

The Ingrebourne Valley (Hornchurch to Upminster)			The Ingrebourne Valley (Hornchurch to Rainham)		
1 <sup>st</sup> walk check	2 <sup>nd</sup> walk check	3 <sup>rd</sup> walk check	1 <sup>st</sup> walk check	2 <sup>nd</sup> walk check	3 <sup>rd</sup> walk check
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## The Ingrebourne Valley (Hornchurch to Upminster)

**Start:** Hornchurch Underground

**Finish:** Upminster Station (Underground, Overground, Mainline)

**Length:** 11.7 km/7.3 mi

**Ascent:** 90m

**Time:** 2 ½ hours

**Transport:** Hornchurch Underground Station is in Zone 6, on the District Line to Upminster. Journey time from Aldgate East is 36 minutes, from Victoria 53 minutes. You can shave off time by taking mainline trains from Fenchurch Street (or from Limehouse, West Ham or Barking) to Upminster and then travel back a couple of stops on the underground. Upminster Station is also in Zone 6 and served by the London, Tilbury and Southend Railway from Fenchurch Street (journey time 22 minutes, via Limehouse, West Ham and Barking), as well as the terminus of the District Line and of the Romford to Upminster Overground.

### Walk Notes:

The part of the Ingrebourne Valley walked through on this walk comprises a varied and unique mixture of interlinked and partly overlapping local green spaces - Ingrebourne Valley Greenway, Berwick Glades, Berwick Woods, Hornchurch Country Park, Ingrebourne Hill and the Sutton, Hacton and Gaynes Parkways. These include habitats ranging from river, open water, grassland, secondary and ancient woodland, marshland, fenland (with the largest continuous area of freshwater reed beds in Greater London), and – not to forget – some arable farmland.

Partly former airfield, ex-quarries, farmland or landfill site, it is now a continuous green space and contains – pound for pound – one of the best viewpoints of London's Skyline, from all of 11 metres above sea!

### Walk Options:

**Several shortcuts** are possible, as the southerly parts of the outbound and return routes are running close to each other, these are obvious on the route map.

**Bus Stops for services to District Line stations** are located close to the route after 8 km and 9.2 km.

**Follow the outbound route back to Hornchurch station** instead of going to Upminster: cut 1.8 km.

**An Extension through Berwick Woods** to the reed-fringed Berwick Pond adds 1.4 km.

**An Alternative Ending** at Rainham station links up with the start of SWC 172 - Rainham to Purfleet (via RSPB Rainham Marshes); Hornchurch to Rainham is a 7.2 km/4.5 mi walk.

## Refreshments (details last updated 21/08/22)

**Ingrebourne Valley Visitor Centre** Hornchurch Country Park, off Suttons Lane, *Hornchurch RM12 6DF* (01708 520 364, <http://www.essexwt.org.uk/reserves/ingrebourne>). Open every day 09.00-17.00 (-16.00 Nov-Jan). The visitor centre is located 3.9 km from the end of the walk.

**The Crumpled Horn** 33-37 Corbets Tey Road, *Upminster, Havering, London RM14 2AJ* (01708 226 698, <https://www.crumpledhornpub.co.uk/>). A Marston's pub. Open 11.00-23.00 every day. Food served.

**Osteria due Amici** 39 Corbets Tey Road, *Upminster, Havering, London RM14 2AJ* (01708 700 500, <https://www.odaessex.co.uk/>). Open all day every day, food served to 22.00 (-21.00 Sun).

**The Upminster TapRoom** 1b Sunnyside Gardens, *Upminster, Havering, London RM14 3DT* (07711 172 881). Open Tue-Sun. With a wide variety of ales, gins and whiskies, also selling Wine & Prosecco. No food.

**The Station Pantry** 61 Station Road, *Upminster, Havering, London RM14 2SU* (01708 608 812, <https://www.thestationpantry.co.uk/>). Open 09.00-16.00 Tue-Wed and Sun, and to 21.00 Thu-Sat.

**The Junction** 70 Station Road, *Upminster, Havering, London RM14 2TD* (01708 229 289, <https://www.greeneking-pubs.co.uk/pubs/essex/junction/>). A Greene King pub. Open 11.00-23.00 (-24.00 Fri-Sat). Food served to 21.00 every day.

## Refreshments in Rainham (details last updated 27/08/19)

**The Albion** Rainham Road, *Rainham, Essex RM13 8SS* (01708 552 445, <http://www.flaminggrillpubs.com/pub/albion-rainham/c3476/>). A Flaming Grill pub, tied to Greene King. Open at least 12.00-23.00 every day. Food served 12.00-22.00 Mon-Sat and 12.00-21.00 Sun.

**The New Angel Inn** 31 Broadway, *Rainham, Essex RM13 9YW* (01708 522 829). Open all day.

**The Phoenix Hotel & Public House** Broadway, *Rainham, Essex RM13 9YW* (01708 552 445, <http://www.the-phoenix-hotel.com/>). 5 hand pumps, and with a large garden at the back. Food served 12.00-14.30 Mon-Fri and 17.00-21.00 Mon-Thu.

## Notes

### Ingrebourne River/Ingrebourne Valley Local Nature Reserve

The River Ingrebourne / ˈɪŋɡəˌbɔːrən/ is a 43 km (27 mi) tributary of the River Thames. It rises near Brentwood, Essex, from where it flows in a southwesterly direction under the M25 and through the Borough of Havering roughly from north to south, joining the Thames at Rainham.

Ingrebourne Valley is a 146ha local nature reserve. It is owned and managed by Havering Council, and has a visitor centre managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust. Most of it is in Hornchurch Country Park west of the River Ingrebourne, but there are also areas north and south of the park which are part of the LNR.

### Berwick Glades/Berwick Woods

Berwick Glades, owned by the Forestry Commission, is 12ha of former farmland planted in 2003. To maintain the views across the Ingrebourne marshes towards Hornchurch and Elm Park large open glades with wildflower meadows have been left between the new planting, leading to the site name.

Berwick Woods are a 25 ha privately owned woodland (Tarmac Construction) open to the public. It is a restored sand and gravel quarry and was officially opened to the public in 1999.

### Hornchurch Country Park

Hornchurch Country Park (120ha) is located on the former site of Hornchurch Airfield. The RAF Hornchurch base was used during both World Wars and squadrons of Spitfires based here played an important role during the Battle of Britain. Various artefacts and relics of the site's RAF history are still visible including an aircraft dispersal bay, pillboxes, and Tett turrets. A designated Local Nature Reserve, the park is an integral part of the Ingrebourne Valley. Some southern parts of the park have been used as landfill. Almost all of it falls within the Ingrebourne Valley LNR, and the eastern edge is part of the Ingrebourne Marshes SSSI.

### Ingrebourne Hill

Ingrebourne Hill is a 44ha former sand and gravel quarry, which was filled with a range of materials, including bricks, concrete and metal before a land reclamation and restoration company purchased the site in conjunction with the Forestry Commission and transformed it into a country park.

### Ingrebourne Marshes

Ingrebourne Marshes are a 75ha Site of Special Scientific Interest, managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust. The site is the largest area of freshwater marsh in London with the largest freshwater reed bed in London. It has large areas of reed sweet-grass, common reed swamp, wet neutral grassland and tall fen, all with a wide variety of invertebrates and breeding birds. The Marshes run along both sides of the Ingrebourne River, and are almost all closed to the public, but part of it can be viewed from Hornchurch Country Park. A long narrow strip stretches east from the river, incorporating Berwick Pond. This is open to the public.

### Saint Laurence, Upminster

A Grade I listed building, it is the historic minster or church from which Upminster derives its name, meaning 'upper church', probably signifying 'church on higher ground'. The place-name is first attested as 'Upmynster' in 1062. The church is a good example of 13<sup>th</sup> century construction. The tower dates from this period and is rubble-walled, with buttresses at the foot, and a leaded and shingled spire, typical of Essex.

## WALK DIRECTIONS

Exit from **Hornchurch Station** up some stairs and through the station building and *turn right* along **Suttons Lane**. Cross over to the other side of Suttons Lane at a zebra crossing in 40m and in another 25m *turn left* along **Standen Avenue**. In 200m *turn right* along **Crystal Avenue** and follow this road for 380m and *turn left* with it (now called **Ascot Gardens**), gently descending into a valley. In a further 240m from the left turn join **Goodwood Avenue** at a junction and continue towards a grassy area and in 20m cross **Newmarket Way/Hurst Park Avenue** a little to the right and continue in the previous direction along a tarmac path through the grassy area. In 60m at a T-junction with another tarmac path *turn right* through a fence gap into the **Ingrebourne Valley Local Nature Reserve**, with **London LOOP**, **Havering Greenways** and **National Cycle Network 136** markers.

The chimneyed building away on the right is a power station within the grounds of a hospital and in 75m you have the **Ingrebourne River** close by to the left. In 250m by a wooden four-way signpost and a two-railed bridge over the river on the left, you **[!]** *turn left* across the bridge ('Footpath 215 to Hacton Lane'). [This flat area on the other side can be very muddy as you follow an obvious path toward a wooded rise.] In 120m you cross a couple of duckboards over water-filled channels and ascend through the wood on the other side along the obvious path and in 150m at the upper boundary pass a green metal post with a yellow marker and emerge into an arable field. *Turn right* (with the wood on your right) towards the near right field corner and in 50m follow the boundary round to the left. In 100m you *turn right* with a signpost through the boundary growth and across a plank bridge over a ditch and through a squeeze gate.

You continue in the same direction along a clear grassy path between large arable fields (200°). Half left there are some farm buildings ahead across the fields (**Rainham Lodge Farm** on the OS map), with **Littlebrook Power Station** (south of the Thames) to the left of it on a bearing of 170° and to the left of it the **QE2 Bridge** over the Thames (160°). Outer **South East London** lies ahead on the other side of the **Thames Valley** and you can spot some modest wooded ridges on the half right (the highest of which, on 245°, is **Shooter's Hill**). The **Ingrebourne Valley** is down on the right. You continue in the same direction for 750m, past quite a few marker posts and mostly with a hedge on your left, while crossing a farm track en route (when level with the farm on the left) and eventually head for a wooded area. **London's Skyline** is occasionally visible beyond the trees on the other side of the Ingrebourne Valley.

In the bottom left corner of the last field cross a two-railed wooden plank bridge across a stream and enter **Berwick Glades**, an **Open Access** area. You pass an info panel and in 10m *turn right* along a gravel path at a bend. Ignore all ways off the gravel path and follow it meandering through the lightly wooded area. In 650m leave the Berwick Glades through a gap in the boundary growth.

### At a T-junction with a gravel track you have a choice:

**For the Main Walk**, you *turn right* down the track towards the **Ingrebourne River** (300°) and pick up the directions four paragraphs below ('In 230m...').

**For an Extension through Berwick Woods to Berwick Pond** (add 1.4 km), you *turn left* up the gravel path. In 80m by a red steel marker post, you *fork up to the right* through some trees (signed 'Car Park'). In 140m, with the car park away on your left and at a path junction, you *turn right* along another gravel path (signed 'Berwick Pond, Abbey Wood'). In 150m you enter **Berwick Woods** on the path and in 220m by a red steel marker post and an open area to the left, you *turn left* with the path to the left of the open area (signed 'Berwick Pond').

In 40m you enter trees and follow a narrow path through them, with a lower lying area to the left signalling an ex-quarry site. In 100m the path curves to the right and in 30m you *turn right* at a red steel marker post (signed 'Berwick Wood, Abbey Wood'). You have the reed-lined **Berwick Pond** below on the left and fork left immediately along an indistinct path towards the pond. In 30m *turn right* along the pond and in 30m pass a bench and *turn left* at a T-junction with an earthen path. With the flooded marshland of **Abbey Wood** on your right, proceed for 50m to the pond outflow for the best views up this beautiful reed-fringed pond, then turn around and re-trace your steps along the pond, past the bench and continue in the same direction gently uphill through trees.

*Fork left* in 20m and in 30m emerge in an open grassy area, where you *bear right* along a clear path towards the far-right corner of the area (55°). In 180m you are back at the red steel marker post passed earlier to *turn left* into **Berwick Woods** along a narrow, mud-prone path (signed 'Hornchurch Country Park'). In 260m you emerge from the wood at a T-junction with a gravel path. This is the path you have been on 15 minutes ago, albeit 90m to the right. *Turn left* down the track towards the **Ingrebourne River**.

In 230m (150m if having walked the extension), you leave the wood behind and have some reed-filled ponds on either side and in another 150m cross the **Ingrebourne River** on a raised steel bridge to enter **Hornchurch Country Park**. In 60m walk through a gap to the left of a metal field gate and *turn left* at a T-junction with a tarmac track (signed 'Albys Farm & Lake ½ mile'). In 75m by a bench on the right at the top of a very minor rise, you have wide views over the area to the left across the flooded fen and marshland to Berwick Glades and Woods. In 35m a grassy path forks left towards a pillbox and in 30m you pass an interesting info panel on the left about the former **RAF Hornchurch** on this ground, including the **Tett Turrets** (machine gun emplacements), examples of which you pass in 90m on your left-hand side.

In another 150m there is another pillbox on your left and in 70m you ignore a signposted right turn. The tarmac path enters a wooded area to curve right then left, and after 200m from the signposted junction you pass a seemingly subsided pillbox on the right, in fact the largely underground **Battle HQ** (see the pole-top plaque for an illustration). *Turn left* with the path and continue to the left of **Albyn Lake**. At the end of the lake *bear right* briefly with the path and in 60m **[!]** *turn left* off the path through a gap to the right of a metal field gate into a large grassy field's corner and follow its left-hand boundary (215°). In 150m go through a gap in the opposite boundary growth into an adjacent field and continue in the same direction along its left-hand boundary. The boundary gradually bends to the right and you pass a pond or two (depending on recent rainfall, they may be dry) and after 150m in the field, just after passing the deeper of the two pools, you **[!]** leave the field by *turning left* through a hedge gap.

You cross a ditch and ascend a grassy slope with some bramble bushes to the right. This is **Ingrebourne Hill**. In 35m continue in the same direction (still upslope) up the middle of three paths (265°). In about 120m on the right-hand side, the tops of the **London Skyline** begin to appear and in 90m the terrain levels out. You continue in the same direction along the clear path towards a ziggurat-type structure of large stones. In 140m at a bend in a gravel path you reach the stone structure, a **rather brilliant viewpoint** from this corner of Ingrebourne Hill, with grand all-round views: ahead across Rainham and Dagenham to the Thames Valley and South East London beyond (the power station and chimney on 230° stands at Crossness south of the Thames), the most complete view of London High Rises to the right, the Dartford Crossing on the left and the wooded ridge of Thorndon Park near Brentwood in the back (40°).

**Here you have a choice:**

**For the Main Walk**, *turn right* from the previous direction (255°) along the gravel path and pick up the directions three paragraphs below (“In 50m cross...”).

**For the Rainham Ending**, you fork left (205°) along the gravel path and zigzag down the slope towards a lake. In 250m – after the last right turn – the path levels out and in 160m you *turn left* with the gravel path around the lake, ignoring a grassy path in the same direction. In 90m at a staggered four-way path junction, you continue in the same direction towards the audible main road 100m away. Leave the park through some bike barriers and *turn left* along the pavement of **Rainham Road** (the A 125). [On the right is a **bus stop for services to Rainham or Dagenham East** stations.] In 300m you pass **The Albion** pub on your left and in another 100m cross the busy **A 1306** at **Dovers Corner**, a large roundabout (use the pedestrian lights 70m to the left).

Continue in the same direction along **Bridge Road**. In 30m you cross the **Ingrebourne River** and in 140m cross **Viking Way** and continue in the same direction (now called Broadway). In 60m you pass the closed **Bell Inn**, and in another 20m **The New Angel Inn** on the right-hand side of the road. Pass a war memorial in 50m and then **St. Helen & St. Giles**, Rainham Parish Church. In 60m, by **Rainham Hall (NT)** on the left, cross the road and pass **The Phoenix** hotel and pub and in 50m continue along a tarmac path where the road bears left. You reach **Rainham station** in another 80m.

In 50m cross a marked **BMX track** and in 20m *turn right* with the path and descend from Ingrebourne Hill. In 190m you reach a T-junction with a wider gravel path and *turn right* along it. You’re back on the **LOOP** and the **NCN 136** and ignore all ways off for 570m. **In more detail:** In 210m you re-cross the BMX track. In 20m ignore a waymarked left forking bridle path. The path curves to the right a little and in 50m you see some buildings ahead (**Albyns Farm** on the OS map). The path dips down and in 100m you ignore a stile on the right, leading into one of the grassy fields walked along earlier (along the opposite side). In 150m you reach a three-way gravel path junction (the grassy bridle path joins from the left as well), where the main path turns left.

You **[!]** *turn right* with the NCN 136 and in 10m walk through a gap to the right of a metal field gate and *turn left* with the – now tarmac – path on the other side. In 140m you walk to the right of a metal field gate by a three-way wooden signpost and *turn right* at a T-junction with another tarmac path (‘Squadrons Approach 1 ¼ miles’). In 30m you pass the entrance gate to **Albyns Farm** and in 50m go through a gap to the left of a metal field gate and continue in the same direction along the tarmac path. **[!]** In 130m, just after an indistinct path has joined from the right through the trees out of the field, *turn left* across an earth bridge over a ditch in a hedge gap and in 20m *bear left* to continue to the left of **Albyns Pond**. In 140m at the end of the pond, *bear left* along into trees and in 15m continue in the same direction at a crosspaths.

In 100m emerge from the wood and *bear right a little* through a large meadow (one of the former airfield’s flight-ways), in 60m continuing along the left-hand edge of another wood. In 150m by some trim-trail stations, you join a tarmac path at a bend to continue in the same direction. In 30m you pass a two-way signpost on the left (signed ‘Squadrons Approach ¾ mile’) and continue in the same direction [notice the wooden post on the right: **a memorial for dogs** that used to be walked here]. In 330m by some low trim-trail stations you **[!]** *turn right* at a grassy crosspaths. In 60m cross a tarmac path and in 20m reach a scenic viewpoint by an info panel on the shores of a large reed-filled pond (part of **Ingrebourne Marshes SSSI**).

Turn around and go back to the tarmac path 20m away and *turn right* along it. In 120m the tarmac path walked along earlier joins from the left behind and in 230m you pass the **Ingrebourne Valley Visitor Centre**, a recommended early tea stop. In 50m you have a wooden gate on the right leading into a fenced area. This contains a corten steel

sculpture commemorating the airfields that used to be located where the **Hornchurch Country Park** is now (Royal Flying Corps, Sutton's Farm, RAF Hornchurch).

[**A continuation** along the tarmac path for 100m, **would get you** past an **ex-gun position** marked by a concrete ring in the grass to an interesting info panel at the site of a **former petrol bowser dispersal bay for aircraft** (now a car park), as well as some **air raid shelters** and then to Suttons Lane and a **bus stop for services to Hornchurch or Elm Park stations**. See the route map for details.]

*Fork right* with the fence on the right along a tarmac path, passing a playground and in 100m at a T-junction with another tarmac path, *turn right* along it with a LOOP marker post. In 100m by a bend of the Ingrebourne River, follow the path to the left. [This area is easily flooded, in which case: turn around and follow the alternative path as per the route map.] In 450m, at a signposted four-way junction of paths by a two-railed footbridge across the Ingrebourne, you continue in the same direction and re-trace the outbound route for a short while. In 360m walk through a fence gap and ignore a left turning path leading to a road (the outbound route from Hornchurch station) and *bear right* with the tarmac path, further up the Ingrebourne Valley. [Newmarket Way on the left is a **Hail & Ride road: passing buses will stop at any reasonable place** – and go to Hornchurch station.]

In 250m you pass a large building behind a metal bar fence on the left and in another 170m a grassy path on the right leads to an info panel on the Ingrebourne River 30m away in a double bend of the river. In 250m, just after a play area, *fork left* with the tarmac path to continue to the left of a car park and in 40m *turn right* to cross **Hacton Lane** at some pedestrian lights in 25m. You now follow the tarmac path to the right back to the river and continue upstream. In 200m *turn right* at a T-junction of tarmac paths and cross the river for a last time. *Turn left* on the other side of the bridge with the LOOP and the NCN 136, ignoring a continuation up towards some houses. In 200m **[!]** *turn left* across a side-stream at a three-way junction of tarmac paths with the LOOP, ignoring the continuation of the NCN 136 up into a housing estate. In 40m the path starts to rise and in 30m it levels out with a sports field on the right.

In 150m you descend past a LOOP marker post and in 25m *turn right* along a path to the right of a gravel car park. In 20m go past some metal barriers and continue along a tarmac drive past the entrance to **Hornchurch Stadium**, home to Hornchurch Football Club and Havering Athletic Club. You continue uphill, finally rising out of the **Ingrebourne Valley** and in 50m cross Bridge Avenue (the LOOP turns left along it) and continue up **Brookdale Avenue** (but continue ahead up Brookdale Close where the Avenue turns right). In 250m ignore a left turn (a cul-de-sac) and *turn right* with the road. In 30m *turn left* into **Upminster Park** along a tarmac path. Follow the path to the left and in 40m to the right and in 160m by some fenced tennis courts, *turn left* at a path T-junction. *Fork right* and then *turn right* around the tennis courts and in 120m reach **Corbets Tey Road** (the B1421) at a T-junction.

You have **The Crumpled Horn** pub opposite, and **Osteria Due Amici** to the right of it, as well as a **Prezzo** further to the right. *Turn left* along the road and in 70m pass the gate into the churchyard of **Saint Laurence, Upminster**, which is well worth a visit. Continue along the road and in 70m at the junction with **St. Mary's Lane** by a **Pizza Express** opposite, you *turn right* to cross the road. The highly recommended **Upminster TapRoom** is 150m to the right along St. Mary's Lane, but for **Upminster Station** *turn left* across the road and follow **Station Road** for another 300m.

En route you pass **several cafés, bistros and restaurants** and finally – **The Station Pantry** and **The Junction** pub.