

## TREC Section 2: Hanwell Station / Brent Lodge Park to Perivale Station. Distance: 8.5 km (5.3 miles).

**Public Transport:** Section 2 starts at Hanwell Rail Station served by TfL Rail; alternatively there are plentiful local buses which stop on the Uxbridge Road, 5 mins walking distance from the Station or the E3 bus which stops at the end of Station Road (Hanwell Station stop). There are exit points at South Greenford and Greenford Stations. The walk ends at Perivale Underground Station (Central line), also served by the 297 bus route (Willesden Bus Garage to Ealing Broadway).

**Surface and Terrain:** The first half of the route is along mostly level paths initially alongside the Brent River, then through Perivale Park with some pavement walking at Greenford. The second part of the route includes some uneven ground, which may be muddy and slippery, and a steep ascent and descent of Horsenden Hill. At 85 m (279 ft) it is the highest point in Ealing and offers splendid views. A detour option is provided to bypass walking up and down Horsenden Hill.

**Refreshments:** Brent Lodge Park; Westway Shopping Park (North Greenford); Horsenden Hill Visitor Centre (seasonal, restricted hours). **Covid-19 restrictions: Check availability of refreshments and toilets before your walk.**

**Public Toilets:** Brent Lodge Park; Public Toilets at junction of Rockware Avenue & Greenford Road (in buildings on the east side of Greenford Road; Horsenden Hill Visitor Centre (seasonal, restricted hours); Perivale Station.

*Hanwell is one of the seven major towns of the London Borough of Ealing; much of the western boundary borders the River Brent, which is followed for the initial part of the walk. A settlement at Hanwell is mentioned in the Domesday Book in 1086 and a church had been established on the site of St Mary's Hanwell by 948 AD. The walk starts at the Grade II listed Hanwell Station building, which opened in 1838 on the original line of the Great Western Railway. The station is a short distance east of the Grade 1 listed brick built Wharncliffe Viaduct, the first major structural design by Isambard Kingdom Brunel.*

Leaving Hanwell Station via the north, main exit, follow Campbell Road as it bears left, then turn left onto Golden Manor road, and next right on to Alwyne Road (before the railway bridge), then immediately left on a footpath beside a fenced Rose Garden (Alwyne Road Park, a tiny park more like a town square). Continue on the tarmac path as it passes, on the right, the end of a terrace of houses and then tennis courts, heading towards the spire of the Parish Church of St Mary's, Hanwell. The path marks the border between Brent Lodge Park (left) and Churchfields (right) both part of the Brent River Park. Looking to your left and behind you will get a good view of the Wharncliffe Viaduct crossing the river valley. About halfway along the path, metal railings on your left surround a Memorial to former Boy Scouts who fell in the First World War.

**Alternative route to visit the Viaduct:** Exit Hanwell Station, via the south side, turning right to cross Station Road and enter the small Connolly Dell Rest Garden. Choose your route to walk downhill through the rockery garden with its series of ponds to exit via a gate and turn

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*right on to a footpath on the other side of the park railings for a few metres then take a left turn to continue downhill along an earth and gravel path through The Hobbayne Half Acre Woodland - part of a parcel of land gifted to Hanwell's Mary's Church in 1484 by William Hobbayne for the poor and needy of the Parish. Having reached the end, turn right under the viaduct and follow the path to the Brent Lodge Park Café and Toilets (near the Zoo and Millennium Maze).*

**Brent River Path:** *Created in 1976 following proposals by the Brent River and Canal Society (BRCS) to set up a linear park and improve the Brent Valley river corridor. The Brent is one of London's longest rivers, over 26 km (16 miles) long from Hendon to its junction with the Thames at Brentford (see Section 4). The Brent River Park covers 400 hectares and includes larger formal parks such as Brent Lodge Park, Churchfields Recreation Ground and Pitshanger as well as other open spaces. Churchfields: Formerly agricultural land owned by St Mary's Church; note the boundary stones in the park. Bought by Hanwell Urban District Council in 1898 to create a Recreation Ground.*

Continue on the tarmac path passing a bandstand on the left to exit the park onto Church Road opposite St Mary's Church (Built in 1841, one of the very early churches designed by George Gilbert Scott, later the architect of the Albert Memorial). *To view 'The Hermitage', a Grade II, thatched gothic cottage orné (not open to public), turn right at the Church and walking along Church Road the cottage will be on your left.* To keep to the route turn left to walk in front of the Church (ignoring the footpath sign on your right) then re-enter Brent Lodge Park on a driveway which passes through a wooden covered gated entrance way. To visit the Café and public toilets keep on the drive, bearing left towards the old Brent Lodge Stable block then go right at the signpost for Hanwell Zoo, now following a footpath between animal enclosures to arrive at the Café. The Millennium Maze is beyond the Café.

**Brent Lodge Park:** *On the site of the former landscape park of Brent Lodge, created by a Rector of Hanwell who acquired the house in 1795 enlarging it and creating the landscaped grounds as well as building the cottage orné. The estate eventually became the home of Sir Montagu Sharpe and his wife, who sold it to Ealing Council in 1931. The lodge itself, by then dilapidated, was demolished. The original stable block remains and is Grade II listed. Developments in the Park include both Hanwell Zoo (2016) which evolved from a small enclosed animal centre for unwanted pet rabbits, tortoises, guinea pigs etc, and also a Millennium Maze (2000) built using 2000 young yews.*

When ready to continue on the route, return to the driveway towards the Church, but before exiting through the covered gateway, turn left to follow a path worn into the grass, descending the hill to reach the River Brent. You will now be re-joining the routes of both the Capital Ring and Brent River Path. To your right is Boles Meadow which was used for grazing and contains the remains of the ice house for Brent Lodge. Turn left crossing the river on a tubular steel bridge (TubeWrights Ltd) then right at the Capital Ring waymark, heading north on a gravel path with sports fields on your left. Keep to the gravel path as it nears the river again and enters a shrubbery. Continuing north the path takes you through Brent Valley Golf Course, beware of golf balls! Eventually take a right at the Capital Ring/Brent River Path

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waymark post to re-cross the river using a wooden bridge and immediately go left continuing on a path with the river on your left; the path rises up a bank to reach a meadow (Bitterns Field, another grassed-over refuse tip). Follow the path as it branches left towards the river, then skirting the meadow turn right to continue on the elevated path looking down to the river on left and meadow on the right. Where the path turns right to continue round the meadow, bear left on a path descending a short slope back to the level of the riverside then continue north, between the river and a hedge/fence to reach the main road (Ruislip Road East) and Greenford.

To safely cross the main road turn left over Greenford Bridge to the pedestrian crossing, cross and turn right along Costons Lane, keeping on the left hand side pavement. You have now left the route of the Brent River Path, but continue on the Capital Ring route. Stay with the lane as it bears left and cross over when you reach the gated entrance to Perivale Park. Follow the tarmac path into the Park, to cross Costons Brook and continue past Perivale Golf Course on your right, then turn left to skirt the cricket and football pitches. Turn right just before the park exit to continue skirting the playing fields and head towards tennis courts and the athletics track. Half way along this stretch of the path you pass a piano-themed park bench, memorial to the pianist Nicky Hopkins, born in Perivale, who played as a session musician with The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and more. At the tennis courts, continue past the huts and bear left on the tarmac path through trees and a small car park to leave the park, crossing a side road to reach the A40 Western Avenue.

To your right is a ramped footbridge. *To reach South Greenford Rail station (occasional trains on the branch line from West Ealing to Greenford), walk past the footbridge to reach the station entrance.* To continue on the walk, cross the footbridge over the A40 and at the foot of the ramp on the far side turn left along the side road (Runnymede Gardens) then first right along Cayton Road. At the road end, by the entrance to a sports ground, turn right along a paved footpath between fences and follow it as it skirts the grounds. When the path reaches houses, turn right at a lamp post with a Capital Ring sign on it into Bennetts Avenue. Follow the Avenue as it rises then descends to reach Greenford Road; turn right walking under the bridges carrying the Central Line and Paddington to Birmingham railway line, to reach the junction with Rockware Avenue. *To reach Greenford Station (Central Line & National Rail), turn left at the traffic lights, crossing Greenford Road to walk along Rockware Avenue, then left along Oldfield Lane under a bridge to the Station entrance.*

To continue on the walk, cross Rockware Avenue (Westway Shopping Park on your right) and pass the Capital Ring waymark to join a tarmac footpath/cycle track keeping Greenford Road on your left and a car park on the right. Follow the path through a subway to enter Paradise Fields.

**Paradise Fields:** *Wetlands, converted from the former Greenford Golf course, containing scrapes, reedbeds and lagoons to provide a peaceful haven for wildlife.*

Continue on the route as it bears right on a tarmac path and, as the path rises to a footbridge crossing the Grand Union Canal – Paddington Branch, you now leave the Capital Ring route.

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*As an optional detour, to avoid the ascent and descent of Horsenden Hill, do not cross the footbridge, instead continue on the Capital Ring route bearing left through a gate to reach the Canal towpath. Turn right under the bridge and along the towpath for half a mile, with the canal and Hill on your left, to reach a humpbacked bridge. Pass under the bridge and turn sharp right up steps to join Horsenden Lane North, turn left on the pavement and in 0.5 km (600 yards) reach Perivale Station.*

Enjoy the view as you cross the wooden foot bridge over the canal and you can see your destination, Horsenden Hill, in the distance. Zig zag down from the bridge and at the bottom turn left to walk along a gravel cycle track towards and along the edge of sports grounds keeping the hedge on your right. Continue to follow this path, as it bends left and then right, for almost 0.8 km (half a mile) until you reach Horsenden Lane North (Ballot Box Pub on the right). Cross with care to enter a path almost opposite and walk to the end near houses (Whitton Drive). Turn right by the Capital Ring sign onto a firm made path into Horsenden Wood; keep on the path as it goes uphill with steps to reach the grassy summit of Horsenden Hill. Beneath you are two disused reservoirs built into the hill on its south side while behind you is the trig point TP4024. Places which may be visible include Harrow on the Hill, Wembley Stadium, planes coming in to land at Heathrow Airport, and on a clear day, the Home Counties of Surrey, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire.

**Horsenden Hill Park:** *The largest conservation area in the borough of Ealing (includes Paradise Fields). Archaeological evidence has shown that people occupied the hill top site for at least 7000 years. The ancient plough soil on the hill top suggests Neolithic farming; considerable numbers of Iron Age pot sherds were discovered in 1987. The site was scheduled an ancient monument in 1976.*

With your back to the trig point, and facing south, you will see two grass paths leading downhill. Take the right hand path and descend via several sets of steps and a steep concrete trackway to a tarmac footpath. Turn left on to a path through woodland bearing east, around the contour of the hill, through a gate and cross the field then at the path junction continue straight on through another gate and in a few yards turn right to reach the back gate\* entrance of Horsenden Farm. Go down steps, passing a barn, into the area that was the farmyard (toilets may be open). You may be lucky and find the Friends of Horsenden Hill selling refreshments from the courtyard Hayloft, but this is not a regular event other than on the third and the last Saturday of the month. Walk down the drive bearing right to reach the gateway\* onto Horsenden Lane. \*Gates may be locked depending on season, in which case continue on the path downhill to reach Horsenden Lane and turn left to reach the canal.

Turning left out of the Farm gate, cross over the canal using the footbridge to the side of the old humpbacked canal bridge re-joining the pavement alongside Horsenden Lane to head south to Perivale Station, 0.5 km (600 yards) and the end of this section of TREC.

*To provide feedback on The Round Ealing Circuit (TREC) route contact West London Ramblers via our website: [www.westlondonramblers.org.uk](http://www.westlondonramblers.org.uk)*