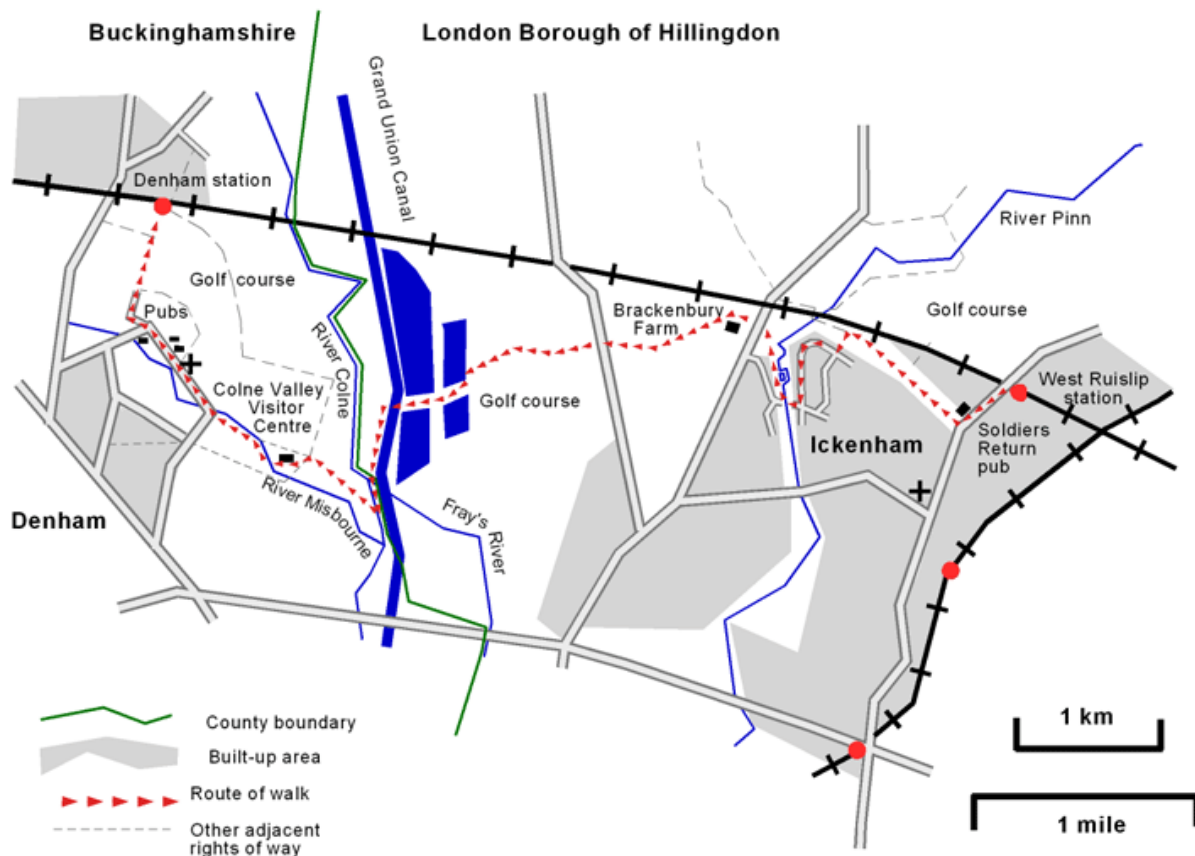


West Ruislip – Denham

This walk starts at West Ruislip station (on the Chiltern Line and Underground's Central Line) and follows the Hillingdon Trail briefly, before heading west across fields, past lakes and over the Grand Union Canal and the River Colne, visiting Denham Country Park and the remarkably unspoiled village of Denham in Buckinghamshire. Flat terrain, easy walking.

Minor route change 2008



Distance

4.3 miles (7 km)

Travel

West Ruislip and Denham stations are on the Chiltern Line between Marylebone and High Wycombe; West Ruislip station is also on the Central Line.

Refreshments

Soldiers Return (on the route, very near the start) – West Ruislip
Fran's Tea Garden (closed Mondays and Tuesdays; no toilets) - Denham Lock, Grand Union Canal
Colne Valley Park Visitor Centre café (on the route)
The Swan, Green Man, Falcon - Denham village

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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 all on O.S. Explorer Map 172, *Chiltern Hills East*.

Route

Cross the road from West Ruislip station and go left down the hill, then just after the car park of the Soldiers Return, turn right on a track leading to Ickenham Green.

Ickenham Green is one of two former common meadows in the old parish of Ickenham and extends north-westward from Ickenham High Road to the River Pinn. By 1865 a few houses and a chapel occupied the frontage of the Green bordering the High Road (the chapel is now used as a scrap yard). In 1950 the local authority leased part of the Green to Ickenham Cricket Club and the remainder was preserved as an open space.

Follow the Hillingdon Trail waymark post ahead through trees and at a Hillingdon Trail signpost pointing right, continue ahead on a green path that then runs along the edge of a sports field beside the railway.

Go through a gap in the trees to a footpath signpost and turn left and go along the field edge then along an enclosed path, to a road, Hoylake Crescent.

Turn right, and follow the road to a crossroads.

Turn right and continue along a tarmac path and over a footbridge.

Immediately turn right, going past an information board for Pynchester Moat, and continue with houses on your left and a channel, then the moat, then the river Pinn on your right (for most of the way there are two parallel paths).

Continue in the same direction across a small field to a gap in an old hedge, with a high fence corner on your left.

Head half left (the official path goes ahead and then left, but most people seem to go direct.) across the next field to a stile by a gate and an old oak tree to reach Breakspear Road South.

Turn right for 50 yards (take care !) and at a footpath sign opposite, go up the drive of Brackenbury Barn and Farm (moated).

At the far left corner of the parking area, go over a stile by a pond, and continue along the left-hand field edge, over two more stiles (with glimpses of the moat over the fence to your left) into the next field.

Continue in the same direction and through a kissing gate.

From here the official route bears slightly right downhill then uphill to a stile on to Harvil Road a little to the left of the top of the hill, but at present this is obstructed by fences. Work your way round to the left of them.

Cross this busy road with care, and the stile opposite, then bear slightly left over two stiles, on to the golf course.

Go ahead a few yards, to join a track leading downhill and slightly right.

At the bottom of the hill cross a plank bridge by a footpath signpost, and go through a gap in the trees ahead to follow a path between lakes.

Cross a track (the disused GWR branch line from Denham to Uxbridge, closed to passenger services in 1939 and finally to goods traffic in the 1960s) and continue between two more lakes, until the Grand Union Canal is reached.

Cross over the bridge and continue ahead on the towpath (which is also the Colne Valley Trail, Grand Union Canal Walk and London Loop).

After Denham Lock, turn right onto a footpath then over a footbridge crossing the River Colne. Here you leave Hillingdon Borough and enter Buckinghamshire.

Go through the kissing gate ahead and across Misbourne Meadow, exit through two kissing gates to a driveway; and cross the field ahead to the Colne Valley Park Visitor Centre.

The Visitor Centre is situated in Denham Country Park, an area of about 70 acres of wetland and woodland habitats bordering the Grand Union Canal and rivers Colne and Misbourne. However, it serves as the main centre for the whole of Colne Valley Park, stretching from the Thames floodplain in the south to chalk hills of the Chilterns to the north. It is open daily from 10.30am-5pm, March-October, and 11am-4pm November-February (refreshments and toilets available). Maps of local walks and other information can be obtained from the Centre.

The Misbourne rises north of Great Missenden and the Colne at Colney Heath in Herts. The confluence of these two rivers is a few hundred yards downstream from here.

(Source: Visitor Centre literature)

Leave the Visitor Centre by the rear exit to a footbridge on the right (or go round to the back of the building), cross the footbridge into woods and turn right to follow a path along the edge of the River Misbourne, bearing half left at a small building to emerge at a field and a bridleway marker post. Continue ahead, keeping to the right of the field, then after 180 yards turn right through a hedge gap.

Follow the path between fences, go over a stream and turn left alongside the stream to continue on the bridleway (with a fence on your right and the South Bucks Way the other side of it, skirting the edge of the Buckinghamshire Golf Course).

Follow this to a road corner, go through a swing gate and ahead on Village Road (noting the attractive old mill buildings on the left) into Denham village.

Denham Village survives as a peaceful and remarkably unspoiled area of historic buildings, with numerous old residences. Roman remains have been found in the south of the Parish and it is certain that Denham has been settled since Saxon times.

St Mary's church stands on a Saxon site; the tower may well be Norman but the rest of the church dates mostly from the 15th century. The chief items of interest are the 13th-century font of purbeck marble; the 15th-century Doom painting, which is a painting of the Last Judgement, over the south door; and numerous brasses and monuments. Several of the brasses are of the 15th and 16th centuries and one was used in 1440 to commemorate the death of a Franciscan friar and in 1544 to record the death of Amphilis, daughter of Sir Edmund Peckham. Also of note is a bust of Sir Roger Hill of Denham Place.

Hills House, a 17th C red brick building to the left of the church, used to be the home of Sir John Mills, the film actor. Another former owner was Sir Alexander Korda, founder of Denham Studios, and his glamorous wife, Merle Oberon. The opening of the studios and the close proximity to London resulted in many film stars choosing to live in Denham.

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Continue past the church (and Cedar Cottage just before it, with patterned black and white plaster work on the wall facing the church), and past two pubs (The Swan and The Green Man) to reach a small green, with a third pub, The Falcon, to the left.

Go to the right of the green, with the gates of Denham Place ahead.

Denham Place was built for Sir Roger Hill at the end of the 17th century. The gardens were landscaped by 'Capability' Brown.

Turn right on a driveway (The Pyghtle) between walls, and then continue ahead, with the old brick wall of the grounds of Denham Place on your left and the golf course on the right, to the foot of the railway embankment.

Follow the path to the left and then right under the archway, and go up the stairs on the left to reach Denham station.

Alan Sheppard