



sole-searching

Walk 12 is one of the greenest parts of the Capital Ring, with just a few hundred yards of road walking along the whole five miles. Imagine the whistles of long departed steam trains as you follow the Parkland Walk along a former railway line. Admire the ingenuity of the engineers who constructed the artificial New River as you stroll along its grassy banks. Spot the water birds on several lakes and reservoirs. Soak up the cosmopolitan ambience of Stoke Newington's Church Street. Finally, prepare to be spooked as you wander amongst the gravestones of Abney Park Cemetery.



Walk
» 12

Walk 12. Highgate » Stoke Newington

walk the capital RING

sole-searching

Discover the heart and soul of London on foot...



Walk 12

Highgate
» Stoke Newington
5 miles, approx. 2 1/2 hours

Walk 11. Hendon Park » Highgate

The Capital Ring

1. Woolwich Foot Tunnel » Falconwood
2. Falconwood » Grove Park
3. Grove Park » Crystal Palace Park
4. Crystal Palace Park » Streatham Common
5. Streatham Common » Wimbledon Park
6. Wimbledon Park » Richmond Bridge
7. Richmond Bridge » Osterley Lock
8. Osterley Lock » Greenford
9. Greenford » South Kenton
10. South Kenton » Hendon Park
11. Hendon Park » Highgate
12. Highgate » Stoke Newington
13. Stoke Newington » Hackney Wick
14. Hackney Wick » Beckton District Park
15. Beckton District Park » Woolwich Foot Tunnel

This is Walk 12 of the 15 stage Capital Ring, a 78 mile circular walk devised by the London Walking Forum. It takes you on a fascinating journey through London's parks, riversides, streets and woodlands.

If you have enjoyed this walk you might be interested in the London Loop, a 150 mile circular route in 24 stages taking in the best countryside of the outer London Boroughs. For more information on these and many other walks in London call 0870 240 6094 (national rate), email walking@tfl.gov.uk, or visit Transport for London's Walking Pages on www.tfl.gov.uk/walking.



Transport for London

Discover the heart and soul of London on foot...

WALK THE CAPITAL RING

Highgate » Stoke Newington

Walking conditions and accessibility

Highgate Spiney involves a short but steep climb on an earth path. The Parkland Walk is virtually level all the way, mostly with an earth surface, which can be muddy after rain. The paths in Finsbury Park are tarmac, with some gentle gradients.



1. Parkland Walk
2. Old Crouch End Station
3. Finsbury Park
4. New River and West Reservoir
5. The Castle, Manor House
6. Stoke Newington Church
7. New River flora
8. Clissold Park's manor
9. Abney Park Cemetery

The New River Path is mostly on level grass or earth. Clissold Park has level tarmac paths. Most of the paths in Abney Park Cemetery are earth or rolled aggregate. Short flights of steps along the New River and into the cemetery can be avoided on alternative routes.

Public Transport Information »

Use the train or bus to get to and from the walk. Stations and bus stops are marked on the map overleaf to help you plan your journey. For further information call 08457 484950 for trains, or 020 7222 1234 for London Underground and buses, or visit the Transport for London website www.tfl.gov.uk



Frequent daily services from Central London on the following lines:

Highgate Station. Northern Line (High Barnet branch).
Finsbury Park Station. Piccadilly and Victoria Lines.
Manor House Station. Piccadilly Line.



The following details show average service intervals during off-peak. Peak services may vary – for details contact National Rail Enquiries on 08457 484950.

Finsbury Park Station. Frequent daily service from London Kings Cross. Monday – Friday service every 15 minutes from London Moorgate.

Crouch Hill Station. Daily service every 30 minutes on the Gospel Oak to Barking Line via Blackhorse Road.

Stoke Newington Station. Daily service from London Liverpool Street and Seven Sisters: Monday to Saturday every 15 minutes, Sunday every 30 minutes.



Bus services in this area run daily (unless shown otherwise) at frequent intervals, usually about every 10-15 minutes. Sunday services may be at longer intervals.

Highgate. Buses 43, 134, 143, 234 and 263 serve Archway Road.

Crouch End. Bus W5 serves Stanhope Road. Buses 41 and 91 serve Crouch End Hill.

Crouch Hill is served by bus W7.

Stroud Green. Bus W3 serves Stapleton Hall Road.

Finsbury Park Station is served by buses 19, 29, 106, 153, 210, 236, 253, 254, 259, 279, W3 and W7.

Manor House Station is served by buses 29, 141, 253, 254, 259, 279 and 341.

Seven Sisters Road is served by buses 253, 254, 259 and 279.

Clissold Park. Buses 141, 341 and 393 serve Green Lanes.

Stoke Newington. Buses 73, 393 and 476 serve Church Street. Buses 67, 73, 76, 106, 149, 243, 349, 393 and 476 serve High Street / Stamford Hill.

Capital Ring Guidebook



A guidebook to the whole Capital Ring, by Colin Saunders, has been published by Aurum Press at £12.99, available from all good booksellers.

As well as a very detailed route description, there are colour photos by David Sharp, and enlarged Ordnance Survey Explorer maps at 1:16,666 scale show the route, station links and facilities.

Capital Ring Route



OS grid references. Start TQ 287882. Finish TQ 337868.



One of the London Strategic Walks

The Capital Ring has earned the coveted Seal of Approval awarded by the London Walking Forum. It is also one of the strategic walking routes, which have been designated by the Mayor of London to set high standards for other trails in the Capital. Funding has been provided by Transport for London and the appropriate boroughs. If you would like further information, if you notice any damage or obstructions, or if you have suggestions to improve the walk, please call 0870 240 6094 (national rate) or email walking@tfl.gov.uk. Full details of these and many other trails in London can be found on TFL's Walking Pages website: www.tfl.gov.uk/walking.

How to enjoy your walk

You can walk all or part of this 5 miles (8 km) section. There are frequent bus stops and train stations if you need to break off along the route. Remember! leave your car at home! Your route is well marked with the distinctive Big Ben discs and fingersigns, so there is no need for a map or compass. We can't guarantee the weather or course, so an extra sweatshirt or a waterproof may come in handy. There are plenty of places to stop and refresh yourself along the way.

Walk 12

Highgate to Stoke Newington



PICK YOUR WALK

From the start of Walk 12 in Highgate, it's 5 miles to the finish at Stoke Newington, where Walk 13 starts – in case you're thinking of continuing further. The Capital Ring links with the stations at each end and are just a hundred yards or so long. For a shorter walk, from Highgate Station it's 1 1/4 miles to Crouch End Station or 2 1/4 miles to Finsbury Park or Manor House Stations. From Finsbury Park Station to Stoke Newington Station is 3 miles.

Italic text refers to a station link or alternative route.



From Highgate Station ticket office, take the Priory Gardens exit and follow the road around to the right, using the right-hand pavement. In 150 yards, Walk 12 starts between house numbers 63 and 65, where you turn right up a narrow footpath.

Follow the main path as it climbs ahead through Highgate Spinney, keeping close to the left edge of the wood. At the road, Shepherd's Hill, turn right to the main road, Archway Hill. Opposite lies the former Highgate Methodist Church, now a community centre with café and toilets. Turn left for 50 yards then left again down Holmesdale Road, but before doing so take a look ahead. You should see the Archway, built in 1900 to replace an older bridge. The road there was to have gone through a tunnel, but the ground collapsed.

Follow the left-hand side of Holmesdale Road as it bears right. At the next bend, go through a gate on the left and down a slope to join the Parkland Walk. Look left to see the old railway tunnels that once led to Highgate's high-level station.

1 The Parkland Walk is now London's longest statutory Local Nature Reserve, created from the railway line that once ran from Finsbury Park to Edgware, High Barnet and Alexandra Palace. It operated for just over a century from 1867 to 1970. Now tree-lined for most of the way, it has become a haven for wildlife and some 250 species of plants. For a while, after the line closed, a regular sight was the white-robed Goat Man, who herded his goats along the line and into the surrounding streets. Somehow, even muntjac deer have managed to make a home for themselves here, but they're very shy and spend the daytime sheltering in the deepest wooded parts. The reserve is mostly managed by Haringey Council, but a short section at the centre is Islington's.

Follow the broad track ahead for the next two miles, crossing over or under several roads: Northwood Road, Stanhope Road, Crouch End Hill, Crouch Hill, Mount Pleasant, Stapleton Hall Road and Upper Tollington Park. At Crouch End Hill you encounter the eerie, deserted platforms of the former Crouch End Station. Beyond that, look up to the left as you pass under the bridge: emerging from the brickwork is the scary figure of a spriggan, a kind of goblin. They were said to steal human children and leave baby spriggans in their place.

You are now in the Islington section, among the skateboard track and other paraphernalia of Crouch Hill Community Centre.

If you wish to break off, you can reach Crouch Hill Station by following the footpath that leads up to the left, opposite the skateboard track. At the road, turn right downhill, then in 200 yards use the zebra crossing and keep on down the hill, now on the opposite pavement, to the station.

Continuing along the Parkland Walk, you walk briefly beside Blythwood Road, then (back in Haringey) a grass-covered reservoir appears on your left at Mount Pleasant. The next bridge crosses Stapleton Hall Road. Stroud Green Station used to occupy the area beyond that, but hardly a trace of it remains. You are on the topmost of three levels of transport here, as the Gospel Oak to Barking railway tunnels under the road below.

Soon you reach the end of the Parkland Walk, and turn left across the main East Coast railway line from London to Scotland, opened in 1850 as the Great Northern Railway. Ahead lies Finsbury Park, opened in 1862 to provide open space for the people of Finsbury, nearly three miles to the south.

The link to Finsbury Park Station leads off to the right. Follow the right-hand edge of the park to Stroud Green Road, to find the station opposite.

Keep ahead across the park's carriage drive. Shortly turn left up some steps (avoidable on a parallel path) past a play area, then turn right beside the boating lake.

At a flagpole, bear half right, then shortly left to enter an enclosed flower garden. Keep ahead to the park's central footpath junction, with a shelter and Capital Ring signpost. You now have a choice of routes to Clissold Park, either on the main route beside the New River, mostly on grass or earth with a short flight of steps, or more directly (saving a mile) on a level alternative route beside roads.

For the alternative route, turn right at the signpost. Follow the path across the carriage drive again and go through the ceremonial gateway, with Manor House Station nearby. Turn right across Seven Sisters Road, then left across Green Lanes. Turn right to follow Green Lanes for 400 yards, rejoining the main route by keeping ahead past The Castle.

The main route continues ahead at the signpost. Shortly take the right fork and follow this across the carriage drive again. You leave the park on to Green Lanes, one of the longest roads in London at nearly seven miles. Cross at the lights and turn left for 30 yards, then go through a bright green gateway on your right to join the New River Path.

2 The New River is spectacularly misnamed, as it is neither new nor a river – it's nearly four hundred years old and an ingenious artificial watercourse. Built at a time when fresh water for London was in very short supply, it brought water forty miles from springs in Hertfordshire to Islington. Following a very

twisting route, the gradient dropped very gradually so that gravity pulled the water along. There was considerable opposition from local landowners, and it cost a fortune, but the engineer Sir Hugh Myddelton pushed it through with support from King James I. The "river" and surrounding land is owned and managed by Thames Water, who recently opened the path to the public. You can now follow the river on foot most of the way from near Hertford to Islington.

Follow the path beside residential buildings on your right. This is part of the massive Woodberry Down Estate, which with some fifty blocks forms the largest council housing estate in Britain. At Seven Sisters Road, the path continues ahead but you should not attempt to cross here. Turn left to the controlled crossings and come back on the far side.

Turn left to rejoin the river, and follow it across a lane, down some steps and on past the first (East) of two reservoirs, where the flowing water of the New River comes to an end. Cross Lordship Road and continue ahead beside the second (West) reservoir, which is now a nature reserve and water sport centre. The water beyond this point is recycled, purely for effect.

At the end, cross a footbridge and turn right along a service road. To your left is The Castle, a fine example of the imaginative recycling of a utilitarian building, a former water pumping station, whose brick walls and turrets now provide an indoor climbing centre. At the main road (Green Lanes again, where the alternative route from Finsbury Park rejoins), turn left for 350 yards, crossing Lordship Park, and enter Clissold Park.

3 Clissold Park is named after the Reverend Augustus Clissold, a curate who lived in the mansion at its south end during the mid 19th century. It was previously known as Newington Park, and the mansion was owned by the Crawshay family. Eliza Crawshay wanted to marry the curate, but her father opposed the union. When he died in 1835 they were free to marry. Clissold died in

1882 and the estate was sold to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who wanted to sell the land for residential development, but local opposition ensured that the park was preserved for the enjoyment of the public.

Bear half right to follow the right-hand side of Beckmere, one of two small lakes that add to the attractiveness of this very pleasant park. The lakes are named after the two council engineers who designed the park. At the main path junction, just before the second lake, Runtzmere, turn right to pass the park's One o'Clock Club. Follow this past an open-air stage and toilets to the mansion, which contains a popular café.

Bear half left, between the mansion and a children's playground, then at the next path junction, with Capital Ring signpost, turn left to pass an all-weather sports pitch. In 80 yards turn right to follow a fenced path through a graveyard. At the end, turn left along Stoke Newington Church Street.

4 Stoke Newington has two parish churches. You first pass the oldest, now known as the Ancient Mother Church, built in 1563. In 1858, on the other side of the road, it was joined by St. Mary's, whose magnificent 220-foot spire dominates the area. It is one of many splendid churches and other public buildings designed by the eminent architect, George Gilbert Scott.

Stoke Newington attracted non-conformist Christians of all kinds, as it was close to the City of London, from which they were banned. One of these was Daniel Defoe (1660-1731), the author of Robinson Crusoe and Moll Flanders, who is commemorated by a local street and pub.

Continue along Church Street, passing the old Stoke Newington Town Hall, now a branch office of Hackney Council, and the

library, where Daniel Defoe's tombstone is on display. Note the many bistros, cafes and other eateries offering a wide variety of cuisines. Soon after you cross Bouverie Road, the pavement widens and you turn left through a gate leading to a short flight of steps into Abney Park Cemetery.

To avoid the steps, keep ahead to the traffic lights, then turn left along Stoke Newington High Street to rejoin the main route at the far end of Abney Park Cemetery. There is level access to the cemetery at this point.

5 Abney Park Cemetery is now a nature reserve where over 300,000 graves have been laid since it opened in 1840. Every path has a name and you will follow Abney House Corner, Lions' Ride, Wilson Ride, Chapel Ride and Swayne Path. Previously the cemetery was the grounds of two large manor houses. It is now owned by Hackney Council and managed by a trust, which aims to maintain the natural habitats that surround the graves. A guidebook is on sale at the visitor centre.

Inside the gate, take the left-hand of two narrow paths leading between graves to join a wider path, where you turn left. Opposite lies the grave of William Booth, who founded the Salvation Army in 1865. In 200 yards at a major path intersection, turn right to pass on its right-hand side a derelict chapel, which the trust hopes to restore.

A short diversion to your right leads to the Commonwealth War Memorial and the tomb of Isaac Watts, the 18th century non-conformist preacher and composer of hymns.

From the chapel, continue in the same direction past another path intersection until you come to a broad, paved avenue by a sundial, and follow it to the main gate. The visitor centre on your right contains a display about the cemetery's history. Beneath your feet lies a plaque containing Egyptian hieroglyphics, translated as "The great gate of the mortal part of man".

Beyond the gate, turn left along Stamford Hill and shortly cross over at the traffic lights to the end of Walk 12.

To continue on to Walk 13, turn right then immediately left along Cazenove Road. For Stoke Newington Station turn left for 120 yards.

