woodland edge. Go straight ahead at the cross track until the path forks. Take the left fork and keep going until you come out onto an open grassy area of the Common.

Cross the grass on a diagonal and enter the wood. After about 30 metres turn right and follow the fence onto the unmade track which is Golf Road. At the end turn right into Hayes Lane.

After about 100 metres take the footpath on the left **A** through the wood. Then turn right into Betts Mead Recreation Ground. Go through a large gap in the trees to the left and turning left follow the field edge passing the corner of the field, before reaching a narrow road.

Just around the corner to the left is the Wattenden Arms which is full of World War II memorabilia from Kenley Airfield, including many original photos.

Cross the road and track, climb over the stile, walk diagonally across the field and head for the domes of the Kenley Observatory.

The earth banks to the left are blast bays that once protected Spitfires.

Cross the stile by the observatory and fork left onto the track. Bear right between two forked trees along the leafy path. Walk between the bollards and down the bridle way to Caterham Drive. Continue up Rydons Lane on to Coulsdon Common. Cross the road and follow the path to Coulsdon Road.

Cross the road into Fox Lane and go past the pub to a gate. Follow the tarmac path until it reaches the trees. Continue down the hill into the sloping field. Follow the path across the top part of the field and through some trees to a picnic bench with great views of Happy Valley.

Happy Valley is home to one of Britain's rarest plants – the greater yellow rattle. It's so called because when the plant is ready to set seed, the calyx (a group of sepals) dries out and rattles.

Turn left across Happy Valley, keeping the ancient hedgerow on your left. On the far side of the valley turn right and continue along the edge of the wood bearing left into Devilsden Wood.

Devilsden Wood appears on the earliest maps and is classified as an ancient woodland. Hazel, ash and cherry dominate the lower path of the wood. Yew and beech can be seen further up the slope. In spring bluebells and wood anemones lay a carpet of blue and white.

Come out of the woods after about 600 metres, onto Farthing Downs, turning left up the hill past the cottages (there are toilets next to the car park). **B** Turn right and follow the road along Farthing Downs for about one mile past two cattle grids.

Farthing Downs is also an unusual site in that English Heritage have designated it an area of archaeological interest due to its ancient Roman landscape and Saxon tumuli.

At this point take a look at the horizon. There's the familiar sight of the London skyline with the NatWest Tower, Canary Wharf and the transmitter masts at Crystal Palace.

Leave Farthing Downs and continue down the hill to the main road. There is a café in the park across the road. Turn left and left again into Reddown Road. After about 100 metres turn right to Coulsdon South Station.

To continue on to Section 6 to Banstead Downs continue past the station.