



## Brockwell Park walk

Short amble through a small but well-kept urban park in Southeast London on raised ground

**Length** 3.8 km (2.4 mi) or 6.2 km (3.8 mi) **Ascent:** 70m or 85m

**Time:** 1 hour or 1 1/2 hours walking time.

**Transport** Herne Hill station is located on the boundary between Zones 2 and 3 and served by Southeastern trains on the Chatham Line from Victoria to Orpington, and by Thameslink services on the Portsmouth Line to Sutton. Travel time from Victoria is 9 minutes, from Blackfriars 11 minutes. Brixton station is in Zone 2 and also on the Chatham line, one stop closer to Victoria, and the southern terminus of the Victoria Line Underground.

**Walk Notes** Meandering route through a small but well-kept urban park in Southeast London on raised ground within the valleys shaped by one of London's Hidden Rivers, The Effra, and a couple of its tributaries. Created from the purchase of the existing private gardens of the Brockwell Hall estate and some smaller neighbouring properties, it is noted for its 19<sup>th</sup> century layout as a gracious public park, a clocktower, water garden, and walled garden, as much as for the Art Deco Brockwell Lido. Brockwell Hall has served as a cafe since the opening of the park in 1892.

An Alternative Ending past Brixton Windmill to Brixton Station adds 2.4 km to the route.

**Eat/Drink** **Lido Cafe** Dulwich Road, Brockwell Park, Herne Hill, SE24 0PA ([020 7737 8183](tel:02077378183)). Open 09.00-15.00 Mon-Fri, 09.00-16.00 Sat-Sun.

**Brockwell Hall Cafe** Brockwell Park, Herne Hill, SE24 9AF ([020 8671 5217](tel:02086715217)). Open 09.00-18.00 every day.

**Bullfinch Brewery Tap Room** Arches 886-887, Rosendale Road, Herne Hill, SE24 9EH. Open 16.00-22.00 Tue-Fri, 12.00-22.00 Sat-Sun.

Plenty of options near the stations, see text below for details.

**Notes** **River Effra**

The River Effra is a converted river or former large stream in south London, now mainly underground. Directionally the Effra travelled mainly NNW from Upper Norwood until north of Brixton where it then fed Lambeth Marsh and Walworth Marsh, joining Earl's Sluice and entering the Thames at Deptford Wharf. It was diverted in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century to run west from Kennington to join the Thames at Vauxhall. Due to its history and the pressing need in the late Victorian era for a surface water drainage system, its contours have been used for a combined sewer, draining for example much of the historic broadly defined areas of Peckham and Brixton.

When the London sewerage system was constructed during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, it incorporated flows from the River Effra into the Southern High Level Sewer, also known as the Effra sewer, running from Herne Hill eastwards under Peckham and New Cross to Deptford and from Putney, the Southern Low Level Sewer picking up remaining effluent from the old depression converted to sewer at Vauxhall, passing under Kennington and Burgess Park to Deptford merging to form the Southern Outfall Sewer that runs underneath Greenwich and Woolwich to Crossness.

**Brockwell Park and Hall**

Brockwell Park is a 51ha park located between Brixton, Herne Hill and Tulse Hill, created when in 1891 Lambeth Council bought Brockwell Hall and its gardens as well as two adjacent smaller properties: Clarence Lodge and Brockwell House. Because these gardens were never developed, the park retains traces of the watercourses that used to run through them: The River Effra and a couple of its tributaries.

The Park has commanding views of the skyline of the City and of Central London and is noted for its 19<sup>th</sup> century layout as a gracious public park, the clocktower, water garden, JJ Sexby designed walled garden and other monuments and links to its 18<sup>th</sup> century agricultural past in the hedge lines and mature oak trees. The Brockwell Lido is a Grade II listed art deco building. Brockwell Park is open from 07.30 to 15 minutes before sunset every day.

The Park is home to the annual free Lambeth Country Show, and has hosted many large-scale music events with up to 150.000 spectators (Rock Against Racism 1978).

The Grade II\* listed Brockwell Hall was built between 1811-1813 when the area was part of Surrey and was the country seat of glass merchant John Blades Esq. After a campaign led by the local MP Thomas Lynn Bristowe, the land and house were acquired by the London County Council in March 1891 and the park opened to the public in the following summer. At the unveiling, Bristowe died of a heart attack on the steps of the hall. A bust of him is on display in the Hall.

<http://www.friendsofbrockwellpark.org/> <https://brockwellparkcommunitypartners.org.uk/>

**Help Us!** After the walk, we would love to get your [feedback](#)

You can upload photos to the [SWC Group on Flickr](#), and [videos to Youtube](#). This walk's tags are:



**By Car** **Start** SE24 0JW

**Help** National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Travelline SE (bus times): 0871 200 2233 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234

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## Walk Directions

1. Leave the platform down some steps and exit the station past the [Perks & White](#) cafe (Mon-Fri 07.00-12.30 only) on the left and the [Minus 12](#) craft ice cream parlour (Wed-Sat 12.00-19.30 and Sun 11.00-17.30) on the right in the ticket hall onto **Railton Road**, opposite [The Commercial](#) hotel and pub and with [Llewellyn's](#) restaurant on the right (there is a farmer's market here every Sunday 10.00-16.00).
2. *Turn left* along the road. In 100m at a junction with Dulwich Road, cross the road at a pedestrian crossing and over a traffic island, where you cross one of London's 'Hidden' or 'Lost' Rivers, **The Effra** (Dulwich Road was formerly called Water Lane). Proceed towards the **Herne Hill Entrance** to **Brockwell Park** and enter the park through the wrought iron gates.
3. *Turn right* along the furthest right of three tarmac paths, initially following the tree-lined right-hand park boundary, with Dulwich Road audible behind, broadly following the course of The Effra away to the right. In 50m you pass the Herne Hill Gates station of a **miniature railway** (open 11.00-16.00 summer Sundays) and in 150m the far end of the railway. You *turn left* in 25m by the **Lido/Dulwich Road Entrance** to the park and in 20m pass **Brockwell Lido**. The recommended [Lido Café](#) can be found along the tarmac path around the right-hand side of the Lido, 70m away.
4. In 10m and again in another 30m *fork right* along the right of two paths and continue with the lido on your right. In 90m ignore a left turning path up an incline and in 100m at the end of the line of trees hiding a football pitch on your left, **[!]** you *turn left* up a grassy incline. In 60m, at the far corner of the football pitch on your left, *turn left* through a thin line of shrubs and then curve left around a fenced grassy area and in 100m *turn up to the right* at a T-junction with a tarmac path.
5. You pass a **BMX Track** on your right-hand side and then a fenced bowling green on your left-hand side. At the far end of the fence veer right a little downhill at a four-way tarmac path junction. You are descending into the shallow valley of one of the smaller tributaries of the **Effra River**.

6. In 130m at a four-way junction with a playground away on the right and a fenced area ahead, you veer right a little and continue to the right of the fence. In 40m at the far end of the fence *turn left*, ignoring the continuation of the path towards the **Tulse Hill Entrance** of the park. In 20m *turn left* and weave your way through a succession of three ponds (fed by the tributary stream) by *turning right, right again* (crossing the stream) *and then left and left again* (re-crossing the stream), and eventually you reach a **walled garden** and *turn right* to continue with the walled garden on your left.
7. In 80m at the far end of the wall around the garden, *turn left* back on yourself and enter the walled garden through a metal gate. After a tour of the garden, leave it through the same gate and *turn up left* along a tarmac path past '**The Temple**', now serving as a toilet block, with an info panel on garden and temple just beyond it.
8. Continue uphill along the path, soon passing **Community Greenhouses**, some tennis courts and a wooden shelter, enjoying some fine views to The City and Canary Wharf on the half left. At the far end of the plateau at the top of the rise *turn right* with the path.
9. In 140m *turn right* along a tarmac path and in 70m you have **Brockwell Hall** away on the left across a grassy area. In 140m *turn left* at a T-junction. In 25m *turn left* towards a **clock tower** (from 1897) 20m away and continue to the right of it.
10. In 90m *turn right* into Brockwell Hall and walk past a bust of **Thomas Lynn Bristoe MP**, leader of the campaign to create the park, and through **Brockwell Hall Café** to exit on the other side onto its terrace. [If the café is already closed for the evening, pass the hall to its left hand side.]
11. *Turn right* on the terrace on the other side of the café and in 30m from the café exit ignore a left turn downhill. In 60m *turn right* with the path and in 50m, with the clock tower on the right, **you have a choice**:
12. **For the Brixton Ending** pick up the directions below, **for the Herne Hill Ending**, *turn left* downhill. You *curve left* with the path into the valley of the Tulse Hill tributary of the Effra and in 300m at the bottom of the descent by the **Brockwell Park Gardens (Vehicle) Entrance** *turn left* at a four-way junction.
13. In 80m ignore the **Norwood Lodge Entrance** and *bear left*, passing the fenced park gardener's yard on your right. In 50m a path joins from the left down the hill and in 170m an **optional right fork** leads you to the **Rosendale Road Exit** from the park, on across Norwood Road and along Rosendale Road to the recommended **Bullfinch Brewery Tap Room** (open to 22.00 Tue-Sun), just before the railway bridge on the left-hand side.
14. Continue along the path through the park, with **Brockwell Hall** up on the left across the slope, and in 420m leave it through the **Herne Hill Entrance**. For the **direct route to the station**, retrace the steps from earlier, along Railton Road.
15. **For other tea or dinner options**:
16. - either *turn hard right* along **Norwood Road**: on the opposite side you'll find **Saray** Turkish restaurant, **Canopy Beer Co. Brewery & Tap Room** (in a backyard), the recommended **Park's Edge** bar & kitchen, **Olley's** fish & chips and **Steve's** café;
17. - or *turn half right* under the railway bridge and on along **Half Moon Lane** (sight of a devastating flood on 7 August 2013, caused by a burst water main and flooding 36 properties): you'll find **Wild + Lees** wine and beer bottle shop, **Cafe Provencal**, **The Half Moon** pub, **The Roome** cafe and **Mimosa** cafe;
18. - or cross **Dulwich Road** and *turn left* on the opposite pavement, in 20m passing the **500 Degrees** pizza restaurant and in 60m you reach the recommended pub **The Florence**. The **First Aid Box** cocktail bar is a further 50m along. By the pub *turn right* along **Brockwell Passage** and in 60m *turn right* towards **Herne Hill station**.

### Brixton Ending

1. Continue in the same direction, gently descending towards some ponds. In 150m continue to the left of the walled garden and to the right of the first pond. In 90m and in another 80m ignore left turning paths and continue to the right of the ponds. In 50m curve left with the path, ignoring a fork to the right and in 30m *turn right* at a T-junction of tarmac paths.
2. In 30m *turn left* at a four-way junction towards the **Tulse Hill Exit** from Brockwell Park and in 70m leave the park and cross **Tulse Hill** (road) at a set of lights to continue in the same direction through the red brick **Tulse Hill Estate**.
3. In 220m *turn left* a T-junction with **Leander Road**, gently uphill, and in 80m *turn right* along **Helix Road**. In 50m, where the road turns right, *turn left* up some steps 10m away into an estate of low rise houses and *turn right* along **Cherry Laurel Walk** between rows of houses (with a 'Footpath Only'-sign on the right).
4. In 60m *turn right* down between metal bike barriers and *turn left* past a metal car barrier to continue along **Beechdale Road**. In 60m *turn right* along **Fairmount Road** and curve left with the road.
5. In 300m, cross the A 23 **Brixton Hill** (road) at a set of lights and continue a little to the right along **Blenheim Gardens**. In 125m you pass a Royal Mail Delivery Centre on the right-hand side of the road and in 110m continue to the right of a metal car barrier.
6. In 30m *bear left* to enter **Windmill Gardens** through a double metal gate. **Brixton Windmill** is 50m away, and some info panels are mounted on a wall.

7. Return the way you came back to the Royal Mail Delivery Office and *turn left* immediately after it along **Halliwell Road**. In 90m *turn left* along **St. Saviour's Road** at a T-junction and in 100m *turn right* along **Lambert Road** at a T-junction.
8. In 200m *turn left* along **Brixton Hill** and in 30m at a four-way junction, *turn right* to cross it at a set of lights and immediately *turn left* to cross **Brixton Water Lane** to enter **Rush Common** and follow a tarmac path through it.
9. In 400m leave the common back onto the A road's pavement and *turn right* along it. You pass a **community orchard** on your right (on the site of a Cold War Nuclear Bunker) and in 50m cross **St. Matthew's Road** at a set of lights.
10. Continue to the left of the fenced church yard but in 50m *turn right* through a metal car wide gate and continue to the left of St. Matthew's. In 30m enter **St. Matthew's Church Gardens** through a gap in a metal fence (on the left across the road you have first Electric Brixton Concert Hall and then Lambeth Council Hall).
11. In 75m leave the gardens to the right of a monument and cross **Effra Road** (with the river running below it) and cross **Windrush Square** past Brixton Library to its far-left corner by the **Ritzy Cinema** (you have the Black Cultural Archives away on the right as well as a War Memorial for African and Caribbean Men and Women killed in WWI and WWII).
12. By the cinema cross **Coldharbour Lane** and continue along the right-hand pavement of the A23 Brixton Road.
13. In 100m either continue down the road for 40m to go straight to Brixton Underground station, or (recommended) ,*turn right* along the pedestrianised **Electric Avenue**.
14. You cross Electric Lane in 40m and curve left with Electric Avenue and in 80m cross Atlantic Road to go along **Pope's Road** under the first of two railway lines and in 75m reach **Brixton Station Road** at a T-junction.
15. You have the station entrance 20m away on your left and the entrance to **Pop Brixton** across the road, providing numerous interesting food and drink options over two floors.
16. For Brixton Underground station, *turn left* along Brixton Station Road and in 125m *turn left* along Brixton Road to in 100m reach the station.

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