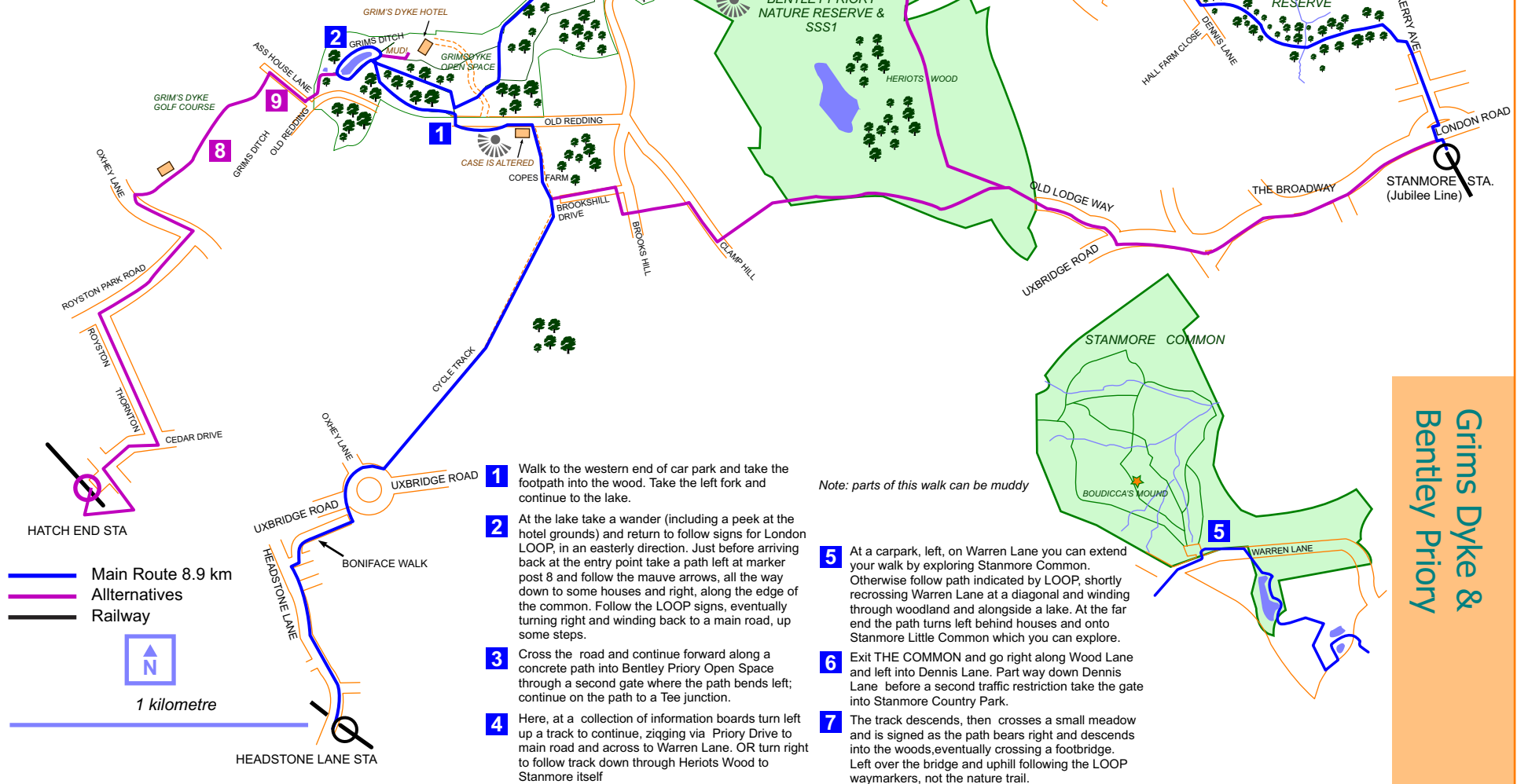


Grims Dyke & Bentley Priory

- 8** Along Oxhey Lane turn right at the entrance to the golf course. The right of way is just to the right of the club house then along the right bank of a ditch, crossing to the left through trees and exiting to the left of a building into Ass House Lane.
- By a substation opposite an information plaque turn left through a non-descript hole in the fence. Follow the track round between a boundary fence and a ditch until you reach a small pond. Turn right over a bridge and across a road into the rhododendrons where you reach the main pond and walk.
- 9** Follow the track round between a boundary fence and a ditch until you reach a small pond. Turn right over a bridge and across a road into the rhododendrons where you reach the main pond and walk.



- 1** Walk to the western end of car park and take the footpath into the wood. Take the left fork and continue to the lake.
- 2** At the lake take a wander (including a peek at the hotel grounds) and return to follow signs for London LOOP, in an easterly direction. Just before arriving back at the entry point take a path left at marker post 8 and follow the mauve arrows, all the way down to some houses and right, along the edge of the common. Follow the LOOP signs, eventually turning right and winding back to a main road, up some steps.
- 3** Cross the road and continue forward along a concrete path into Bentley Priory Open Space through a second gate where the path bends left; continue on the path to a Tee junction.
- 4** Here, at a collection of information boards turn left up a track to continue, zigging via Priory Drive to main road and across to Warren Lane. OR turn right to follow track down through Heriots Wood to Stanmore itself

Note: parts of this walk can be muddy

- 5** At a carpark, left, on Warren Lane you can extend your walk by exploring Stanmore Common. Otherwise follow path indicated by LOOP, shortly recrossing Warren Lane at a diagonal and winding through woodland and alongside a lake. At the far end the path turns left behind houses and onto Stanmore Little Common which you can explore.
- 6** Exit THE COMMON and go right along Wood Lane and left into Dennis Lane. Part way down Dennis Lane before a second traffic restriction take the gate into Stanmore Country Park.
- 7** The track descends, then crosses a small meadow and is signed as the path bears right and descends into the woods, eventually crossing a footbridge. Left over the bridge and uphill following the LOOP waymarkers, not the nature trail.

Bentley Priory & Grims Dyke

The beginning of this walk is a bit tedious, but once out of the built-up area the route takes an enclosed pathway up to the heights and there is a fine view back over London. The going in the grounds of Grims Dyke House and Harrow Weald Common is tortuous and muddy.

Grim's ditch

There are many appellations of Grim's ditch/dyke across the country. This one stretches 3km from Harrow Weald to Bushey Heath although it was once longer, from Cuckoo Hill, Pinner to Pear Wood, Stanmore.

Grim is the Saxon word for devil or goblin and was given to various similar earthworks. Excavations at Grim's Dyke Hotel found a 1st century, or slightly earlier, fire hearth. Other discoveries include Iron Age and Belgic Pottery found elsewhere. It may have been built by the Catuvellauni tribe as a boundary/defence against the Romans but it is too small to have any real military application.

Grimsdyke House

The house was built from 1870 to 1872 by Norman Shaw for painter Frederick Goodall and named after the earthwork.

Bought by WS Gilbert in 1890 he died there in 1911, drowning it is said while trying to rescue a guest. The grounds except by the house are now rather overgrown and the lake silting up; the house is now a Best Western Hotel in a charming setting.

Harrow Weald Common

Harrow Weald Common is a remnant of the once extensive woodland of the Forest of Middlesex. By 1759 the extent of the common land was reduced to 300 ha., and is now even smaller. In the 18th century it was a haunt of highwaymen and the steep hill and wildness made it perilous for coach travellers. Following the Enclosure Acts, gravel extraction had been granted as one of the common rights of Harrow parishioners here, as well as pannage: the right to pasture pigs, and turbary: the right to cut peat for fuel. Gravel extraction took place in the 19th century on a large scale, and the undulating floor of the woods is the result of this industry.

Bentley Priory

The walk skirts Bentley Priory, originally a medieval Augustinian priory, a house was built there for a wealthy businessman by Sir John Soan in 1775. After various

owners it was acquired in 1926 by the RAF and was headquarters of RAF Fighter Command and part of the house is now a museum. The extensive grounds through which the walk passes is now a nature reserve and a SSSI. There is a lake and lots of walks to explore.

Stanmore Country Park

The walk continues through Stanmore Little Common and Stanmore Country Park, which includes a nature reserve. The Country Park was originally part of the grounds of Warren House but is now run by Harrow Council and is home to badgers, weasels, red foxes, muntjac, tawny owls, buzzards and sparrow hawks. Until the mid-20th century part of the area was grazed open fields, of which Six Acre Field, Spring Field, John Hall's Field and Forty Acre Field remain as grassland, the remainder largely secondary woodland. The presence of wild service trees, mature hornbeam and other trees indicate that this was ancient woodland. The area was used for gravel digging in the 18th - 19th century and fish ponds were constructed along the eastern border. The parkland of the Warren House estate was gradually overtaken by secondary woodland.