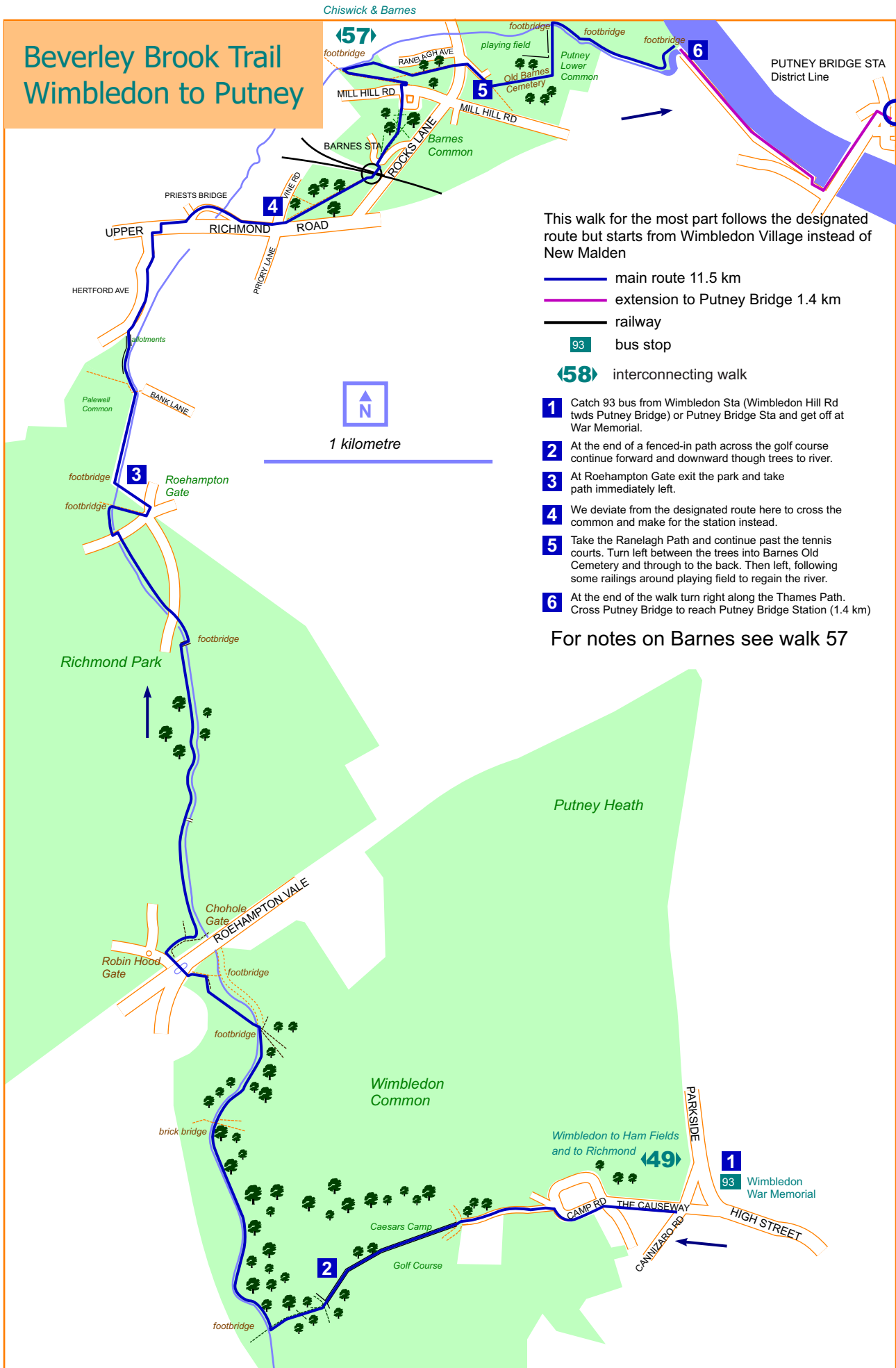


# Beverley Brook Trail Wimbledon to Putney



## walk notes

### **Beverley Brook Walk, Wimbledon - Putney**

*This walk crosses Wimbledon Common to join the Beverley Brook and follow it to its confluence with the Thames. It does contain some footpaths that can be muddy when wet.*

#### **Caesar's Camp**

After crossing Caesars Camp on Wimbledon Common the walk descends to and follows the bank of Beverley Brook through the common and on through Richmond Park. Caesar's Camp hill fort is roughly circular in plan except on the NNW side where it is flattened to follow the edge of the spur. It is approximately 300m in diameter with an entrance on the west side about 20m wide. The earthworks are denoted by a single bank and ditch but have been diminished by landscaping. Partial excavation was carried out in 1937, during the digging of a water mains trench. This showed the ditch, which survived partly as a buried feature, to be 9m wide and about 3.5m deep. The excavations indicated that timber posts had been used in the construction of the rampart, probably as a revetment to both inner and outer faces. The hill fort was dated to the Iron Age, having been built in about the 3rd century BC. Pottery recovered from the site has since provided possible evidence for occupation into the Late Iron Age. An urn containing a Roman coin hoard, possibly dating to the 1st century AD, has also been found. The fort probably had 2 entrances, however remains of the NW one are no longer distinguishable.

#### **Beverley Brook**

Beverley Brook is 14.3 kilometres (8.9 mi) long and rises at Cuddington Recreation Park in Worcester Park, flows through Motspur Park, New Malden, Wimbledon Common, Richmond Park and Barnes. It joins the River Thames near Putney Bridge at Barn Elms. The Brook is recorded as 'Beferithi' in 693. derived from Beaver's Ley. For many years in the twentieth century it was fed by poorly treated sewage from a sewerage works in Green Lane, Worcester Park. Since the introduction of improved treatment methods in 1998 the range of wildlife species in the river has steadily increased. The brook Brook is on the Environment Agency's watch list of rivers susceptible to flooding.

#### **Richmond Park**

The royal connections to this park begin with Edward (1272-1307), when the area was known as the Manor of Sheen. The name

was changed to Richmond during Henry VII's reign. In 1625 Charles I brought his court to Richmond Palace to escape the plague in London and turned it into a park for red and fallow deer. His decision, in 1637, to enclose the land was not popular with the local residents, but he did allow pedestrians the right of way. To this day the walls remain, partially rebuilt and reinforced.

#### **The Old Cemetery**

An eery oddity passed on this walk is Barnes Old Cemetery. It was established in 1854 on two acres of sandy ground purchased by the Church of England for the sum of £10. A chapel, lodge and landscaping were provided at a further cost of £1,400. The cemetery functioned as an additional burial ground to the local parish churchyard. It was well-used and a number of distinguished Victorians were buried there, with a variety of monuments and statues erected to their memory. At the centre of the cemetery is a large memorial to the Hedgman family, who were local benefactors. In 1966 the cemetery was acquired by the London Borough of Richmond with the intention of turning it into a lawn cemetery, a grass-covered area where each grave is marked with a commemorative plaque rather than standing memorials. The council demolished the chapel and lodge and removed the boundary railings to prepare the cemetery for its new role. However, it then dropped the plans and effectively abandoned the cemetery. See also walk 57.

#### **Palewell Common**

Palewell Common is about 12 hectares of open space and woodland, adjacent to Richmond Park, bounded on one side by Beverley Brook. The first reference to Palewell Common is in 16th century manorial records. The Common land was part of the interests of the lord of the manor which fell to the Spencer family until these interests were transferred to other landowners living to the west of the Common. In 1921, following a petition from local residents the land was transferred to the Council which has subsequently managed the area. The area known as the Fields formed part of the grounds of Clarence House in Priory Lane, Roehampton until purchased by the Council in 1920. Since then the facilities within the Common and Fields have changed and developed but the area continues to retain its unique character.