

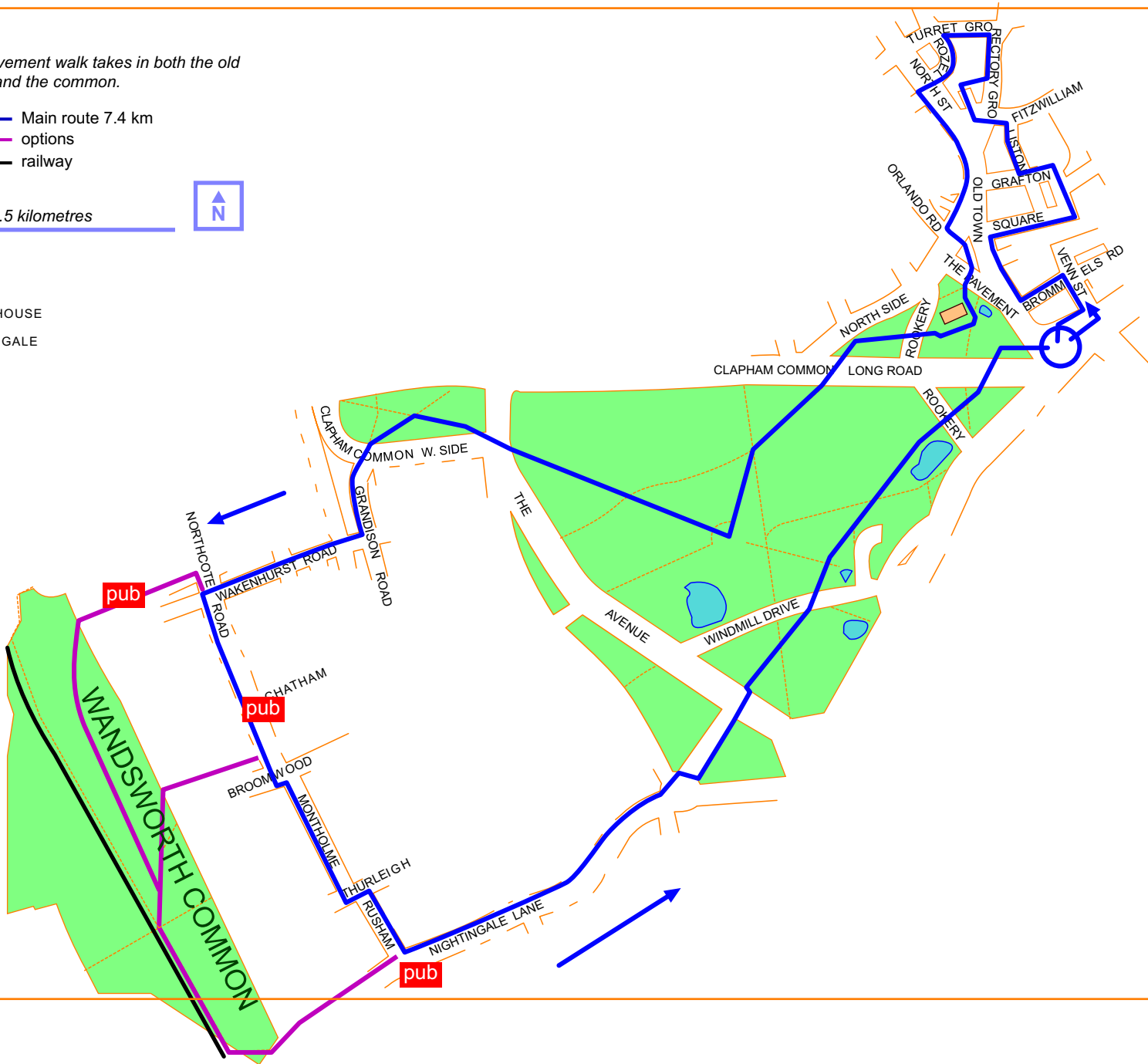
This pavement walk takes in both the old village and the common.

- Main route 7.4 km
- options
- railway

0.5 kilometres



PUBS:
DRAFT HOUSE
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NIGHTINGALE



Clapham Circular Walk

Clapham

This mainly pavement 7.4 km walk has very short potentially muddy sections but these can be skirted. There are many fine old buildings, some of which go back to the late 18th century. On the far side of the common is a separate community of terraced victoria houses, based on the vibrant Northcote Road shopping street, sometimes called Nappy Valley, close to Clapham Junction station.

Clapham goes back to Saxon times.

At that time Clapham was called Clopeham. Medieval Clapham was a tiny place with a population of less than 100 and remained a small farming settlement for centuries.

It began to grow in the late 17th century. Refugees arrived from the Great Plague of London in 1665 and the Great Fire of 1666. By the end of that century Clapham was quite a large village. In the late 18th century it became a fashionable place for the rich to live as it was close to the amenities of London but was in a rural setting away from the dirt and noise of the city.

In the 18th century lavender was grown in

fields near Clapham. It was used to make perfume giving the name to Lavender Hill. An old church had existed since the middle ages, in Rectory Grove, where St Paul's Church now stands. It had grown haphazardly and by the mid-eighteenth century was in a poor state of repair and far too small for one of the fastest growing villages round London. The centre of the village had shifted, and the emphasis was now on the area around the Common, where rich Londoners had their new mansions. The parishioners decided to build a new Church on the Common. An Act of Parliament was obtained, to allow the land to be bought from the manorial family and to set up a Trust to manage the construction. The leading trustees met at the Plough Inn and in 1774 set the work in hand. They chose as their architect Kenton Couse, who was employed by the Office of Works. He provided a very simple design - a rectangular brick building with three doors at the west end, leading to the ground floor and galleries. There was a stubby tower, with a large clock from Thwaites of Clerkenwell, and four bells. By 1801 Clapham had become a suburb

with a population of 3,864. In the mid 19th century Thomas Cubitt laid out the extensive Clapham Park Estate with grand houses aimed at the top end of the market. Crescent Grove and Grafton Square took their tone from his work.

In 1877 the Metropolitan Board of Works purchased Clapham Common and turned it into a formal recreation ground for games like cricket, football and golf. The bandstand on Clapham Common was built in 1890. Clapham Clock Tower was erected in 1906.

The Clapham Sect

Holy Trinity is associated with the group of friends known to history as "the Clapham Sect". They lived around Clapham Common and worshipped there. Devout Christians, they fought for religious and humanitarian causes, notably the abolition of the slave trade. Their campaign was led in Parliament by William Wilberforce. But they took up many other causes; the heritage they have left us includes the Church Mission Society and the Bible Society.