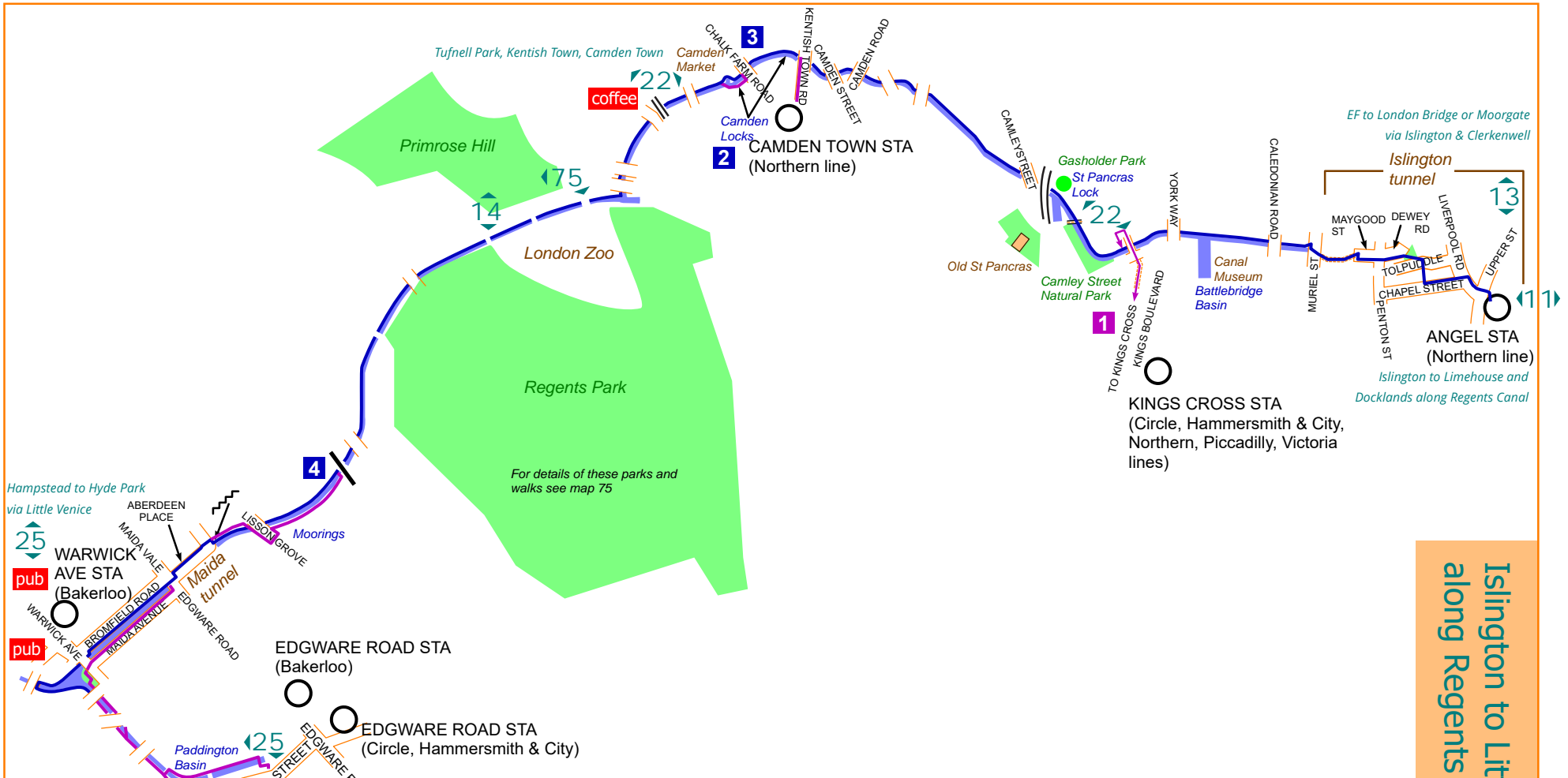


Islington to Little Venice along Regents Canal



- 1** A shorter alternative from Kings Cross St Pancras avoids Islington streets.
- 2** Camden Locks are more accurately known as Kentish Town Lock, Hawley Lock and Hampstead Road Lock.
- 3** After crossing Chalk Farm Road you can avoid the market by crossing the road bridge and recrossing on foot bridge. If you decide to go through the market look for a 'hole in the wall' to regain the tow path.
- 4** Moorings at Lisson Grove or subsequent steps may be closed. To avoid the risk cross by footbridge after the railway bridges and follow above the canal to Lisson Grove. Recross the canal and continue left on footpath above canal.
- 5** A walk extension to Paddington Basin.

This walk follows the canal, initially above the canal tunnel.

- main route 6.9 km
- alternative routes
- railway
- ↕ connection with another walk
- 1 kilometre

Pubs near Little Venice: *The Prince Alfred, The Warwick Castle*
Coffee en route: *Melrose and Morgan* (up slope)

This is a 6.9 km walk along towpath and pavement starting above the canal's Islington tunnel (886 m). The route is very peaceful except for the threat of cyclists! At the end of the canal is little Venice and Paddington Basin.

The Regent's Canal

The Regent's Canal was built to link the Grand Junction Canal's Paddington Arm, which had opened in 1801, with the Thames at Limehouse. Director John Nash the architect was friendly with the Prince Regent, who allowed the use of his name. The Regent's Canal Act was passed in 1812 and the canal was opened in two stages, from Paddington to Camden (with a spur to Euston) in 1816, and the rest of the canal in 1820. The river Brent was dammed in 1835 to form the Welsh Harp reservoir to supply water.

The main centre of trade was the Regent's Canal Dock at Limehouse, a point for seaborne cargo to be unloaded onto canal boats. Cargo from abroad, including ice destined for ice stores, was unloaded there and continued its journey on barges. The most important loads however were of coal from the Midlands, building materials, and foodstuffs. The King's Cross Coal Drops and viaduct, still there today, were built by the merchant and coal mine owner, Samuel Plimsoll, who is better remembered for the Plimsoll line. Plimsoll's coal fed the insatiable appetite of locomotives and London's hearths, and ensured London's streets remained well lit, courtesy of the Imperial Light and Gas. City Road Basin was the second most important traffic centre, handling incoming inland freight, to a large extent.

By the 1840s the railways were taking traffic from the canals and there were attempts to turn the canal into a railway as early as 1845. In 1929 the the Regent's Canal, the Grand Junction Canal, and the Warwick Canals, merged to form the Grand Union Canal Co. The freezing of the Regent's Canal was to be its downfall as a commercial venture when the harsh winter of 1962-3 saw the Canal freeze so hard that no cargo could move on it for weeks. By the time the thaw came, the freight traffic had been irreversibly transferred to road. The site of the former Euston spur can be seen on the left on entering the Regent's Park.

Camden Market, Interchange Building

The area around Camden Lock took off as a transport hub when the railway intersected the canal. Pickfords moved much of their activities there from City Road Basin and constructed an interchange building for barges, rail wagons and horse drawn road traffic. Other industries moved in and Gilbeys chose the former site of Camden flour mills for their gin factory. Much later a new red-brick interchange building was constructed on the opposite bank with three floors of storage above and is easily recognisable today by its red-brick water tower. The path goes over the barge entrance to the interchange basin with vaults on either side. All the vaults were used by Gilbey's to store wine and spirits and, wrapped round one side of the building, was the horse tunnel linking Oval Road with Stables Market. At ground level were the railway sidings on one side and and the roadloading on the other, See <http://www.crht1837.org/history> and <http://www.locallocalhistory.co.uk/ctown/p050/p>

[ages83-89.htm](#) for more information.

With the decline in industry the area deteriorated until developed into Camden Market, making use of old stables and horse hospital and the yards around.

Regent's Park

Marylebone Park, as it was known, remained a royal chase until 1646. It was John Nash, architect to the crown and friend of the Prince Regent, who in 1810 developed The Regent's Park as we know it today.

Initially intended to be an exclusive development, with the land reserved for the 'wealthy and the good' Nash planned a palatial summer residence for the Prince, 50 detached villas in a parkland setting and elegant terraces around the exterior of the park. An elegant new street, Regent Street would link it to St James's Park and the Prince's residence, Carlton House.

Work began in 1812, but the venture was nowhere near as profitable as hoped. The number of grand villas was soon reduced to 26; only eight were built and nothing became of the Prince's summer pavilion.

Crockers Folly

In 1983 the pub on Aberdeen Place called The Crown was bought by north eastern brewer Vaux, who soon renamed it Crocker's Folly. A large reconstruction and enlargement of the Crown had taken place at the time Frank Crocker was the owner, some 80 years previously. However there is no truth in the legend that surrounds his and the pub's name regarding the railway or Crocker's ghost. Below Aberdeen Place is the 272 yard (251m) Maida Tunnel.