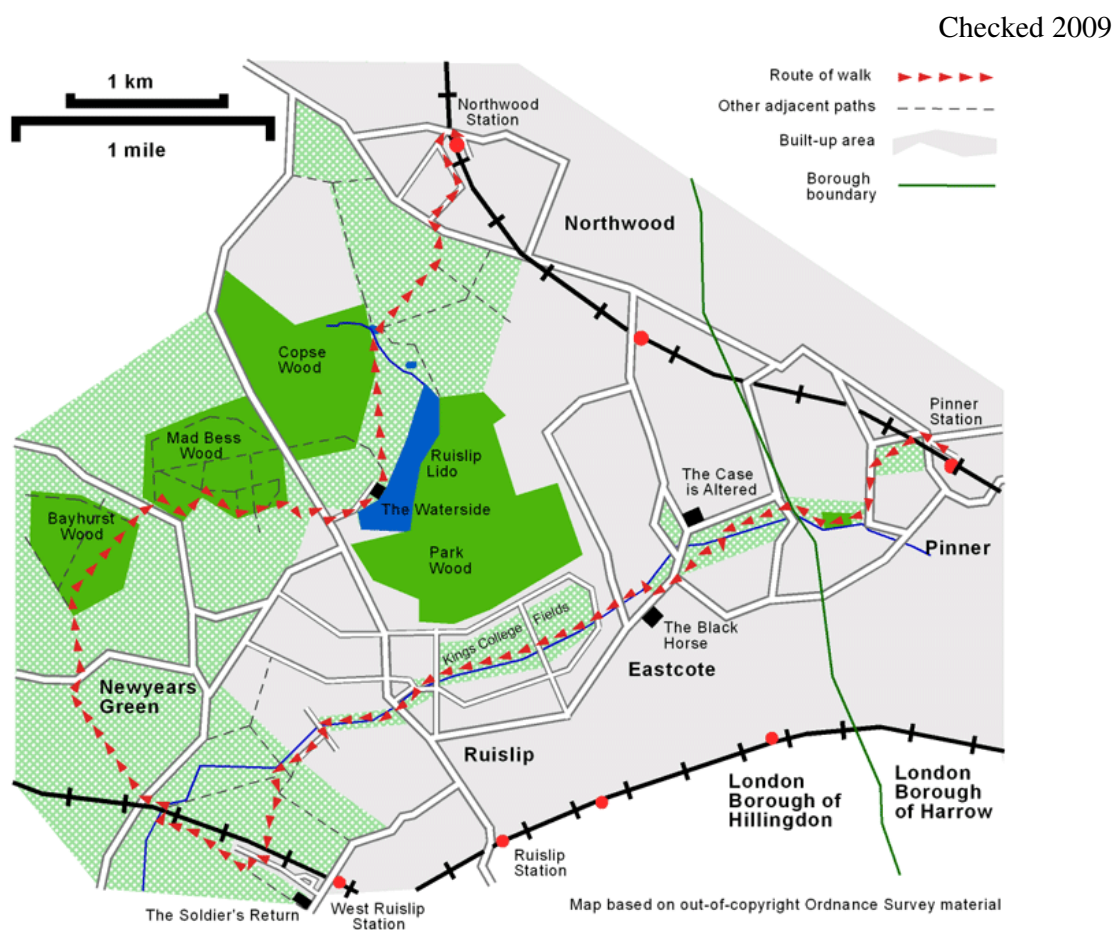


Pinner - Ruislip - Northwood

Until the completion of installation of a new gas pipeline (scheduled for the end of 2009) this route is practicable only as far as West Ruislip. The footpath between Newyears Green Road and Bayhurst Wood is closed and there is no practical alternative route.

This walk begins at the old Middlesex village of Pinner (now in the London Borough of Harrow) and follows a green corridor as far as Ruislip, after which the country becomes more open until Northwood (all part of what used to be known as 'Metroland' in the 1920s and 30s, when the Metropolitan Line opened up this part of Middlesex). Flat terrain, easy walking for the first section (Pinner to West Ruislip); getting hillier as the land rises to Northwood.



Distances

Pinner to West Ruislip	2.5 miles (4 km)
West Ruislip to Northwood	4.5 miles (7.5 km)
Total	7 miles (11.5 km)

Travel

Pinner and Northwood stations are on the Metropolitan Line (Amersham/Chesham branch).

Ruislip station is on the Metropolitan Line (Uxbridge branch).

West Ruislip station is on the Central Line and National Rail (Chiltern Railways).

Number H13 bus runs between Pinner and Ruislip Lido daily (every 20-30 mins).

Number H11 bus runs between Pinner and Northwood daily (every 15-30 mins).

Number 331 bus runs between Ruislip and Northwood daily (every 20-30 mins).

Detailed travel information for the whole of this area is available from the Traveline South East website www.travelinesoutheast.org.uk or telephone 0871 200 22 33

Refreshments

Pinner is well stocked with pubs, coffee bars and restaurants. (The Queens Head, Victory and Hand in Hand are all old pubs in the High Street and on the suggested detour.)

The Case Is Altered and the Black Horse at Eastcote

The Soldier's Return on Ickenham High Road near West Ruislip station (400 yards off the main route)

The Waters Edge at Ruislip Lido (has a fine view of the lake)

There are several cafes and restaurants in Northwood, and the Misty Moon pub (corner of Green Lane and Dene Road)

Please always be considerate about muddy boots in pubs etc; either take them off, or cover them up. Never eat or drink your own provisions on pub premises (including the garden, if there is one).

Ordnance Survey Map

This walk starts on O.S. Explorer Map 173 *London North* and goes on to 172 *Chiltern Hills East* shortly before Ruislip.

Route

Pinner to West Ruislip 2.5 miles (4 km)

From Pinner station, cross over Station Approach and go left down the hill then right into Marsh Road to the foot of Pinner High Street. Although it is not apparent because of housing development, the land rises on both sides at this point as Pinner is in a shallow valley created by the River Pinn.

It is worth making a short detour up the High Street to the right, as it one of the best preserved in the London area and has 24 listed buildings, with St John's parish church at the top.

St John the Baptist parish church is the oldest building in Pinner, constructed largely in the 14th and 15th centuries, though parts may date back to the late 13th century. It was certainly in existence in 1234 as a chapel of ease to St Mary's Church, Harrow Hill. The bizarre Loudon monument in the graveyard has a coffin apparently suspended above the ground, but this is purely decorative. On the north side of the church, a simple headboard records: "William Skenelsby died Nov 7th 1775 aged 118".

All three pubs in the High Street have early origins. The Victory is a timber-framed building of the 16th century, and the Hand in Hand is set in a 17th century barn. The Queens Head opposite has been an inn since the time of Charles I and has the longest jetty (projecting upper floor) in Pinner; the stage coach for London used to leave here daily in the 19th century.

**Pinner Fair is one of the oldest in the country, originating with a charter of 1336 and held every year without interruption. It fills the High Street and Marsh Road, and the village is completely closed to traffic on these days (though all trace has gone by the early morning when the streets are reopened).
(Source: "Ten Walks Around Pinner" Pinner Association 1991)**

Cross over High Street and then to the left over Bridge Street, at the bridge over the River Pinn (this area was frequently flooded until alleviation schemes were put in place some years ago). Turn right and then left up Chapel Lane, go under the railway bridge, cross the entrance to a car park on the left and go into Pinner Memorial Park, created from the grounds of West House situated at the top of the rise (beyond the trees ahead).

There has been a house on this site for 500 years and the present building was one of the grand houses of Pinner in the 19th century, looking across landscaped grounds to the church on the other side of the valley. Lord Nelson's daughter, Horatia, lived in West End Lodge opposite and her son, Nelson Ward, occupied West House from 1873 to 1883. The older part of the house was demolished in 1950, though there are now plans to reinstate the lost wing and to use the building as a home for the William Heath Robinson Trust Collection, as well as continuing to house the 'Book of Remembrance' in honour of Pinner's war dead.

William Heath Robinson (1872-1944) was a cartoonist and book illustrator whose bizarre inventions of machines to perform simple tasks (like raising one's hat) gave rise to the term 'Heath Robinson contraption'. He lived in Pinner for ten years from 1908 and it was during this period that he did some of his most important work.

(Source: "Ten Walks Around Pinner" Pinner Association 1991; Cambridge Biographical Encyclopedia)

Walk up through the park and go left in front of the house, then right at the end of the building and immediately left to follow a short path leading to the exit at West End Lane.

Cross, and go left down the hill (past Rose Cottage, on the left, built in the 1850s, and behind it Woodbine Cottage, formerly accommodation for the staff of Rose Cottage) to the second mini-roundabout.

Fork right into Cranbourne Drive and right again through a gate into Cuckoo Hill allotments, with the River Pinn on your left.

Follow the river, with allotments on the right, then through trees for 100 yards. Fork right, away from the river (the path here can get muddy in winter), and continue ahead 200 yards, still through trees, to pass a footbridge on your left and enter a field (signposted Celandine Route)

Go to the far end of the field then bear left (just before houses) on a track to reach Cheney Street (listed in papers of 1565 and still with the appearance of a country lane, despite the volume of traffic now using it).

Cross over Cheney Street and continue on Long Meadow open space (a remnant of the medieval Well Green), with the river on your left.

(To your right is High Road Eastcote, with several interesting old houses and The Case Is Altered pub at the far end. If you would like to look at them, about 300 yards before the end of Long Meadow and just after a large oak tree on the route, go through the trees to your right, to the road, later returning to Long Meadow opposite the pub.)

High Road Eastcote was the original main road through the village and, in medieval times, was lined with cottages and farmhouses, some of which still

survive. Approaching from the east, the first is a 3-storey red-tiled house called 'Ramin', the oldest parts of which date from the 1600s (the name possibly derives from Ram Inn, known to have been in the area). Then comes The Old Shooting Box, created from three former cottages in the 16th to 18th centuries, and further on are the white-boarded buildings of a 16th century farmhouse known as The Grange.

Beyond is the Case Is Altered pub (dating from the 16th century but largely rebuilt after a serious fire in 1890) and then Haydon Lodge, a showpiece cottage of 1880 designed by the fashionable architects, George & Peto. It was once the lodge to Haydon Hall, demolished in the 1970s.

(Source: "Eastcote – A Pictorial History" by Ruislip, Northwood and Eastcote Local History Society 1984. "Ten Walks Around Pinner" Pinner Association 1991)

100 yards before the road at the far end of Long Meadow (with the Case Is Altered pub just out of sight to the right) go left over a footbridge (by a Celandine Route display board) and through a small copse to what used to be the grounds of Eastcote House, with the old walled gardens and dovecote ahead and the old Coach House to the right.

Eastcote House was the home of the Hawtreys (an important local family whose memorials are in St Martin's Church, Ruislip) from ca 1525 to the early 1860s. Except for the coach house and dovecote, the buildings were demolished in 1964 and the grounds were turned into a public park. The walled garden is believed to be 17th century and now contains a display of herbs and flowers which may be freely visited.

(Source: "Eastcote – A Pictorial History" by Ruislip, Northwood and Eastcote Local History Society 1984)

Continue to the right past the old Coach House and follow the tarmac path ahead out of the park to a busy road junction (very poor visibility to the right).

Go a few yards left and cross with great care at bollards, and then again at more bollards to Forge Green opposite, and turn left along High Road Eastcote. (This may be safer than crossing the two lanes of the busy road ahead).

This area is known as Old Eastcote and the timber-framed Old Barn House on your left is the oldest building in the vicinity, dating from late medieval times. There were tea gardens here in 1908 when the Olympic Games were held and the 13th milepost for the marathon was fixed outside.

The Black Horse pub is a 19th century building on the site of an early 18th century pub of the same name.

(Source: "Eastcote – A Pictorial History" by Ruislip, Northwood and Eastcote Local History Society 1984. "Ten Walks Around Pinner" Pinner Association 1991)

Continue to a Celandine Route display board just before the first house on the right (The Old Forge). This was the site of the village smithy, in use until the mid-1950s (an anvil may still be seen in the front garden).

Turn right and cross a footbridge over the River Pinn then go left on a path beside the river through trees to Fore Street (once the 'fore' or front of a park in medieval times).

Cross over Fore Street and continue on a tarmac path to Elmbridge Avenue, then cross this to Kings College Playing Fields.

Kings College Playing Fields are named after the Cambridge college that owned Ruislip from 1451 onwards and was lord of the manor (previously it had been in the hands of the Abbey of Bec in Normandy). The fields were acquired by the local authority as open space in 1938.

(Source: "Ten Walks Around Pinner" Pinner Association 1991)

Stay to the left along the river bank and continue ahead to a gate.

Cross Kings College Road to continue on the western part of Kings College Playing Fields, passing a small skateboard park and a running track to rejoin the river further on.

Ignore a footbridge on your left and continue by the river bank, past a marshy area full of reeds and rushes on your right (this appeared in the 1990s after heavy flooding and now seems to be a permanent feature) until you reach St Martin's Approach. To the left is Ruislip village and St Martin's Church.

[Ruislip station, on the Metropolitan and Piccadilly lines (Uxbridge branch), is ca half a mile (1km) away and may be reached by going left on St Martin's Approach and along the High Street.]

Cross St Martin's Approach and continue ahead on a tarmac footpath to the right of the field, past the end of Sherwood Avenue and then through trees to emerge on Pinn Way.

Cross at a white bridge and enter the field opposite, bearing right past a Celandine Route display board to follow the edge of the field along the river bank until you reach a gap in the hedge at the far end, 50 yards to the left of the river.

Go through to Bury Street, turn right and cross the road by the crossing and into a small park area with the river on the right.

Go ahead on the footpath then turn right over a footbridge and left to continue following the river along the other bank.

At a road on the right, turn left over a footbridge (the Celandine Route has to leave the river for a short section here) and go up Westcote Rise then right into Woodville Gardens.

Continue to the end then go under or over a bar and cross a field to rejoin the River Pinn at the far right-hand corner.

Go ahead through trees, past a footbridge on the right (on the Hillingdon Trail) then in 20 yards fork left onto the Hillingdon Trail (leaving the Celandine Route which continues ahead along the River Pinn to the Grand Union Canal at Cowley).

This narrow enclosed path is what used to be Clack's Lane, an ancient Ruislip highway. After 50 yards cross a sandy path and continue ahead for a further 140 yards to a footpath crossing (there is a Hillingdon Trail waymark post here but it is often half hidden).

Turn right here over a bridge on to the golf course, then go right again for a short way to a ditch stretching across the fairway.

Cross the ditch and go left alongside it, across the golf course (take care!) then through a belt of trees, and keep following the Hillingdon Trail signs, close to the ditch, across another fairway (watch out for play coming from the left) to a gate.

Follow an enclosed path through a curved low tunnel under the railway to emerge at a road (The Greenway), turn right and then cross to a footpath opposite, between houses 55 and 57.

Go through a short passage to a Hillingdon Trail signpost, where our main route goes to the right through trees.

However, the rest of the route is blocked by the installation of a gas pipeline at Newyears Green Lane and so turn left at the signpost and follow the directions to West Ruislip Station.

[For West Ruislip station, on the Central Line and National Rail (Chiltern Railways), go left at this signpost in the direction of the Hillingdon Trail to Ickenham High Road (at the Soldier's Return pub), then left a short distance up a rise].

West Ruislip to Northwood 4.5 miles (7.5 km)

[To start the walk from West Ruislip station, cross at the pedestrian crossing, turn left, and just after the Soldier's Return pub, turn right on a track leading to a small green. Follow the Hillingdon Trail waymark post through trees, to pick up the main route at a Hillingdon Trail signpost, where you continue ahead.]

To continue on the walk, follow the path through trees, then along the right-hand edge of two fields to a footpath junction at the foot of the railway embankment.

Take the right fork, go under the railway, then left at a footpath T-junction to emerge at Breakspear Road South.

Cross half left and go up a driveway to the left of a house, then continue ahead through wooden posts up a bridleway (with a vehicle driveway to the left), eventually reaching Newyears Green Lane.

Go right on Newyears Green Lane for a short distance (care as there are no verges) then after the sign for Pond Farm, cross over and go through a wooden gate to a path leading up to Bayhurst Wood (part of Ruislip Woods).

Enter the corner of the woods at a kissing gate) then ahead along the left-hand edge of the woods for 130 yards to a picnic area (a good spot for a break).

Bayhurst Wood Country Park was once a part of the Great Forest of Middlesex and is known to have been in the possession of the Hospitallers (Knights of St. John Hospital, Jerusalem) in the 13th century. The land was then granted by the king in 1542 to Robert Tyrwhit who shortly after sold it to the Newdigate family (lords of the manors of Harefield and Moorhall). It is now in the Ruislip Woods National Nature Reserve. Principal trees include common oak, sessile oak, hornbeam, common beech, aspen, and sweet chestnut. It covers an area of 90 acres and is a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

(Source: Colne Valley Park Visitor Centre. www.groundwork-tv.org.uk)

From the picnic area, turn into the woods (north) towards a post and wire fence and Hillingdon Trail signpost, then continue uphill on a track marked by bridleway and HT waymark posts.

Follow this path through the woods to a green metal gate, then continue ahead on a short drive leading to Breakspear Road North.

On the other side is Mad Bess Wood but do not enter it at the Hillingdon Trail sign directly opposite: instead, cross half right to a stile at a metal gate.

Go over the stile into the woods and turn right on a path running parallel with the road for 200 yards, then bearing left under electricity wires just inside the woods to a 3-way signpost; level with a white cottage to the right.

Go right at the 3-way signpost, passing a Scout memorial on the left, to another 3-way signpost after 35 yards, then in 10 yards bear half right off the main track through coppiced woodland, keeping to the right and passing behind the white cottage.

Follow the path just inside the edge of the woods, passing a 2-way signpost on the left and a metal stile on the right, to where there is a convenient bench (with a stile on the right) to take a short

break, offering a pleasant view through a gap in the trees of what much of rural Ruislip used to look like.

Continue ahead just inside the wood edge and then beside the boundary fence of Ruislip Crematorium on your right, then bear right to exit the woods at a display board.

Turn right, along the edge of a field and through a metal kissing gate to follow a short drive to the left leading to Bury Street.

Turn right into Bury Street then cross over and go up Reservoir Road (Hillingdon Trail sign at the corner) to reach the gate into Ruislip Lido after the last house on the right.

Ruislip Lido was dug in 1811 to feed the Grand Junction Canal and to provide drinking water for Paddington. When the water level becomes low during droughts, the remains of the hamlet of Park Hearn can be seen. The Lido was converted to leisure use in the 1930s and the Lido Railway built in 1946.

Go through the gate then follow the path to the left along the shore of the lake to the Waters Edge pub with views over the Lido. Ruislip Woodlands Centre is just before the pub on the left.

Continue past the pub and follow the path round to the left, taking the left fork to rejoin Reservoir Road at a display board.

Cross half right to a roomy kissing gate at a Hillingdon Trail signpost, go through and then ahead at a Ruislip Woods Nature Reserve display board on the right.

Ruislip Woods National Nature Reserve was one of the first natural history reserves in southern England, and is one of only two NNRs in Greater London (the other being Richmond Park). The woods are recorded in the Domesday Book in 1068 and there are many species of plants and flowers that are only found in ancient woodlands. There are extensive areas of hornbeam coppice and other principal trees include common (or pedunculate) oak, sessile oak, silver birch, aspen, beech, hazel, holly, alder and sweet chestnut.

The woods cover 300 hectares (740 acres) and consist of five main areas - Poor's Field, Mad Bess Wood, Bayhurst Wood, Park Wood and Copse Wood.

(Source: English Nature. www.english-nature.org.uk)

Where the Hillingdon Trail forks off to the left, continue ahead on the main path to follow a broad green way, narrowing as it goes through trees and passing an ancient area known as Poor's Field on the right, with Copse Wood on the left.

Copse Wood (part of Ruislip Woods National Nature Reserve) was formerly known as Coppice Wood, after the extensive coppicing of hornbeam and other trees for use as firewood and to make pea and bean sticks, furniture and tools.

Continue north, going ahead at a bridleway crossing and then bear right after an isolated signpost to cross the end of a small pond via a low concrete bridge (if this is flooded, go round the left edge of the pond, through a kissing gate and turn right to follow a path between fences to a second kissing gate on the left).

Go through a squeeze gate and cross a path to a kissing gate ahead, with a display board for Ruislip Woods to the right.

Go through the kissing gate and ahead on a narrow footpath across the golf course, going past houses and outbuildings on the right, and then on a track between fences to houses at the end of Hills Lane.

Ramblers' Association: Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes and West Middlesex Area

Walk up the lane to the junction with Rickmansworth Road, turn left and then cross over (traffic island a little further on for safety) to continue up Murray Road.

Follow Murray Road to the junction with Maxwell Road, with the police station on the left (note the old style lamp post and police call box by the entrance).

[Alternatively, take the short cut to the station along the path just before the Waitrose car park].

Turn right into Maxwell Road, right again at the junction with Green Lane, and right at Station Approach to the entrance for Northwood station on the right (also No 331 bus stop).

Alan Sheppard