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## Hendon to Hampstead

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Distance: 8½ km=5½ miles

easy walking

Region: Greater London

Date written: 13-may-2010

Author: Thwelder

Last update: 18-mar-2018

Refreshments: Start and finish

Map: Explorer 173 (London North)

*Problems, changes? We depend on your feedback: [feedback@fancyfreewalks.org](mailto:feedback@fancyfreewalks.org)*

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*Parks, green routes, heath, historic town*

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### In Brief

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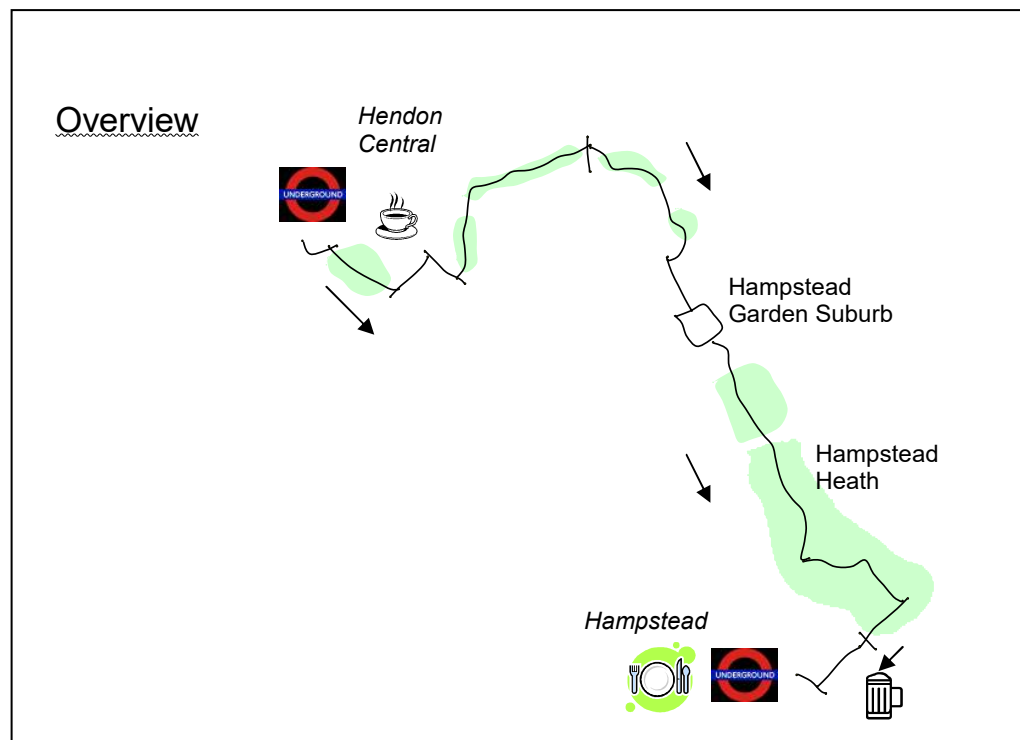
This is an amazing walk from outside the North Circular Road to Hampstead, almost entirely along green routes, including extensive heath.



The walk begins at **Hendon Central** underground station and ends at **Hampstead** underground station.

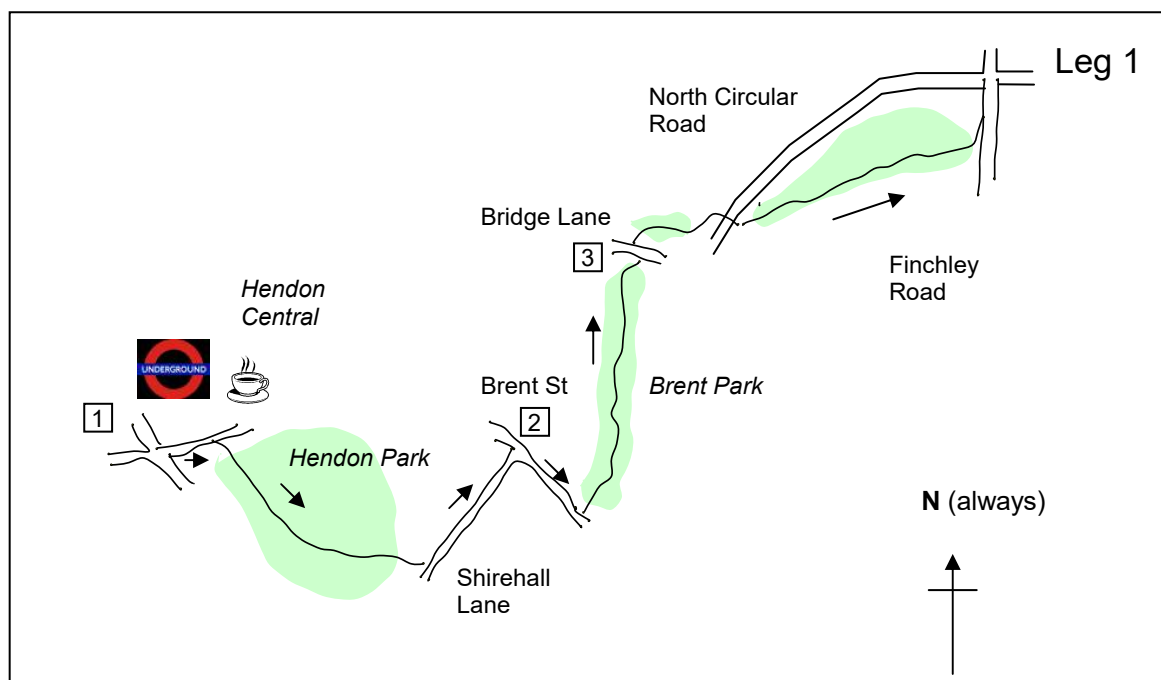


There is no rough walking (except for a bit of mud in winter) and no nettles and dogs are welcome.



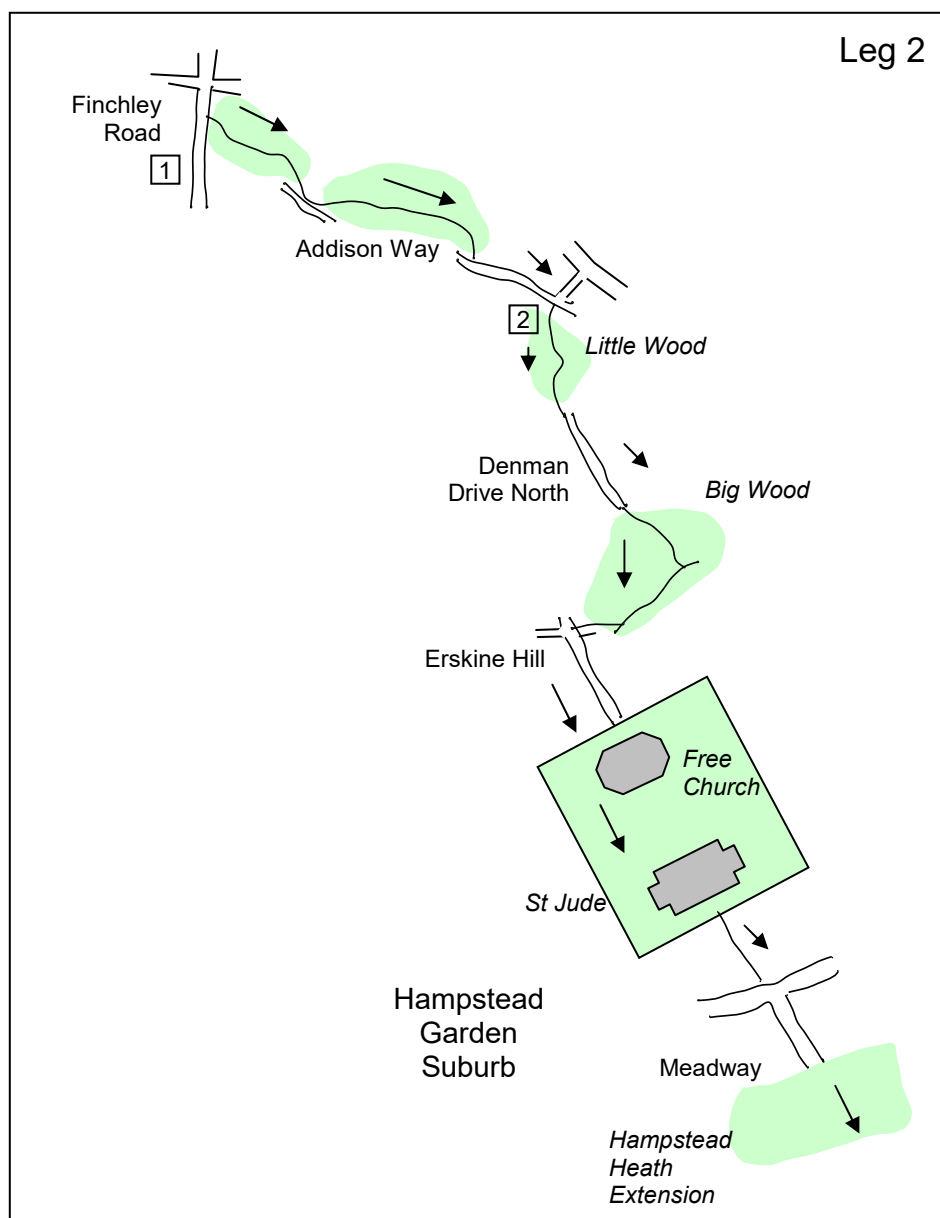
# The Walk

## Leg 1: Hendon Central to Finchley Road



- 1 Turn **left** out of the station and immediately **left** at the lights on Queens Road. Cross the road **right** into Hendon Park. There are toilets and a café here. On the left is a Holocaust Memorial Garden entered under arch with a message wrought in Hebrew. Continue on the central path past the tennis courts. *In the right-hand corner is one of London's great trees, a japanese maple.* At a T-junction go straight ahead downhill across the grass, aiming for the far left-hand corner. On reaching it, turn **left** on Shirehall Lane.
- 2 At the traffic lights, turn **right** into Brent Street. Just before reaching the busy North Circular Road, turn **left** into the strip of green woodland running beside the River Brent known as Brent Park. *Note the two rather dilapidated roofed observation platforms by the weir. You are on the Capital Ring, a walking route of about 120 km planned and signposted by the London boroughs that encircles inner London.* Go over a little bridge and turn **left**. [2017/18: the bridge was closed; you need to follow Brent Street to the North Circular, turn **left** at the traffic lights and, after an estate on your left, you will find an entrance on your left by a Capital Ring sign into Brent Park on the other side of the bridge.] Keep to the main path with the river on your left. At a junction, turn **left** following the Capital Ring sign, so that you now have a pond on the right, popular with geese and other waterfowl, with the river still on the left. Exit the park at the end and turn **left** on Bridge Lane.
- 3 In a few metres, turn **right** on a footpath alongside the river. On reaching a grassy space which is a children's playground, turn **right** and go through an underpass beneath the North Circular Road. [2018: after the underpass the path was closed; they are currently building a new path; some walkers ignored the notice; follow the diversion signs to Finchley Road, cross it using the traffic lights over to a path on the other side - a bit dull but hopefully for a short time only.] Keep ahead on a path beside the river. After some distance, on approaching Finchley Road ahead, fork **left** up to it and cross it using the traffic lights over to a path on the other side.

## Leg 2: Finchley Road to Hampstead Garden Suburb



- 1 Staying on the main path, cross a bridge and eventually reach Addison Way, a pleasant residential road on your right. Don't join the Addison Way yet, but veer away to the **left** through more green space until the greenway finally gives way to Addison Way. Continue along the road.
- 2 Just before Addison Way meets the busy North Circular Road, turn **right** on a footpath into the delightful Little Wood. Keep to the tarmac through the wood (on the right is a small amphitheatre). At the end of Little Wood, continue ahead on Denman Drive North. At the end of the road, enter the equally delightful Big Wood.

*Big Wood and Little Wood are a Local Nature Reserve. They became open spaces within Hampstead Garden Suburb when it was founded in the early 1900s. The trees date back to the early 1800s. Big Wood is of ancient origin and is host to wild service trees, yellow archangel and bluebells, with occasional hazel coppices.*

In the middle, you meet a tarmac crossing path. Turn **right** here and at a T-junction, turn **right** again, continuing on Temple Fortune Hill. At a cross-roads, turn **left** into Erskine Hill. At the top is the central square of Hampstead Garden Suburb dominated by two great churches. Cross the grass to the right of the Free Church.

*The Free Church, Hampstead Garden Suburb, built 1910-1912 was designed by the great English architect Edwin Lutyens. It was built with the intention that people of all denominations should worship together. It is affiliated to the Baptist Union and a member of the United Reformed Church.*

Continue across the grass to the right of St Jude-on-the-Hill.

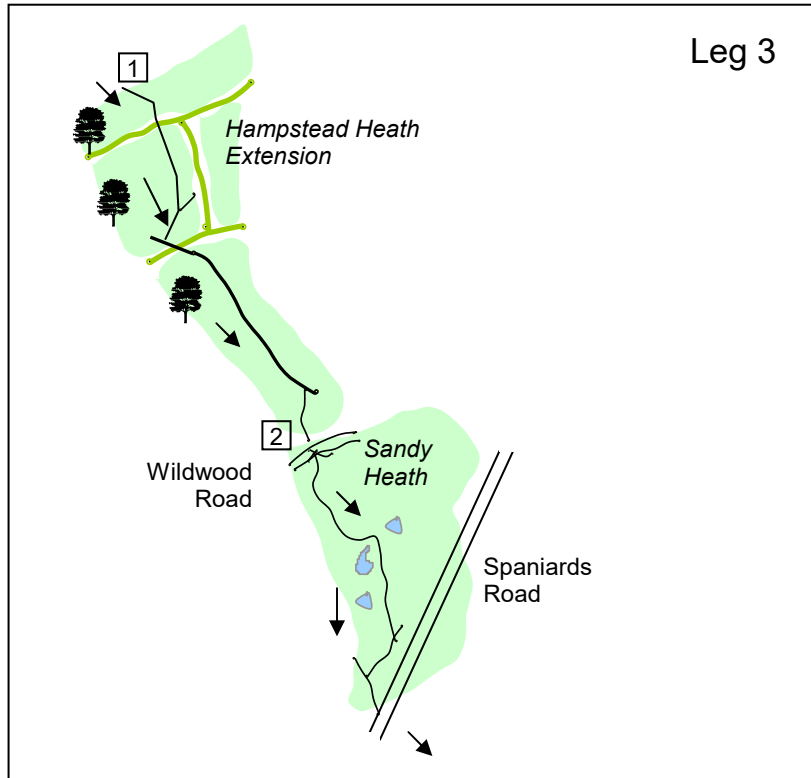
*In contrast to the Free Church, St Jude on the Hill is Anglican Catholic. It is the Parish Church of Hampstead Garden Suburb and, like its close neighbour, was designed by Edwin Lutyens. Building began in 1909, but it was not completed until 1935. It is 200 feet (61m) long externally and the top of the spire is 178 feet (54m) above the ground. The ceiling is barrel-vaulted and domed. The murals and paintings are by Walter Starmer (1877-1961) and the west window is to his design and depicts Saint Jude. (Jude was one of the twelve disciples and no relation to Judas.) Writers associated with St Jude include Evelyn Waugh and C.S. Lewis.*

Continue in the same direction down Heathgate. Go straight over Meadway and continue along the cul-de-sac and exit at the end onto the open space of Hampstead Heath Extension.

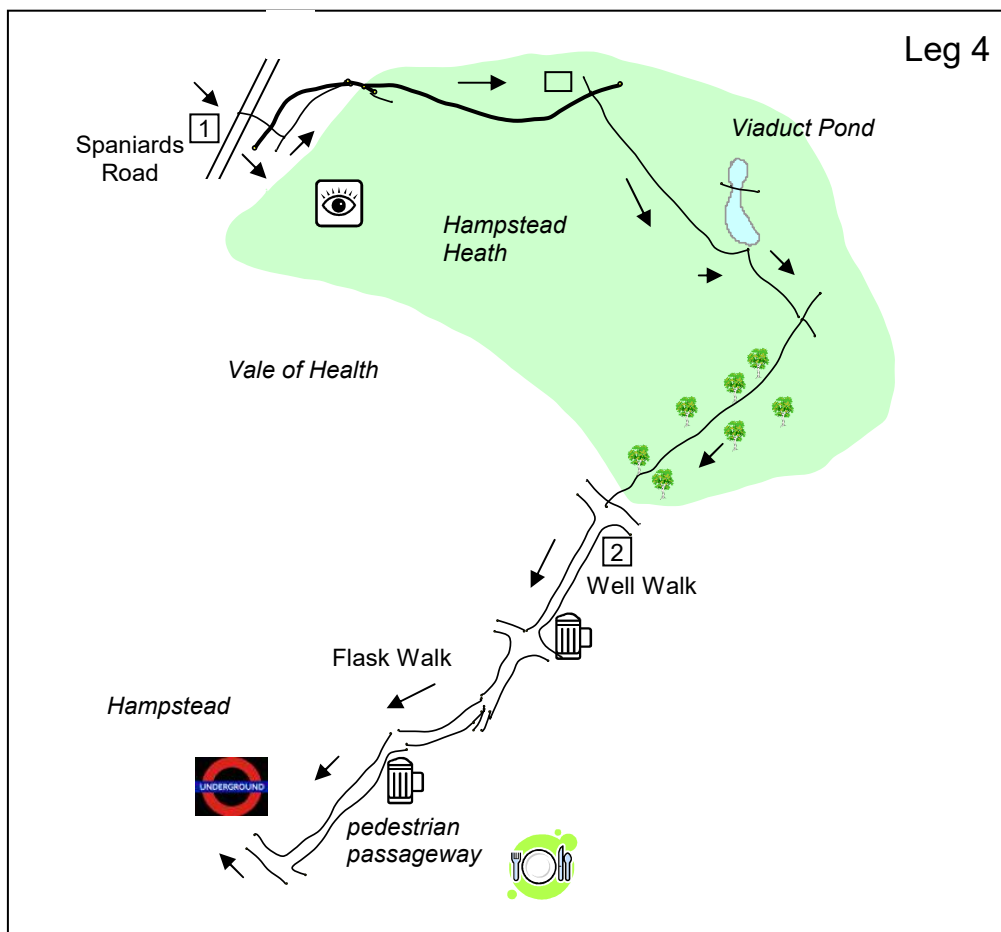
*Hampstead Garden Suburb was founded in 1907 by Henrietta Barnett to be a model community where all classes of people would live together in attractive surroundings and social harmony. It was intended to be quiet (note – the two churches have no bells), have a low housing density, wide tree-lined roads, no walls – only hedges, woods and public gardens. Nowadays of course the occupants are overwhelmingly upper-middle class.*

### Leg 3: Hampstead Garden Suburb to Spaniards Road

- 1** **See minimap overleaf.** Head slightly left and go over a bridge in a gap in the trees. Continue across the next space (a cricket pitch) aiming about 100m right of the obvious gap in the trees. Here you join a stony track **wc** between buildings. *There are toilets here.* Follow the track, keeping to the main track all the way, passing several ponds on the left. Eventually, the track goes past a drinking fountain on the left and wheels right to a road.
- 2** Cross Wildwood Road and continue up steps on the other side. Ignore paths left and right and go up a fairly steep path, reaching some seats at the top of Sandy Heath. *You are on part of a sandy ridge that stretches from Highgate to Hampstead.* Continue in the same direction, avoiding all paths that branch off to the left. The path meets a tarmac path coming from the right. Bear **left** here on the now stony track. It reaches Sandy Heath Pond. Go **left** round the pond to a point immediately across on the opposite bank and continue in the same direction. The path goes past a pair of oaks ringed by wooden railings and zig-zags right-left past another small pond. It reaches a T-junction with a path that runs beneath the busy Spaniards Road. Turn **right** here. At another T-junction, turn **left** up to Spaniards Road.



Leg 4: Spaniards Road to Hampstead Village



- 1 Cross over Spaniards Road, crossing excellent foot and cycle paths, and go down steps to meet a very broad track. Cross the track to a seat which has fine views over the Vale of Health and across to the tall buildings of the City and Canary Wharf. Turn **left** on the edge of the hill, gradually joining the broad track you just crossed. Keep to the track as it curves right, avoiding a straight tarmac path right. You pass toilets on the left – a little black and white timbered house – and at the next junction take a broad path **right**. This path leads down to the aptly-named Viaduct Pond.

*With the solid London clay lying underneath the porous sand, the Heath had many springs. Gradually these were dammed to make the many ponds that can now be seen there. The pond and its Viaduct were originally built as a reservoir between 1844 and 1847.*

By the bank of the pond, turn **right** on a sandy path steeply downhill. On reaching a wide path running in an avenue of beeches, turn **right**. This leads to East Heath Road in Hampstead Village.

- 2 Continue straight over on Well Walk. *On the left is a house where the painter John Constable once lived.* At the start of Willow Road, fork **right** into Flask Walk. Keep to the wider road, the one with a grassy strip in the centre. At the end, you pass the excellent *Flask* pub (Youngs) and reach a pedestrianised area, leading to the main road. Turn **right** here a few paces for Hampstead underground station.



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