

Byways to Hampstead

- Main route (from church) 6.3km
- Alternative route (from station) 6.8km
- Digressions
- Railway



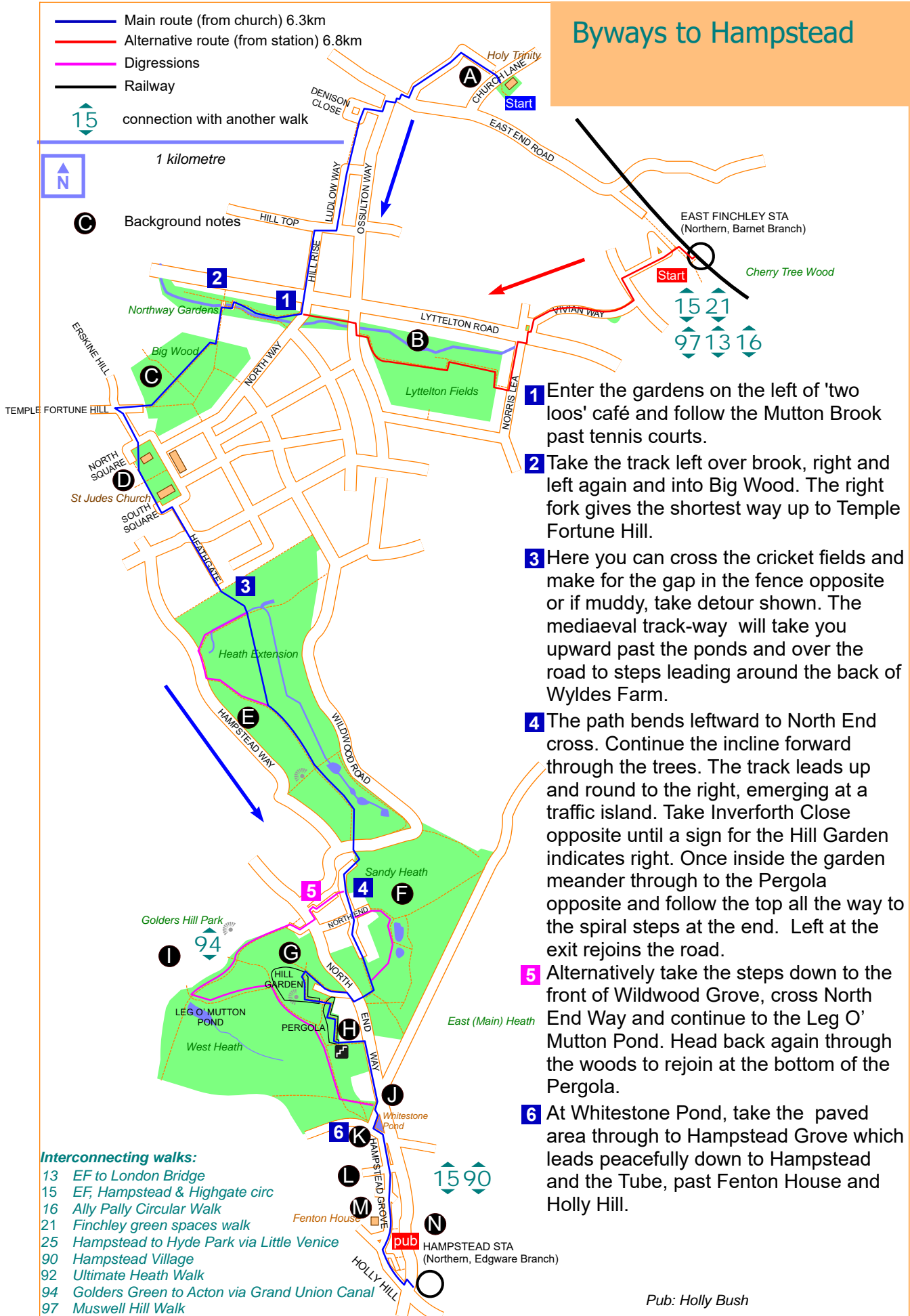
connection with another walk



1 kilometre



Background notes



- 1** Enter the gardens on the left of 'two loos' café and follow the Mutton Brook past tennis courts.
- 2** Take the track left over brook, right and left again and into Big Wood. The right fork gives the shortest way up to Temple Fortune Hill.
- 3** Here you can cross the cricket fields and make for the gap in the fence opposite or if muddy, take detour shown. The mediaeval track-way will take you upward past the ponds and over the road to steps leading around the back of Wyldes Farm.
- 4** The path bends leftward to North End cross. Continue the incline forward through the trees. The track leads up and round to the right, emerging at a traffic island. Take Inverforth Close opposite until a sign for the Hill Garden indicates right. Once inside the garden meander through to the Pergola opposite and follow the top all the way to the spiral steps at the end. Left at the exit rejoins the road.
- 5** Alternatively take the steps down to the front of Wildwood Grove, cross North End Way and continue to the Leg O' Mutton Pond. Head back again through the woods to rejoin at the bottom of the Pergola.
- 6** At Whitestone Pond, take the paved area through to Hampstead Grove which leads peacefully down to Hampstead and the Tube, past Fenton House and Holly Hill.

Interconnecting walks:

- 13 EF to London Bridge
- 15 EF, Hampstead & Highgate circ
- 16 Ally Pally Circular Walk
- 21 Finchley green spaces walk
- 25 Hampstead to Hyde Park via Little Venice
- 90 Hampstead Village
- 92 Ultimate Heath Walk
- 94 Golders Green to Acton via Grand Union Canal
- 97 Muswell Hill Walk

Pub: Holly Bush

walk notes

While East Finchley may be densely populated, you are never far from green spaces. What better way to enjoy peace and quiet and see wild life than the walk to Hampstead. Depending on time of year, look out for kestrels, woodpeckers, comma butterflies and cowslips

Once reaching Hampstead you can explore the village via walk 90 or the Heath via walk 94 or continue to other destinations as indicated, or have a drink at the ancient Hollybush pub.

General Notes

Ⓐ Holy Trinity Church

Until the early 1800s the only C of E church in Finchley was the original St Mary at Finchley almost two miles walk away from the East End community, quite a hike each week for the inhabitants of East Finchley. In 1842 Congregationalists started a school, a British school, at their chapel. This draw on their congregation prompted C of E goers to raise funds for a local church and school in East Finchley, which they did. Holy Trinity church was built in 1846 to a design by Anthony Salvin, who headed the campaign.

Ⓑ Mutton Brook

The Mutton Brook begins on the western slopes of Highgate Wood. An area within Cherry Tree Wood used to be known as the Quag, and there were watercress beds. We first meet the brook in Lyttleton Playing Fields, part of the design for Hampstead Garden Suburb. The water eventually drains into the Thames at Brentford. We leave the brook before entering Big Wood and cross the watershed at Whitestone Pond.

Ⓒ Big Wood

Big Wood and Little Wood are remnants in Finchley of more extensive woods that used to cover the area thousands of years ago and became known as Middlesex Forest. The shape of the remaining woods is recognisable as far back as John Roque's map in 1754, although the shape was trimmed when the Suburb was constructed. The new gate at the Temple Fortune Hill entrance, where we exit the wood, was donated by residents to commemorate the 29 suburb residents who died in the Second World War. It replaces an earlier gate and actually stands on an ancient 8th century boundary that became the boundary between

Finchley and Hendon. (Hampstead Garden Suburb straddles the boundary and we leave Finchley at this point).

The wood is home to Wild Service trees, Hazel, Treecreepers and Woodpeckers, Nuthatches, Bluebells, Yellow Archangel, Speckled Wood butterflies and much more.

Ⓓ Hampstead Garden Suburb

Raymond Unwin was chosen as master planner of the new Suburb. Following design of a model village at New Earswick near York, Unwin with his partner Barry Parker, in 1904 won the competition to plan Letchworth, the first garden city. He continued this trend here, avoiding monotony and uniformity, making use of existing contours, curves and natural features, giving the feeling of living in a village. His first plan is dated February 1905. However he didn't have things all his own way and the plans changed several times, becoming more formal with time.

Edwin Lutyens was chosen for the important buildings around the high point. He had very different views from Henrietta Barnett and the result was a stormy compromise. The tall tiled church roof of St Jude's of 1909, stretching down to low eaves was one result. He had some fun, however. If you look at the terrace on the North Square, notice all the different ways he designed windows on the second floor.

The suburb was to be a social as well as architectural experiment. The social experiment was a failure. Most working class people could not afford the charges and were eventually squeezed out.

Ⓔ The Heath Extension

It was fear of developers on her doorstep that precipitated Henrietta Barnett to form the Hampstead Heath Extension Council in 1903. At that time the land, the Wylde's Estate, belonged to Eton College, having been granted to the new foundation in 1481. 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's estate was bought for Hampstead Garden Suburb, over which there are fine views.

Our walk takes the original medieval pathway in use before North End Way was constructed.

F 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. We skirt the area on a track around the back of Wylde Farm, the oldest building in the area. Look out along the way for plaques for Unwin, Blake, Pevsner and Ventris. To see ponds turn left at North End and take the path up the hill.

G 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 (next to his) 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

H 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

I 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.

J 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 but flats and a gym.

K 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. It has recently been renovated by the Heath and Hampstead Society.

Southwards water drained into the Thames via the Fleet River. Northwards into the Thames at Brentford via Mutton Brook and Brent Brook.

L 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.

M 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.

N 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 a Fuller's pub.

For more notes on the Heath see walk 92

For more notes on Hampstead see walk 90