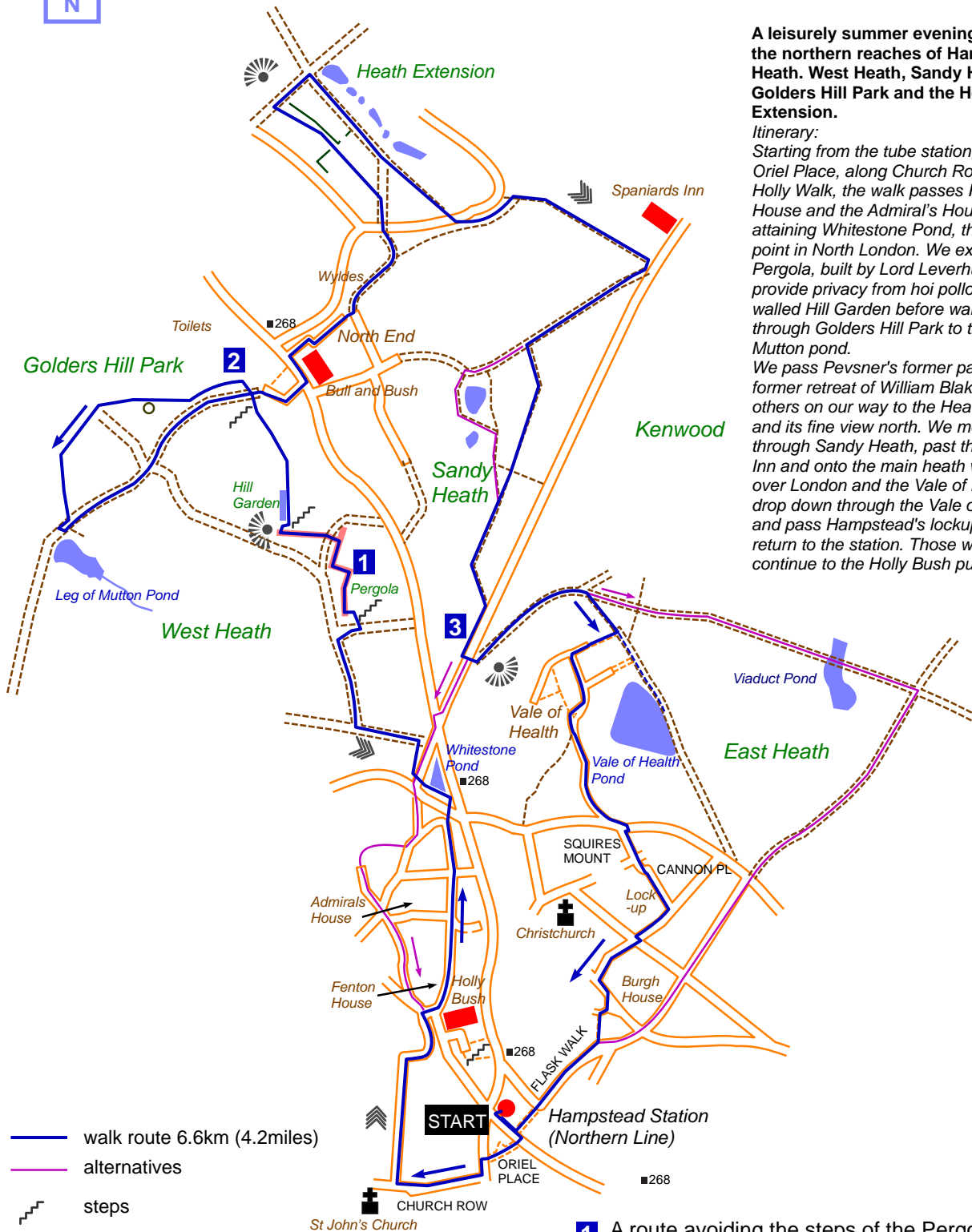


A Walk on Hampstead Heath

1 km



A leisurely summer evening exploring the northern reaches of Hampstead Heath. West Heath, Sandy Heath, Golders Hill Park and the Heath Extension.

Itinerary:

Starting from the tube station, across Oriel Place, along Church Row and up Holly Walk, the walk passes Fenton House and the Admiral's House before attaining Whitestone Pond, the highest point in North London. We explore the Pergola, built by Lord Leverhume to provide privacy from hoi polloi, and the walled Hill Garden before walking through Golders Hill Park to the Leg of Mutton pond.

We pass Pevsner's former pad plus the former retreat of William Blake and others on our way to the Heath Extension and its fine view north. We meander through Sandy Heath, past the Spaniards Inn and onto the main heath with a view over London and the Vale of Health. We drop down through the Vale of Health and pass Hampstead's lockup on our return to the station. Those who wish can continue to the Holly Bush pub.

- walk route 6.6km (4.2miles)
- alternatives
- steps
- hill pointing upwards
- viewpoint
- bus stop

- 1** A route avoiding the steps of the Pergola and Hill Garden is available for any who wish.
- 2** A possible point for a break.
- 3** Here we can vary the walk if the group prefers, two such alternatives indicated

Walk starts at Hampstead tube station Wednesday July 20th at 4.30pm; see walk notes overleaf

Walk Notes

Church Row

The handsomest street in Hampstead. Nearly all the houses are of early 18th-century origin with flush-framed windows. Eight houses were built on the south side in 1713 as a speculation by Richard Hughes of Holborn. Plaques attest to many well-known residents from Giles Gilbert Scott to Bosie.

St John's Parish Church

This building dates from 1747 and was designed by local resident John Sanderson. It has its belfry and tower at the east side. Enlarged and reoriented by Cockerell in 1878. It has some fine stained glass by Clayton and Bell.

Holly Place/St Mary's

Includes St Mary's Roman Catholic Church. French émigré Abbe Morel raised the funds for the church, one of the smallest and most attractive in London. Prospect Place next door was also built by French émigrés.

Holly Bush Pub

This pub started in the stables of the house built in the 1790s by portrait painter George Romney and subsequently used as the Hampstead Assembly Rooms. A favourite of Tony and Stuart, it still had gas lighting when they discovered it. Benskin's, since 1928 it is now Fuller's.

Fenton House

dates from 1693 and passed from one owner to another. Lady Binning died in 1952 leaving it to the National Trust. It has a very pretty walled garden and the house includes the Benton-Fletcher collection of early keyboard instruments as well as fine pictures furniture and porcelain.

Admiral's House

was not actually lived in by Admiral Matthew Barton. Built originally in 1700 by a vintner, it was Captain Fountain North who adapted the roof to look like a ship's deck, complete with cannon.

Whitestone Pond

is the highest point in North London, 440 ft above sea level and takes its name from the white milestone located nearby. It began as a small dew pond but was enlarged by the Vestry and artificially filled with water and arranged so horses could pass through it after their steep climb.

Jack Straw's Castle

has no connections to Jack Straw or a castle. It became an inn in Charles II's time but the present building with its battlements dates back only to 1962. No longer an inn.

The Pergola

Hampstead Pergola is essentially a raised walkway, set amidst some wonderfully dramatic gardens. Its history goes back to 1904 when soap magnate Lord Leverhulme purchased a Georgian house called The Hill which he demolished to build what is now Inverforth House. The idea of the pergola was to extend the level area outside the house and at the same time provide privacy from the public on the Heath below. He enlisted the help of Thomas Mawson, landscape architect. He had no need to purchase spoil for the construction. He offered to transport and dispose of the spoil from the construction of the Northern Line nearby for a fee! Progress was quick, and the Pergola was finished in 1906

The Hill Garden

A well-known actress from Covent Garden Theatre, Mrs Lessingham, applied for, and obtained despite violent opposition from local copyholders, a grant of land on which she built Heath Lodge. Lord Leverhume subsequently bought the estate and demolished the house with the aim of extending his garden. His application to abolish the right of way between his two properties was rejected, so he extended his pergola across the lane using a bridge. The walled hill garden was purchased by LCC and opened to the public in 1963

Golders Hill Park

In 1767 a colourful and somewhat shady character by the name of Charles Dingley carved out an estate for himself north of Golders Green at Golders Hill. Landscaping by John Coore with advice from Humphrey Repton. By 1897 the estate was put up for auction and after various battles it was bought to prevent developers building flats and opened as a public park. The Victorian pile of a house, on the highest point of the land, was bombed out in the Second World War.

The Heath Extension

It was fear of developers on the doorstep that precipitated Henrietta Barnett to form the Hampstead Heath Extension Council in 1903. At that time the land, the Wylde Estate, belonged to Eton College. An ingenious plan to buy the centre of the land for the Heath at a knock-down price compensated for by selling the land on either side made more valuable for housing by the amenity value of the proposed new Heath Extension. The rest of the Wylde estate was bought for Hampstead Garden Suburb, over which there are fine views.

Sandy Heath

was so named because it lay over a large deposit of Bagshot sands and gravels. The Lord of the Manor, Thomas Maryon Wilson, exploited this as an income. When the Midland Railway extended its line to create a new terminus at St Pancras he granted the company access to the sands and 30 cartloads a day were extracted leaving pits up to 25 ft deep. Spaniards Road marks the original surface level.

Vale of Health

Despite its name this area started out as a malarial bog at the source of the Fleet known as Hatch's Bottom until the Hampstead Water Company drained it in 1777, making a reservoir. Squatters moved in and with the coming of the railway and day trippers the community grew to around 50 dwellings and became home to factories, tea-houses, boat rides, grottoes, arbours and a fairground. With time poets, authors and artists moved in. Building in the Vale was curtailed in 1872 when the Metropolitan Board of Works bought the heath, limiting construction to the existing area.

Viaduct Pond

The Viaduct was the result of another money-making scheme by Maryon Wilson. He planned a superior residential development East Park there in 1844, with bricks made from the clay of the adjacent land. The existing path and viaduct were created (and the funny little round brick house) before he ran out of money. A bill to give him the right to grant building leases was passed by the Lords but failed in the Commons.

Burgh House

was built in 1704. It was one of the first large houses to be built in Hampstead, which at the time was flourishing as a fashionable Spa, known as Hampstead Wells. It was built on land recently reclaimed from the Heath. It now houses the museum and an art gallery.