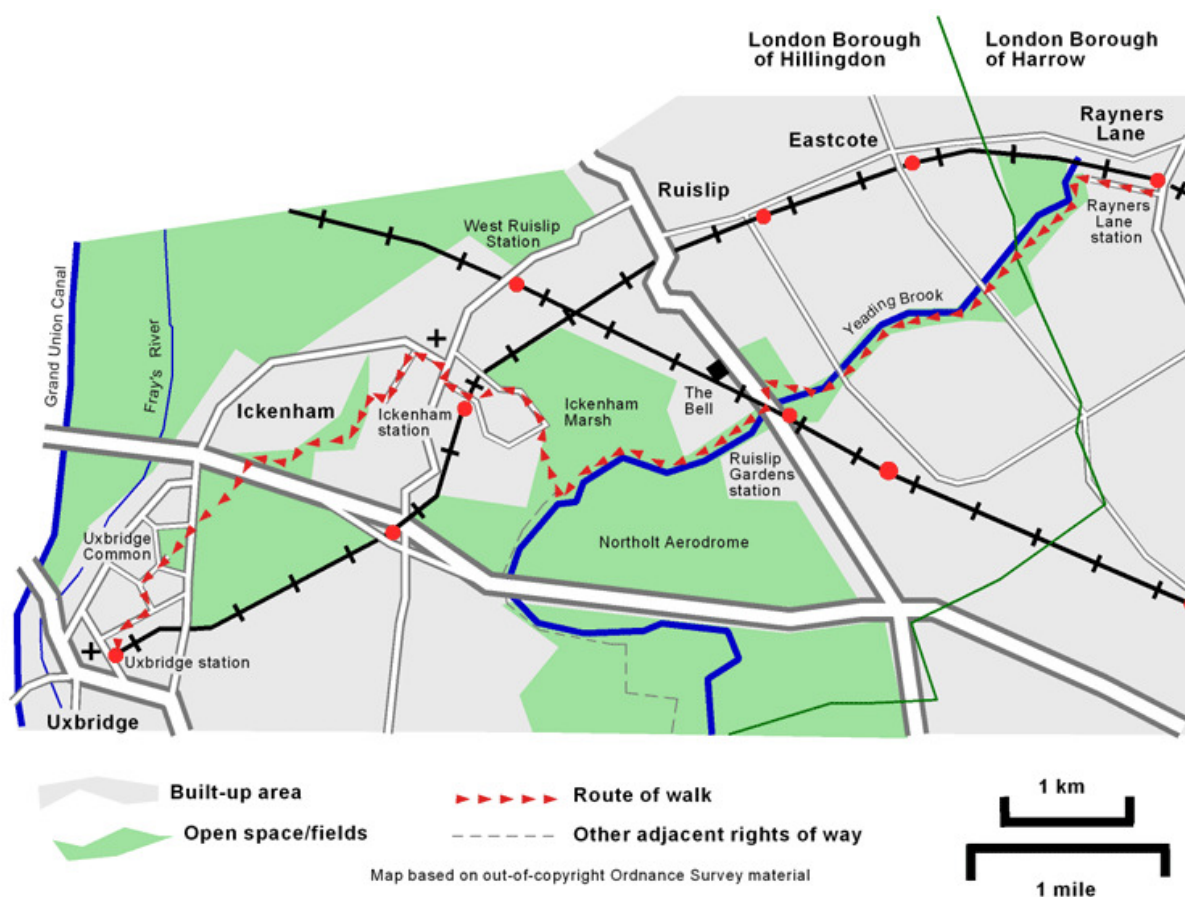


Rayners Lane – Ickenham – Uxbridge

Like the Pinner – Northwood route, this walk starts in the London Borough of Harrow (at Rayners Lane, on the Metropolitan Line). It then follows part of the Willow Tree Wander along a green corridor through Hillingdon Borough, along the banks of the Yeading Brook to Ickenham Marsh. Here the route switches briefly to the Hillingdon Trail into Ickenham village, then joins a third leisure route, the Celandine Way, before leaving it to cross Uxbridge Common and on to the end of the walk at Uxbridge. The area around Ickenham Marsh is probably the nicest and most rural part of the walk, but it is often wet and muddy in winter. It may be advisable to choose a different walk if there has been heavy rain very recently.

Checked 2009



Distances

Rayners Lane – Ruislip Gardens	2.1 miles (3.5 km)
Ruislip Gardens – Ickenham	1.8 miles (3 km)
Ickenham – Uxbridge	2.6 miles (4 km)
Total	6.5 miles (10.5 km)

No significant hills.

Travel

Rayners Lane, Ickenham and Uxbridge stations are all on the Piccadilly/Metropolitan Line (Uxbridge branch).

It is possible to leave the route at Ruislip Gardens which is on the Central Line (West Ruislip Branch), with easy connections to National Rail (Chiltern Railways).

The number E7 bus runs between Ruislip Gardens and Ruislip (which is on the Metropolitan Line), and U10 links Ickenham, Ruislip and Uxbridge (though this only runs once an hour Mon-Sat during shopping hours).

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

The Bell (on the route) – Ruislip Gardens

Coach & Horses and the Tichenham Inn (both on the route) and several cafes and restaurants in Ickenham.

Uxbridge is well stocked with refreshment places of all kinds, including many old pubs; the Ostler is on the route close to Uxbridge station.

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 is shown on O.S. Explorer Map 173 *London North* as far as just after Ruislip Gardens, then goes on to 172 *Chiltern Hills East*.

Route

Rayners Lane - Ruislip Gardens 2.1 miles (3.5 km)

From Rayners Lane station, go ahead down Rayners Lane past shops, and opposite the former art deco cinema on the left (now the Zoroastrian Centre), turn right into High Worple, then at the far end go ahead beyond the mini-roundabout along a short passage labelled “No Through Road”.

Go through metal gates then turn left immediately, past a sign for Roxbourne Park, onto a footpath that goes through woods with the Yeading Brook on your right. This is the Willow Tree Wander, one of the leisure routes through Hillingdon Borough.

Go ahead at a field and then right over the brook, to continue in the same direction on the opposite bank. After 60 yards, you can fork left to go down alongside the brook (though this can get a bit muddy in wet weather), or stay on the top of the bank in the open.

At the far end of the field, go through a wooden gate to Field End Road then cross half left (busy), also going over the brook, and turn right through a gateway to the left of the bridge to continue following the Yeading Brook.

Go ahead at a footpath crossing, keeping the stream on your right, until you reach Queens Walk.

Cross over and continue ahead through concrete bollards on a broad green way, narrowing further on, until you reach low-set green bollards at Victoria Road.

Cross over and continue ahead on a path by the stream, bearing right at a playground, to a footbridge on the right.

Cross the stream here and continue on a clear path on the other side, and where the path turns right, go half right across the next field (in the direction of a playground) to emerge onto West End Road.

Turn left (the Bell pub is just to the right opposite) and go under the bridge to Ruislip Gardens station.

[It is possible to leave the route here, though Ruislip Gardens is on the Central Line. To get back to the Metropolitan Line, catch the E7 bus from Ruislip Gardens to Ruislip station].

Ruislip Gardens – Ickenham 1.8 miles (3 km)

From Ruislip Gardens station, cross at the lights and take a path just to the right, running along the right bank of the Yeading Brook.

Follow this path until you eventually leave the houses behind and reach an area of fields and hedgerows, characteristic of what much of this part of Middlesex looked like at the turn of the last century. Birdwatchers should look out for kestrel, kingfishers, heron and buzzards.

Where a path leads invitingly ahead across the fields, bear left to continue following the bank of the Yeading Brook for 600 yards, to a bridge with the emergency exit from Northolt Aerodrome on your left (the Aerodrome is now mainly used by the RAF and visiting heads of state).

Continue ahead beside the brook 250 yards, until the path leads slightly away from the brook to a bridge.

Go through the copse and fork left, then follow the path as it curves to the right (this area is typical marshy ground and may well be wet) until you reach a footbridge, signpost and display boards for Ickenham Marsh.

Ickenham Marsh is now a local nature reserve managed by the Hillingdon Group of the London Wildlife Trust, but formerly it was one of two common meadows in the old parish of Ickenham. From at least the 19th century, every householder had the right to pasture one horse or two cows a day from May Day to Martinmas; in 1961, the Marsh was still being used for grazing cattle.

Turn right here, away from the stream to join the Hillingdon Trail, a 20 mile path that runs roughly north-south through the Borough.

Follow an enclosed path that soon becomes a track, emerging at the corner of Glebe Avenue and Austin's Lane.

Continue ahead on Austin's Lane (an ancient highway with banks, ditches and a variety of trees in the hedgerows) until just before the road rises at the railway bridge, and go through the gap on the left on to a small field.

Go half right and through to the next field, then left to reach the Compass Theatre. Go round to the front, up steps to Glebe Avenue and right to Ickenham station.

Rail communications were established in 1905 when the Metropolitan line was extended to Uxbridge and Ickenham Station was opened in Glebe Avenue. In 1910 District line trains were introduced and in 1933 Piccadilly line trains also began to run along the same route. For a time all three services ran through Ickenham, but District line services were discontinued in 1965.

Ickenham station to Uxbridge 2.6 miles (4 km)

Continue along Glebe Avenue to a T-junction and turn right, to go past toilets to the Coach and Horses pub, with the village pump and pond beyond.

The Gothic canopy over the pump was erected in 1866.

Cross over to the left to Swakeleys Road. Note the old-fashioned Middlesex County Council signpost on the left side of Swakeleys Road, and St Giles Church opposite.

There has been a church in Ickenham since at least the mid 13th century, and parts of the present church of St Giles date from the 14th century. It was extended in the 16th century (this work, together with the timber porch, are the only examples from this period in a Middlesex church) and again after WW2. There are several monuments and late 16th century brasses, mostly of lords of the manor.

Continue ahead on the left side of Swakeleys Road past the Tichenham Inn pub on the left and using the newest, shortest footpath in Hillingdon!

There used to be a garage here and the public had free access across its forecourt, so when the pub replaced it, local residents campaigned for a footpath to be designated across the front. It is the only new footpath in Hillingdon for years and is believed to be the shortest.

Continue across the end of Ivy House Road, then beyond all the shops turn left at The Avenue. [Do not worry about the sign saying "Private Road": this means that the road is maintained privately, not by the Council, but the public can use it. The sign is there so that users are aware that the residents are liable for any problems which may occur. The wording "No Footpaths" on the sign relates to the fact that no footways/pavements are provided for pedestrians.]

Before the end of The Avenue, with Ray House (flats) on the left, turn right through a small car park by a tennis court, then left on the Celandine Route, following the course of the River Pinn (over to the left beyond trees is Swakeleys House).

The most important house in Ickenham is Swakeleys, once a large estate in medieval times. The present Jacobean house was built in the 1630s, but the name derives from an earlier 14th century lord of the manor, Robert Swalcliffe. It has had many owners over the years, including Sir Robert Vyner, Lord Mayor of London in the 17th century (when Pepys visited Swakeleys). In more recent times it was the UK headquarters for Bristol Myers, a US pharmaceutical company, but the premises are currently vacant.

Continue ahead across a green space then bear left at the far end to join the main path where it exits the park through green metal gates.

Fork right to Swakeleys Drive, cross over and go right and then at an Uxbridge signpost turn left into Warren Road, then at a round footpath/cycleway sign (to the left of metal gates leading to a school) left again into woods.

This used to be a public right of way footpath (and shown as such on the O/S map) but has now been reclassified as a cycle track under the Cycle Tracks Act 1984. Officially this creates a 'highway' for the use of both pedestrians and cyclists.

Follow the path ahead and then to the right, keeping the railings on your right, to reach the access to a footbridge over the A40 on the left.

Cross over, then go through squeeze gates into a copse.

Where the tarmac path goes right at the fourth lamp-post after the squeeze gates, keep ahead on a minor path, then go to the left of a clump of trees ahead, to emerge onto a large open space with a road under construction ahead.

Cross the line of the new road and continue ahead on a cinder track with a hedge on your right.

The mound to your left is marked on Ordnance Survey maps as a ski-slope. It may be hidden in trees, and appears to be disused. There is a good view towards Harrow from the top.

At the end of the hedge, continue across playing fields, heading for a green metal gate near the far left corner. (If there is a game in progress, keep following the cinder track which comes out at the same place).

The old water tower to the right, built in 1906 to improve the town's water supply, has now been converted to flats.

Do not exit at the green gate but take a narrow path to the left of this that leads to a smaller metal gate at a footpath signpost and bus stop.

Cross over the busy dual carriageway to North Common Road, then bear half left across Uxbridge Common to the road junction a little to the right of the far corner.

Go down Norfolk Road then at the end turn left along Fairfield Road to Belmont Road.

Cross, and continue down to the junction with Lancaster Road and York Road.

Cross over and continue just to the right of the crossing down Friends' Walk, past the Friends' Meeting House. At the end go right to rejoin Belmont Road.

Turn left and then at the junction with Bakers Road (the Ostler pub on the right), go left to reach the side entrance of Uxbridge station at the far end (this is also the bus terminal).

Fans of London Transport architecture may like to go through the station to see the art deco frontage. The new London Transport station at Uxbridge opened in 1938 as the terminus for the Metropolitan line. One of a notable series designed by Charles Holden for the London Passenger Transport Board in the 1930s, it has an impressive and spaciouly planned interior and now has listed building status as one of the finest of its type.

(Source: <http://www.londonrailways.net/Uxbridge.html>)

Optional Town Walk (ca half an hour)

Uxbridge used to be a major coaching stop and extensive stabling and accommodation was provided by numerous inns along the High Street: in 1853 there were no less than 54 public houses in the town! A number of these old inns survive, such as The Queens Head, The Metropolitan, Old Rockingham Arms, The Crown and Treaty and The Crown & Sceptre, all of which you pass on this walk (in that order). The Old Bill in Windsor St was the former police station.

Go through to the front of the station, with the former 1789 Market House directly opposite.

The Market House is a two-storied building with a long straight frontage of eleven bays. The colonnades were originally entirely open but are now partly occupied by small shops. The rear wall is slightly concave, so that St. Margaret's Church, which lies immediately behind, is hemmed in and largely hidden from view.

Go to the right of the Market House down Windsor Street, passing St Margaret's Church.

St Margaret's Church occupies a cramped island site at the junction of High Street and Windsor Street. It dates back to 1240 but was much altered in the 15th C; the

hammerbeam roof from this period is considered to be one of the best in Middlesex. The tower is of 14th-century origin and the nave, north aisle, and both the nave arcades date from the early 15th century. In 1872, most of the windows were replaced, including the east and west windows of the south aisle and three in its south wall, all with Perpendicular tracery.

Continue down Windsor Street, noting the history panel on the wall of the 16th century Queen's Head pub on your right, and passing the Town Pump on your left, to the junction with Cross Street. Cross at the lights and go left through a stone archway into a small park that was once the town's burial ground (given to Uxbridge by the Earl of Derby). Over the archway is the inscription: "This churchyard was closed AD1855".

Follow the path to the right, past a war memorial and an old water fountain dedicated to E Pratt, ironfounder (1840-98), for his work in bringing a water supply to Uxbridge.

Leave by the exit at the far side and cross at the lights to the opposite side of Trumper Way, then turn left and first right into Wellington Road.

Walk to the end, cross a footbridge to Rockingham Recreation Ground and follow the path to the right along the bank of the River Frays.

Keep to the river's edge until you reach Rockingham Road and cross over to Rockingham Parade.

Continue ahead to a park entrance then go through into Fassnidge Park (if the gate is closed, take the footpath immediately to the right, along the river bank).

Fassnidge Park was opened in 1926 on land donated by Mrs Kate Fassnidge in memory of her husband, Edward James Sidney Fassnidge (a noted Uxbridge businessman). It included a fine Victorian bandstand that became the focus of many entertainments during WW2.

(Source: "A Century of Uxbridge" by K R Pearce, Sutton Publishing 2004)

Go past a memorial to Edward Fassnidge and leave through gates near the far right-hand end (this is where the alternative path comes out).

Go left on Oxford Road as it curves to the left.

Ahead you will see the Quays building. This was constructed in 1991 in the style of an ocean liner and is now the offices of Parexel.

Continue until you reach traffic lights, with The Crown and Treaty pub ahead.

The Crown and Treaty is a listed building dating from the 16th century and believed to be the west wing of a former mansion known as Place House (originally the seat of the Bennet family). In 1645 the house was used for meetings between Royalist and Parliamentary representatives negotiating the abortive 'treaty' of that year. By 1816 the house had become the Crown Inn, and in 1968 it was The Crown and Treaty House Inn.

Cross to the right at the lights, and turn right, away from The Quays and ahead up High Street, crossing the River Frays, to Harefield Road.

Cross, and turn left and then right at Warwick Place, then at the end, go right into Beasley's Yard to Watts Hall on the left.

Watts Hall was formerly the Old Meeting Congregational Church, built in 1716 and rebuilt 1883. It is located in Beasley's Yard, one of Uxbridge's old yards off the High Street, and is named after the Revd Thomas Ebenezer Beasley 1763-1824. (Source: information board in Beasley's Yard)

At the end of Beasley's Yard, turn left and continue along the High Street, passing Johnsons Yard on the left, then cross at the lights and continue on the pedestrian precinct to return to Uxbridge station.

Alan Sheppard