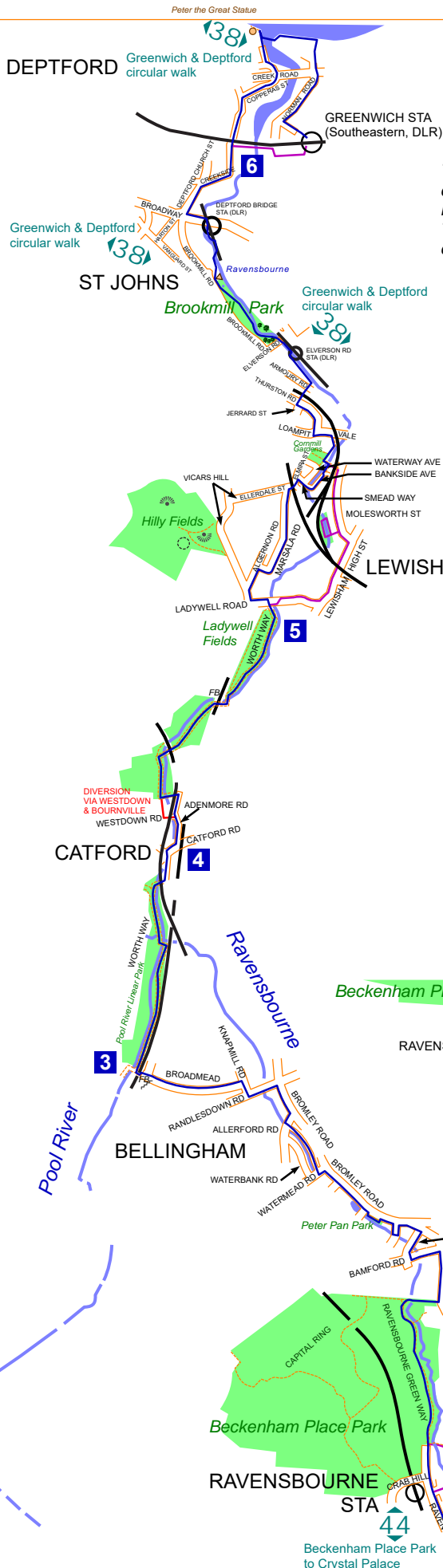


Ravensbourne - Bromley South to the Thames



This is the lower half of the Ravensbourne and consequently the walk is more easy to follow but also includes a significant amount of walking on streets. The route makes use of Worth Way, a long distance cycle route.

- Main route 14 km from Bromley South
- alternates 11.5 km from Ravensbourne
- Railway
- ↕ connection to another walk

- 1** Take the first left up the hill past the station. If gate at end of road is closed look for a footpath indicated as a cycle route to Beckenham and Crystal Palace. Parts of Glassmill Lane are very rural and cars are prohibited.
- 2** The Ravensbourne as it runs alongside a golf course can be glimpsed behind a carpark next to no 30.
- 3** The walk joins the Worth Way, long distance cycle route 21 and follows it for the rest of the walk. Follow signs for 21.
- 4** Do not go up to the main road. Turn right across the corner of the business park and look for tunnel under road opposite Adenmore Road
- 5** Exiting Ladywell Fields there are several alternatives. Follow Worth Way or take a detour through Lewisham High Street or via Hilly Fields and its stone circle (created for millenium) and views to the south.
- 6** Don't expect any views along Creekside. Turn right in front of the railway bridge for a footbridge with views and on to Greenwich Station or continue to the Thames and a new footbridge across the Creek.

walk notes

Ravensbourne Trail lower

This half of the Ravensbourne is on pavement. Beckenham Place Park affords good access to the Ravensbourne and we later follow the combined Ravensbourne and Pool Rivers from their confluence down to the Thames.

Beckenham Place Park

John Cator (1728 – 1806) was a wealthy timber merchant in Southwark who diversified into property and was responsible for the layout of much of the areas around Blackheath and Beckenham.

In 1773 he purchased the Manor of Beckenham from Lord Bolingbroke who had acquired the manor as a marriage settlement in 1765. The land was inherited by his son, who started selling off and leasing parts of the estate. By the 1860s the house was sub let or unoccupied.

The land was bought from the Cator Estate by London County Council in 1927 to provide open space for the new estates of Bellingham and Downman. The park covers around 240 acres and includes 60 acres of ancient woodland, large areas of grassland managed as meadow or sportsground, golf course, formal gardens, a sensory garden, a Ravensbourne riverside walk and nature reserve. For history of John Cator and Beckenham Place see

<http://www.beckenhamplaceparkfriends.org.uk/history.html>

Peter Pan Park/Pool

Opened in 1923 as the first public space in the world to be named after JM Barrie's creation – which had a boating lake, gardens, fun fair and sandpit. Now being reinstated.

Pool River Linear Park

This is a welcome tranquil green corridor, away from motor traffic.

Ladywell Fields

'Ladywell' derives from the medicinal well recorded here in the 15th century, which was named after the nearby parish church of St Mary, the fields forming water meadows attached to the church. In 1889 the area between the Ravensbourne and the railway was purchased by the LCC and Lewisham District Board of Works, with further land purchased in 1891 and 1894, and it was opened as Ladywell Recreation Ground.

Because the area was liable to flooding the river channel was straightened and enlarged, weirs were added, and the meadows were drained and landscaped.

Hilly Fields Park

The summit of Hilly Fields stands 175 feet above sea level, and the park commands very good views.

Hilly Fields was saved from development in the 19th century by the protests of local residents. A committee of influential people was formed, including Octavia Hill. Octavia Hill records that when visiting tenants in Deptford one day, she noticed a vase of freshly picked flowers. On being told they had been picked on Hilly Fields, she set off to visit the area and as a result became instrumental in raising subscriptions to save Hilly Fields, with other financial contributions from the LCC and Greenwich and Lewisham Boards of Works. The northern end of the site was occupied by a brick works. The southern end had originally been fields, part of Bridge House Farm. After lengthy and difficult negotiations the site of the park was bought and improvements made. The site of the brick works was drained, levelled and marked out as a cricket pitch. A bandstand was also provided. The park was formally opened on 16 May 1896.

Cornmill Gardens

Amazingly the river is being removed from its concrete banks, creating an attractive public open space.

Brookmill Park

By the 1840s Kent Waterworks had a small reservoir surrounded by grass and trees on the site of the current Brookmill Park, adjacent to which a small recreation ground had existed from 1880. By 1900 the reservoir was disused. In the 1920s the recreation ground was expanded when part of the reservoir was infilled and opened as Brookmill Park, the name referring to the silk mills that had been located in the area. Some evidence of the reservoir remains, much reduced in size, as the small oval lake still found in the park. Other evidence of the former history of the site is a grey brick engine house built by Kent Waterworks in 1811, next to which a well had been sunk to reach the artesian basin under London.