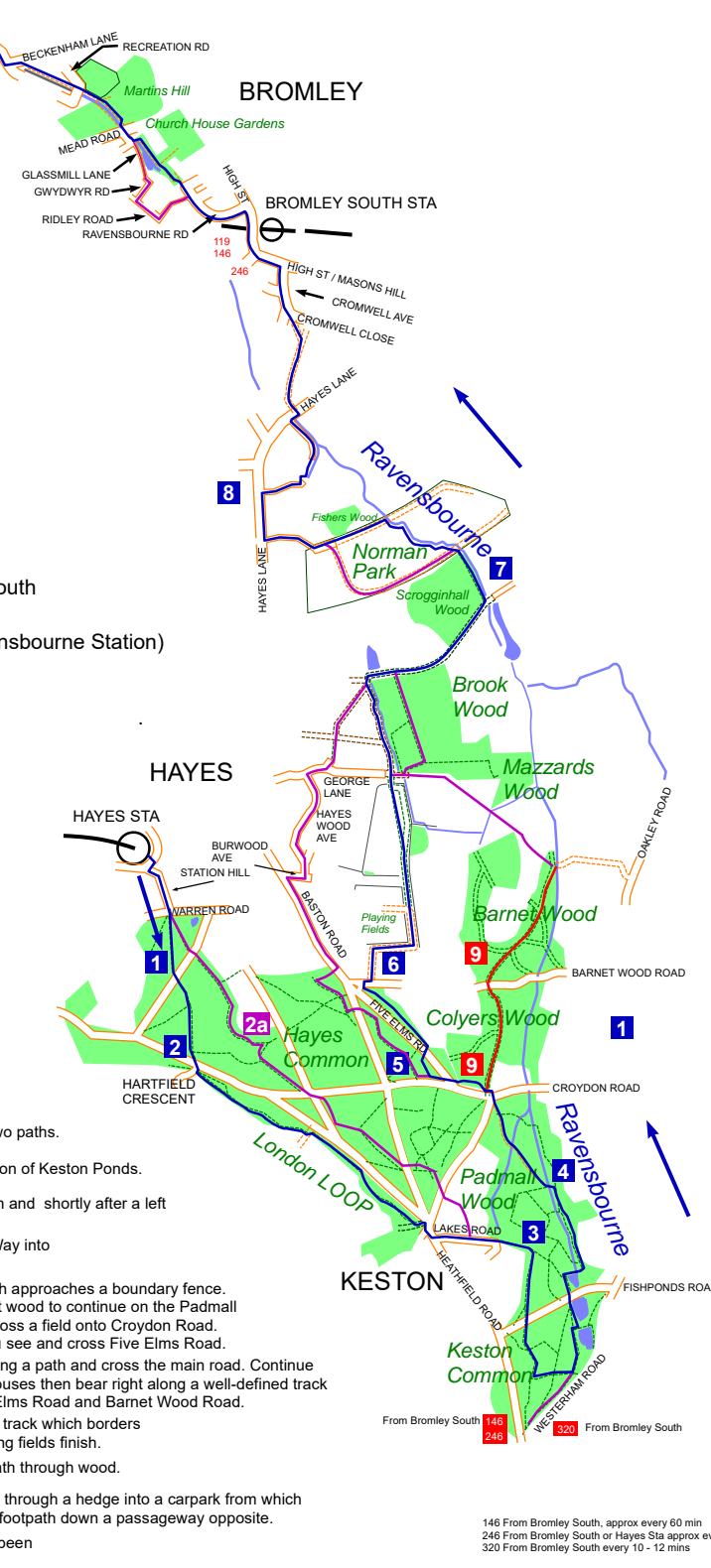
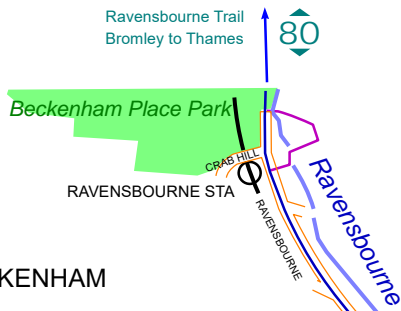


Ravensbourne Trail upper part to Bromley South or Ravensbourne Sta

This is the upper half of the Ravensbourne and so much of it is rural. The latter part is flat and water is carried in a network of boundary ditches. To stay even remotely close to the river it is sometimes necessary to use tracks which are not rights of way. Some possibilities through the woods have not yet been explored; all woods can be muddy when wet. Be warned also there are very few way markers.

BECKENHAM



- Main route 11 km Hayes to Bromley South (or 7.5 km from bus stop)
- alternates (additional 2.6 km to Ravensbourne Station)
- woodland route, as yet to be explored
- railway
- 80 interconnection with other walk

- 1** Looking across the field to the woods take the right-hand of two paths.
- 2** At Hartfield Crescent join London Loop leftwards in the direction of Keston Ponds.
- 2a** Leave the Three Commons Walk at this point; take a right turn and shortly after a left turn, picking up the walk in the opposite direction.
- 3** Leave London LOOP and bear right along Three Commons Way into Keston common.
- 4** After following the right bank down the Ravensbourne the path approaches a boundary fence. Shortly after this cross the brook at a bridge made of chestnut wood to continue on the Padmall Wood circular route clockwise until you see a narrow gate across a field onto Croydon Road. Cross over and take the path left, parallel to the road until you see and cross Five Elms Road.
- 5** Turn first right beside a row of buildings. Continue forward along a path and cross the main road. Continue forward down a lane then left along a short lane past some houses then bear right along a well-defined track parallel to Five Elms Road all the way to the junction of Five Elms Road and Barnet Wood Road.
- 6** Take the entrance to Petts Wood Football Club and follow the track which borders the playing fields, right then left, continuing on when the playing fields finish.
- 7** There is a ditch to jump over in the wood or find alternative path through wood.
- 8** Take the entrance marked Bromley Arena and shortly turn left through a hedge into a carpark from which the exit follows the Ravensbourne to the main road. Take the footpath down a passageway opposite.
- 9** As yet these possible routes through the woods have not yet been explored.

From Bromley South 246 248 320 From Bromley South

146 From Bromley South, approx every 60 min
 246 From Bromley South or Hayes Sta approx every 30 min
 320 From Bromley South every 10 - 12 mins

walk notes

Ravensbourne Trail upper

Sadly not all of the Ravensbourne is accessible to walk along. In this half of the walk there are some boggy bits and a piece of busy main road. This half has the most rewarding countryside, however.

The Ravensbourne

An 11 mile long river in SE London that rises at Caesar's Well in Keston and then flows through the London Boroughs of Bromley, Lewisham and Greenwich, joining the Pool River near Catford and joining the River Thames at Deptford, where its 1/2 mile muddy tidal reach is known as Deptford Creek.

Hayes Common

Hayes Common covers 79 hectares and is owned by Bromley Council. In 1869 Hayes Common became the first common in England and Wales to be given legal protection against enclosure under the Metropolitan Commons Act of 1866.

Keston Common

Keston Common is delightful and occupies a shallow valley with the river Ravensbourne running from its source at Caesar's Well northward to Padmall Wood. The slopes each side of the valley supply water for other springs and boggy areas.

The higher slopes are largely composed of water-worn pebbles and thin sandy soils known as the Blackheath Beds. Even in the British climate, the soils dry out so quickly that only specially adapted plants survive, some of which are now rare in south east England.

The lower ground has soils resting on or composed entirely of heavy clay which remains wet all year round and is even more difficult to cultivate. Alongside these soils are areas of peat built up over centuries because the vegetation decays very slowly. These wet peat bogs add a third habitat for the growth of specialist plants supporting a different range of insect and animal life.

Caesar's Well

Although there is no connection with Julius Caesar the area is rich in Roman remains and at Warbank, just 200 metres to the south, is the site of a Roman farmstead complex. This developed into a major villa with a cemetery and mausoleum (50 AD – 350 AD) The Anglo-Saxons also occupied the site.

There are four ponds in all. The top two are divided from the third by Fishponds Road the fourth is further down the stream. The top three ponds were built between 1823 and 1827 by John Ward, a wealthy London merchant, to provide a reservoir for supplying water to Holwood, the house once the residence of William Pitt the Younger. An hydraulic pump was built to push the water uphill from the ponds to the house and the remains of this building can be seen behind Lakes Cottage at the corner of the Westerham and Fishponds roads. Decimus Burton was employed to build the impressive new house which continues to be occupied. The two top ponds lie on what were small gravel pits. and are popular with fishermen who catch a variety of coarse fish some of considerable size. Carp (over 20lbs), pike (up to 17lbs), tench, roach, bream, chub and rudd are the most common fish caught. There are also freshwater crayfish and prawns.

It is likely that Darwin collected mud samples from these ponds in which to germinate plants when in a series of experiments he investigated the seeds the mud contained. He was friends with the Bonham-Carters who lived nearby. At the bottom of the Common we pass Padmall Wood.

Unless you wish to explore Colyers Wood the route crosses the top of Hayes Common and takes a well defined track across fields to Brook Wood, Bromley Common, where a lane takes us back to the Ravensbourne at Scrogginhall Wood. Information about these woods is sparse.