

Stanmore		
1 st walk check	2 nd walk check	3 rd walk check
25 th July 2023		
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Stanmore Circular

Start & Finish: Stanmore Underground

Length: 8.7 km/5.4 mi

Ascent/Descent: 154m

Time: 2 ¼ hours

Transport: Stanmore station is the northern terminus of the Jubilee Line and in Travelcard Zone 5. The journey time from Baker Street is 28 minutes, but shorter if using the Metropolitan Line to Wembley Park.

Walk Notes:

This undulating route in a leafy part of North London almost completely eschews roads and housing to lead through three separate large Nature Reserves or Commons with a couple of smaller green areas in between, providing for a large variety in ecologies, including secondary and ancient woodlands, streams and ponds, coarse grassland, unimproved neutral grassland, acid grassland, heathland, scrubland, open glades and wetlands. Many areas are rich in wildflowers, butterflies and moths.

You rise up through the fine Modernist Warren Estate and through the wooded Stanmore Country Park to Wood Farm Local Nature Reserve with the London Viewpoint and its panoramic views across London from Alexandra Palace to Heathrow via The City, Wembley and Harrow and out to the North Downs. Descend through grassland and reascend through Cloisters Wood to reach the ridge of Stanmore Hill at Little Common. You pass Stanmore Common's Brewer's Ponds and in the decidedly wilder Common proper have a choice of routes through it. Lastly, the descent through Bentley Priory NR, location of RAF Fighter Command during WWII, enchants with quiet grasslands and varied woods, as well as more vistas to parts of London. Also passed are a large artificial pond with a very old oak tree and a private deer park (on a shortcut).

Walk Options:

Bus Line 142 travels along The Common (the A4140) and its Stanmore Priory Drive stop is passed 4.3 km into the walk. This connects to Stanmore and Edgware Tube Stations or to Watford Junction.

Extensions are described in Stanmore Country Park (add 350m), Stanmore Common (add 1.0 km) and in Bentley Priory NR (add 400m). The longest version of the route has 10.5 km.

Shortcuts are possible by cutting out the loop in Stanmore Common, by taking a direct route through Bentley Priory Park along the Deer Park rather than through the grasslands and woods and past the ponds on partly mud-prone paths (cut 820m), or by taking a clockwise route around the pond (cut 300m).

An Alternative Ending leads along the main road through Stanmore (the A410), past more tea options.

Bus Lines travelling along the A410 through Stanmore to the Station cut up to 1.1 km on this option.

Refreshments

Main Walk: [Bistro 101](#) and [Everest Abercorn](#) and [Agra](#) Indian Restaurants.

Town Option: [Spice Rack Lounge](#); [Costa Coffee](#); [The Oak Caffe](#) (to 16.00 daily); [Sahara Lounge](#); [Barracuda](#) restaurant; [Caffé Nero](#) (to 17.30 daily); [Pizza Express](#); [Cartons of Stanmore](#) boulangerie.

There are no pubs in Stanmore.

Notes

Stanmore and Stanmore Station

Stanmore is most likely named after a couple of stony ponds or "Stane Meres". The likely candidates – now referred to as Spring Ponds – are passed on the route at the highest point of the walk. The ancient Brittonic grassy trackway from Dover to Wroxeter (and on to the land of the Picts), paved by the Romans and named Watling Street by The Saxons, runs east of Stanmore along what is now the boundary to Edgware.

Stanmore Station was opened in December 1932 by the Metropolitan Railway (now the Metropolitan Line). The station building and others on the branch were designed in the suburban style used on the company's other post-WWI stations such as those on the Watford branch. The branch line and station presented competition for the London, Midland and Scottish Railway's train service from Stanmore Village Station approximately 1 km away. The LMS trains connected to the West Coast Mainline at Harrow & Wealdstone (then 'Harrow'), for London-bound services. This branch line ceased operations in 1952.

The Stanmore to Baker Street Metropolitan Line suffered from severe congestion on the Finchley Road to Baker Street section, so that in the late 1930s new tunnels and stations were built and the new line was run as a branch of the Bakerloo Line. In the 1970s, similar congestion problems for the Bakerloo line caused by two branches converging at Baker Street led to the creation of the Jubilee line, initially by connecting the Stanmore branch to new tunnels bored between Baker Street and Charing Cross via Green Park, later still extended from Green Park via Waterloo, the Southbank and the Docklands to Stratford.

Stanmore Country Park and Wood Farm

In 1813, Sir Robert Smirke purchased Warren House (now Springbok House) and the surrounding estate. In 1922, this was acquired by Sir John Fitzgerald, who introduced Kerry Black cows from County Kerry, his native lands. He sold off some of the land near Stanmore Station to be developed into the Warren House Estate, built in Modernist design, while naming the roads there after places in Kerry. In 1940, Fitzgerald sold the rest of the land to Middlesex County Council as Green Belt Land, the future Stanmore Country Park. The underlying soil consists mostly of London Clay in the lower parts, so several paths are mud-prone there, but of Claygate Beds and Stanmore Gravel Beds in other parts. This means that very different ecologies can be seen, i.e.: open grassland (some of which acid grassland), streams and ponds, young secondary woodland but also a fragment of ancient, i.e.: bluebell wood and some ancient oaks (remnants of former field boundary hedges). The park is rich in butterflies and moths.

Wood Farm lies north of Stanmore CP and is continuous with it. It was a working farm until around the end of the 20th century and was only opened to the public in 2015. The farm buildings have disappeared bar the Old Dairy which now serves as a visitor centre. Notable is the London Viewpoint with some panoramic views and a toposcope: on a clear day you can see from Alexandra Palace in the east to Heathrow in the southwest, and over Central London to the North Downs around Box Hill 44 kilometres away.

Stanmore Common

The 49 hectare-sized Stanmore Common is an open space in Harrow with a great sense of wildness, made accessible through a network of winding paths. The subsoil ranges from London Clay in the lowest sections through Claygate Beds to the quickly draining Stanmore Gravels. It contains good examples of acid grassland and heath, mature woodland and wetlands. Some of the paths can be muddy.

The first recorded mention of Stanmore Common dates back to AD793, when land in the area was granted to St Alban's Abbey by the King of Mercia. The abbey held onto the land until the Norman Conquest when it was seized by the Crown Estate. Before the Enclosure Act, Stanmore Common was largely heathland, which was used by people for collecting fuel and rough pasture. The area had poor soil, which made it unsuitable for agricultural improvement, and so it remained largely untouched. As livestock numbers dwindled in the early 20th century, the heathland began to convert to secondary woodland. It is maintained by volunteers. The Common contains a Bronze Age tumulus and a Pillow Mound (a medieval rabbit warren).

Bentley Priory House, Park and Nature Reserve

Bentley Priory was an Augustinian priory of Canons in the Middle Ages, but it ceased to exist before the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 1530s. In 1775 Sir John Soane designed a new house which stood north of the original priory, called Bentley Priory House.

The name Bentley is derived from the Anglo-Saxon 'leah' for clearing, combined with 'Beonet', a place covered in coarse grass. This remains a feature of much of the site today, and includes traditional grassland which has never been treated with fertilisers, and hence is rich in wild flowers.

Bentley Priory has a number of woods, including Heriot's Wood. Its dominant tree is hornbeam, and there are wild service trees as well, both species characteristic of ancient woodlands. It probably dates back to the end of the last Ice Age 11,500 years ago. The Stanburn (further downstream called Edgware Brook), a tributary of the Silk Stream and thence the Brent, was dammed to form Summerhouse Lake.

The grounds and house were separated when the house became RAF Bentley Priory, the headquarters of Fighter Command during WWII. They are now maintained as the 66 hectares Bentley Priory Nature Reserve, a SSSI and Local Nature Reserve. It contains an unusual combination of habitats for Greater London, namely ancient woodland, unimproved neutral grassland, scrub, wetland and streams (plus a private deer park: the deer were originally introduced in the 18th century).

WALK DIRECTIONS

Leave **Stanmore Station** up some steps from the platforms to street level and use a pedestrian crossing to cross an approach road with a bus stop away to the left. Cross **London Road** (the A410) at a set of lights a little to the left and *turn right* on the far side to in 10m *turn left* along a paved path through a hedge gap and a grassy area. In 30m continue in the same direction uphill along **Kerry Avenue** either side of a planted middle strip through the **Modernist Warren Estate**. In 100m cross Valencia Road/ Glanleam Road and continue in the same direction up **Kerry Avenue North**. In 110m go through a wooden kissing gate to the left of a wooden field gate into **Stanmore Country Park**. There is a map showing a Nature Trail (with an Eastern and a Northern Loop). In 10m pass a sign detailing the history of the park. In another 10m you reach a marker post, by a wooden kissing gate on the right, to the left of a wooden field gate.

Here you have a choice:

For a Short Extension Loop through some grassland meadows, *turn right* through the gate and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Country Park Extension**.

For the Main Route, continue in the same direction and in 10m you pass **Marker Post 24** of the Eastern Loop, with a **London LOOP Link Path** marker, by an electricity substation on the left. The Main Walk route will return along the path from the left. Continue uphill along the **line of an ancient trackway** from Stanmore to Bushey and in 30m ignore another wooden kissing gate on the right. In 70m enter an open glade and in 15m pass **Marker Post 17** of the Eastern Loop on the left. In 20m pass another marker post and cross a path. The Extension has joined from the right.

*) In 20m enter an area of brambles and then a wooded area. In 100m cross a path and leave the trees behind to follow a clear path further uphill through brambles then scrub grassland. You have left the Country Park and entered **Wood Farm**. In 40m the path levels out at a T-junction by a bench on the right and a **Wood Farm Loop marker post** opposite ('Wood Lane, Car Park & Old Dairy' to the left, 'London Viewpoint' to the right). *Turn right* through tussocky grassland and in 100m *curve to the left* with the path, with parts of a new housing estate visible ahead. In 50m a path joins from the right behind and in 150m a broad grassy path joins from the left behind by a marker post and you continue in the same direction through more tussocky grassland towards the **London Viewpoint** another 150m away. This is located in a circular gravel area, with a bin and some benches and **at 140m above sea level**.

Weather permitting, you enjoy views **from Alexandra Palace** on the far left, via Hampstead Heath with the higher of the Canary Wharf and City of London towers poking up behind it, Shard, BT Tower, London Eye, Nine Elms, Wembley, Harrow-on-the-Hill **to Heathrow Airport**, with the **Great North Wood** (i.e.: the Crystal Palace and Selhurst transmission masts) and the **North Downs** looming in the distance across the view. Ignore a broad gravel path as well as a right bearing grass path and **[!] turn left** (190°) from the previous gravel direction along a broad grass path, marked for 'Stanmore Country Park & Station' – very gently downhill, with Harrow-on-the-Hill now dead ahead. In 70m ignore a path on the right and in 80m – at a staggered four-way path junction – *turn left* for 20m to a bench then *turn right* steeply downhill with another marker post through scrub grassland with some low trees and brambles.

Cloisters Wood is visible below in the valley bottom, walked through soon enough. Ignore any paths off and in 200m at the bottom of the drop at a T-junction by a **Wood Farm Loop marker post** ahead (can be overgrown), you *turn right* to in 10m go down some steps to a crossing of the **Cloisters Brook** on a wooden plank bridge and **re-enter Stanmore Country Park**. You ascend through Cloisters Wood and in 15m pass

Marker Post 11 of the Northern Loop on the left and a Nature Trail signpost visible 25m away to the left. The large oak tree in that direction is at least 200 years old and a remnant of a former field boundary hedge. In 120m the gradient eases by **Marker Post 10** of the Northern Loop. This area features a high number of birch trees, especially along the right-hand side. They started growing here after 1968 when a linear clearing was created for laying a gas pipeline, which created the right environment for birches.

In 60m you *turn left* along a narrow path by a Nature Trail signpost pointing backwards (notice the gas pipeline marker away on the right). In 50m pass another signpost (bluebells in season on the right) and in 15m pass **Marker Post 9** of the Northern Loop. In a subsequent clearing by a bench on the right and a **London LOOP Link Path** and Nature Trail three-way signpost 20m away to the left (broken and on the ground at time of writing), you continue in the same direction and in 25m *turn right* into trees along an earthen path towards a gate visible ahead. In 90m go through a wooden kissing gate to the right of a wooden field gate **onto Dennis Lane** and cross the road and *turn right* uphill along a pavement. In 300m you reach a three-way road junction with a triangular green in the middle. *Bear left* along the pavement of the left-hand arm of Dennis Lane to in 25m reach **Wood Lane**, with the **Lower Spring Pond** across the road.

Here you have a choice of two routes around the pond, both giving views of one remarkable building each:

Either *turn right* to cross over to the green and continue along its pavement and in 20m cross the right-hand arm of Dennis Lane and continue along the right-hand pavement of **Wood Lane**. In 50m ignore a footpath signpost on the left just before **Upper Spring Pond** on the left (also referred to as **Caesar's Pond** on account of either a battle nearby between Romans and the Catuvellauni tribe or of Roman troops having camped here as later on there was a 'Mansio' called Sullioniacis by Watling Street just to the east). Curve to the right with the road and in 60m, by **Springbok House** on the right (a Grade II-listed early 19th century Neo-Jacobean country house with Dutch gables), *turn left* across the road towards the fields of **Harrow RFC** and *turn left* again back on yourself on the far side of the road. In 10m continue along a gravel footpath, in another 10m passing a London LOOP signpost. In 25m you have the pond on your left and in 80m *fork right*, away from the pond with a LOOP marker on a fence post. In 30m another gravel path joins from the left behind and you *bear right* into a grassy area.

Or *turn left* along **Wood Lane** and in 60m notice the 19th century cast iron **Victorian Water Pump** at the edge of the pond. In 20m, as the road curves to the left, there is a public footpath signpost ('PF 14 to Little Common') on the right. The route will continue that way, but for a part-view of the **magnificent Grade II*-listed Stanmore Hall**, built as a gothic castle, continue for another 80m to its entrance gate on the left (or cross the road and go up a grassy area for different views). There is a **Harrow Heritage Trust** brown plaque giving a very short summary of its illustrious history. *Turn right* along the footpath past a bench, in 20m continuing between garden fence and pond (a heron can often be seen in the pond). In 40m pass a **London LOOP** marker post with a Bentley Priory Circular Walk marker and in 40m a couple of gravel paths join from the right and you continue ahead.

Both routes: In 20m *turn right* with a LOOP marker post on the left (with a Bentley Priory Circular Walk marker) along the right-hand side of the grassy area with some houses away on the left. This is **Little Common**. In 80m go up a bank with a marker post and a LOOP signpost and in 15m *turn left* between trees along some rugby pitches. In 90m *turn right* with a marker post, away from the houses on the left and in 15m you pass a marker post and in 20m reach a pond at a T-junction of paths. You have entered **Stanmore Common**. *Turn right* along one of the **Brewer's Ponds**, created in the late 19th century as a reservoir to serve **Clutterbuck's Brewery**, located nearby.

In 40m *turn left* with a marker post, again with the rugby pitches on the right, now at a higher level. The path follows the bank of the pond to the left then right and in 160m you *turn left* with another marker post at a corner of the rugby pitch to continue between the two Brewer's Ponds. In 30m continue in the same direction with a marker post away from the ponds into a wood, ignoring a left turn, now in **Access Land**. In 70m you pass the car park of **Stanmore Cricket Club** (home club of England Cricketers Angus Fraser and Mark Ramprakash) and in 20m cross **Warren Lane** to a marker post and into a wood. The path curves to the left in 40m and curves further around to the left to in 60m cross a tarmac track. In another 60m *turn left* at a T-junction to the **Stanmore Common Car Park** 50m away. There are info panels for the Bentley Priory Circular Walk and for Stanmore Common Local Nature Reserve and – a little further along by a bench – its Nature Trail with waymarked red, blue and orange routes.

At the bench and furthest info panel you have three choices:

For the Short Option, pick up the directions below at the double asterisk **).

For the Medium and Long Length Options, including either a short or a long loop through the mildly undulating and varied common, *turn right* from the previous direction along a clear forest path past **Marker Post 1** (blue and red) and in 20m you pass the first of several picnic benches and in 20m from the furthest bench you pass **Marker Post 2** (blue) away on the left and continue gently downhill. A stream develops away on the right and in 90m you reach **Marker Post 7** (orange) on the left by a plank bridge on the right. Here the Medium and Long Length Options split.

For the Medium Length Option, *fork left* with the streambed and in 50m cross another stream on a plank bridge by the confluence of two small streams. In 30m *bear right* with the path and in 15m *turn left* at a T-junction. In 30m the path bears left and in 40m it bears further left. In 75m you reach a T-junction by **Marker Post 6** (blue). *Turn left* uphill and in 50m by **Marker Post 5** (blue) *fork left*. In 15m pass **Marker post 4** (blue) on the right and in 60m you pass a moated mound, the 'Fox Earth', variously described as one of the rabbit warrens prevalent here, or as a pre-historic **tumulus**, 15m before **Marker Post 3** (blue). In 50m cross an often dry streamlet and in 70m cross a deep moss-lined stream on a plank bridge. In 80m you reach **Marker Post 2** (blue) and *turn right* back to the Car Park 60m away and pick up the directions below at the double asterisk **).

For the Long Length Option, *turn right* across the plank bridge and in 30m pass a marker post and *bear left* with the path. In 30m pass **Marker Post 6** (orange) on the right and in 60m enter **Hollybrook Rise**, a clearing with low and high vegetation and some bracken. You go over a brow and in 50m pass **Marker Post 5** (orange) and re-enter trees. In 40m ignore a wooden field gate on the right (a horse ride runs beyond it around the Common) and *bear left* with the path, In 120m go over a railed boardwalk across the **Pynding Mersc, a wetland delta** created by the dam carrying the horse ride on the right. In 60m pass **Marker Post 3** (orange) and in 15m ignore a left turning path and enter a large clearing, the **New Heath**. In 25m pass a bench on the left and continue uphill. In 60m *turn left* with the path by **Marker Post 2** (orange) at the top of the rise. In 35m pass a marker post and in 110m, just before **Marker Post 1** (orange), ignore a path from the left. In 80m you re-enter trees and in 10m pass **Marker Post 10** (red) and in 20m *bear left* with a marker post (ignore a faint path ahead).

In 100m pass **Marker Post 9** (red) and in 60m **Marker Post 8** (red). *Curve to the left* around a fallen tree to **Marker Post 7** (red) 20m away. Cross the northern arm of **Tykes Water** and *turn right* with the path. In 50m *turn left downhill* with the path by **Marker Post 6** (red) and in 20m, at **Marker Post 5**, where a path joins from ahead, you *turn right* towards a plank bridge 20m away. Ascend gently and in 40m pass

Marker Post 4 (red). In 40m cross another streamlet on a railed bridge and *bear left* with the path. In 70m cross another streamlet on a plank bridge and in 40m cross another streamlet. Road noise is now audible from the right from the **A4140**. In 110m you pass **Marker Post 3** (red) where a path joins from the left. In 50m cross a boardwalk across an often muddy area and in 90m cross the **Holly Brook** over a railed bridge, just before **Marker Post 2** (red) on the left. You ascend steeply and in 100m reach **Marker Post 1** (red and blue) back by the Car Park.

******) From the bench and the info panels, go through the car park and leave it in its left-hand corner **to Warren Lane** 60m away and *turn right* along its pavement. In 30m continue along the earth and grass verge. In 40m you reach **The Common** (the A4140) with the **Stanmore Priory Drive bus stops for Line 142** on either side along the A road. Cross the road a little to the right and continue along **Priory Drive** with a **Bentley Priory Open Space** signpost and LOOP and Public Footpath signs on a lamppost through a wooden gate to the right of a wooden car gate. In 130m *turn right* at a T-junction and in 75m *turn left*, in 10m walking through a wooden kissing gate to the right of a wooden field gate by a 'Public Footpath to Common Road, Bentley Way, Old Lodge Way' signpost.

You continue along a gravel path between garden fences and in 70m there is some higher grassy ground to the right; this is part of the grounds of **Bentley Priory House**. In 160m go through a metal kissing gate to the left of a wooden field gate (the **Priory Drive Gate**) into **Bentley Priory Nature Reserve**. Continue in the previous direction along a tarmac path. In 50m you come to a three-way junction by a couple of three-way signposts, where the LOOP turns right along the Weald Way (signed 'Old Redding'). There are maps and info panels, including an overview of a waymarked **Nature Trail**.

Here you have a choice:

For a Shortcut, continue in the same direction gently downhill ('Stanmore Church' and 'Stanmore') and pick up the directions below under **Priory Park Shortcut**.

For the Main Walk and the Priory Park Extension, *turn right* with the LOOP, initially along tarmac then concrete, with **Furze Heath** on the left and the fenced Priory House grounds on the right. In 80m, by **Marker Post 9** on the right and a bench away to the right, you have **fine views from the bench** to the area around Box Hill, the Mole Gap and Leith Hill in the distance (185°, foliage permitting).

Here you have a choice:

For an Extension, continue along the concrete path and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Priory Park Extension**.

For the Main Walk, *turn left* across the grass. This is the northerly end of a long grassy ride of acid grassland (**The Greensward**) that runs almost through to the southerly end of the reserve (humps in the grass are raised nests of the yellow meadow ant). You pass a stand of gorse on the right and in 40m from the left *turn veer right* with the grassy corridor. The grassy stretch narrows between trees for about 60m before widening again and in another 65m widening further. The ground is less acidic now and different wildflowers will grow here in season than further up. In 50m you pass some clear humps in the grass that are raised nests of the yellow meadow ant.

In another 20m by a marker post and a bench away to the right, **[!]** *turn right* (245°) towards a pine grove 60m away (planted in the 1860s). [From the bench you get **fine views** along the continuation of The Greensward **to Wembley Stadium**.] Just inside the wood you pass **Marker Post 12** and continue in the same direction. In 40m

continue in a straight line along a narrow path, where a wider path veers to the left. In another 35m go through a squeeze stile in a fence and *bear right* down to a broad path along the (artificial) **Summerhouse Lake**. **Marker Post 13** is away to the left. *Turn right* along the path (a left turn would be an easy-to-follow **Shortcut** though to the pond outflow). In 100m pass a marker post and in 35m pass an elaborate brickwork construction in a tributary stream on the right; this is a **silt trap**.

Turn left with the path at the top end of the lake, soon passing **Marker Post 14**. On the left you can see a marshy area at the top of the lake, while passing a second **silt trap** in a stream. In 25m *bear left* along a path coming in from the right. In 15m ignore the left turn advised by **Marker Post 15** and in 25m *turn left* for 25m to a marker post on a slight mound. There is another mound on the left with **Marker Post 16** on it. These mounds are all that remains of **two ice houses** serving Priory House. This area is a carpet of bluebells in season. Return to the main path and *turn left* along it towards a wooden field gate 30m away and go through a squeeze gate to its right. In 60m pass **Marker Post 17**. The Extension joins from the right out of **Spring Meadow**.

***) There is a tiny overgrown island on the left. This is called Scott Island, in honour of **Sir Walter Scott**. A small gazebo or summerhouse stood on the island in the 19th century, and in the summer of 1807, he wrote the epic poem Marmion there. In 25m go through a wooden kissing gate to the right of a wooden field gate. On the left you have **Marker Post 18**, and on the right the formerly pollarded and now fenced **Master Oak** with its 9 metre-girth and an info panel. At least 500 years old, but possibly much older, it is considered the oldest tree in Middlesex (as it was). From this point, *bear left* and follow the path to the right of a low brick wall, the beginning of some **flood defence** dam. In 50m pass a marker post and in another 30m you reach the lake's dam, sluice gate and overspill channel by **Marker Post 19** on the right. *Bear right* away from the pond and go through a metal kissing gate to the left of a metal field gate and *turn left* along a car wide track (**Priory Farm Track**).

In 65m go through a metal kissing gate to the left of a metal field gate and – where the car wide track bears right into **Mase Field** – you continue in the same direction into **Stanburn Wood** (full of wood anemones and lesser celandines in season), immediately passing **Marker Post 20**. In 50m pass a marker post on the left and in 70m one on the right. *Bear left* in a small clearing and in 25m by a small stream (the outflow of the pond: the **Stanburn**) by **Marker Post 21** *bear right* through a (very tight) squeeze stile and in 20m *bear left* with a marker post, in 25m pass **Marker Post 22** on the left (easy-to-miss). This is where a side stream joins the Stanburn from the left; this stream drains the area near the Deer Park and is crossed on the Shortcut.

[!] In 10m *turn left* **across the Stanburn**, up a bumpy bank (the remains of a dam dating from the 18th century) and *turn right* by **Marker Post 23**, now to the left of the Stanburn. There is a fine view from this ex-dam down the stream with mostly young hornbeam to the left of it. Continue a little to the left of the stream and in 30m pass a marker post and in another 20m *turn right* through another tight squeeze stile in the fence (there is a stile a little further on). In 30m ignore a left turn by a marker post to a gated railed boardwalk and in 50m by a footbridge across the burn out of the Park, *turn left* away from the stream and in 40m go through a wooden kissing gate into **Old Lodge Meadow** and follow a clear straight path across it.

In 60m you are level with **Marker Post 24** away to the right in the grass and in 90m reach a footpath marker post with a Bentley Priory Circular Walk marker, where a tarmac path crosses. Away to the right at the bottom of the meadow is the **Boot Pond** (so called because of its shape). The Shortcut joins along it from the left.

Here you have a choice:

- For the **quiet finish** through residential streets and the Country Park, continue in the same direction across the grass and pick up the directions below at the quadruple asterisk ****).
- For the **main road finish** through the centre of Stanmore, *turn right* along the tarmac path across the grass and pick up the directions below at the quintuple asterisk *****).

****) Humps in the grass on this stretch are more raised nests of the yellow meadow ant. In 150m you **leave Bentley Priory Park** through a wooden kissing gate and continue along a concrete path between garden fences and in 40m continue in the same direction along **Embry Way**. Ignore all ways off as you ascend gently and in 180m ignore **Winscombe Way** to the right. In 70m continue in the same direction along a tarmac path to the right of some high fences around **St. John's Primary School** with a Public Footpath signpost (PF No. 9 to Green Lane'). In 60m continue along a broad drive between houses and in another 50m cross **Green Lane** to continue along a signposted tarmac footpath to the left of some houses ('...to Stanmore Hill'). In 50m you reach **Stanmore Hill** (road) by a corner shop up to the left and *turn right* downhill along it. In 20m you pass **Bistro 101** on the right and in 30m a **bus stop for services to Bushey and Watmore Junction**, with the **Everest Abercorn Bar & Restaurant** on the left-hand side, in 50m followed by the **bus stop for services to Stanmore**.

In 60m cross over to the left at a median. In 30m ignore a signposted public footpath to the left, just before **Hewett Close**. In another 180m, by **Agra** restaurant on the right, *turn left* into **Stanmore Recreation Ground** (should the gate be locked, go back up the road to the signed footpath 180m back and follow the route shown on the route map). Follow any route through the recreation ground to a car park in its far-left corner and go through it to in 270m reach **Dennis Lane** at a T-junction. *Turn right* along the road. In 50m *turn left* with a **Stanmore Country Park** sign along an unnamed private road and in 60m enter the park through a wooden gate to the right of a metal car barrier. In 20m by the by now familiar map, you follow a path to the left into a grassy clearing (**6 Acre Field**) and in 30m ignore a left fork (**Marker Post 2** of the Eastern Loop stands a little away to the left). Head towards a picnic bench some 60m away.

[!] In 15m *fork right* along a clear path, ignoring the continuation towards the bench. In 50m by **Marker Post 27** on the Eastern Loop (can be overgrown) continue along a narrow path through some dense growth. In 50m you emerge in a mature wood and *bear right* through it (30°), gently uphill (ignore a left fork). In 110m the path levels out and you *curve to the right* around a depression on the right (the remains of **Blue Pond**, a reservoir built in 1720 for supply of the Canons Estate of the First Duke of Chandos), in 20m passing **Marker Post 26** on the Eastern Loop. In 60m pass a Nature Trail signpost (backwards) and *turn right* at a T-junction of paths, in 15m passing **Marker Post 25** on the Eastern Loop. The area here is ancient woodland and full of bluebells in season. In 50m at a T-junction, you are back at **Marker Post 24** on the Eastern Loop by an electricity substation. The walk started by going up the hill to the left. *Turn right* downhill and in 30m leave the Country Park through a wooden kissing gate to the right of a wooden field gate, and follow the road downhill to **Stanmore Station**.

*****) In 150m you **leave Bentley Priory Park** through a metal gate to the left of a metal field gate and continue along the pavement of **Old Lodge Way**. In 300m you meet **Uxbridge Road** (the A410) at a T-junction by **The Old Lodge** on the left. *Turn left* along the left-hand pavement. In 75m you pass a **bus stop for services to Stanmore Station** and in 80m you can see the old gate posts of **Stanmore House** on the far side and in another 20m a fine timber-framed cottage. Immediately after that a metal gate gives access to the churchyard of the **St. John the Evangelist, Great Stanmore** churches, old and new. First up is the Grade II* listed highly picturesque

ruin of St. John the Evangelist, **The Old Brick Church of Stanmore**, an example of Caroline classicism and the final **resting place of a former prime minister**, George Hamilton Gordon, the 4th Earl of Aberdeen. To its left is the successor (Gothic Revival) **St. John's Church**. Rejoin the road pavement through the lychgate.

The road bears to the left and (still on the far side) in 100m from the lychgate you pass the well-worth-a-peek **Bernays Gardens** (closes early evening), the former site of the **Old Manor House**. In 90m on the left you pass the **Spice Rack Lounge** and in 60m a **Costa Coffee** branch and the **Oak Caffe**, both on the right. In 50m cross **Stanmore Hill** (road), with **Sahara Lounge** and **Barracuda** restaurant up on the left either side of the road. The road is now called **The Broadway** and bears to the right then curves to the left. In 60m you pass the **Ernest Bernays Memorial Institute** on the right (now the Village Parish Hall; actress Charlotte Rampling started her career here) and in 60m **Cartons Boulangerie** on the left and a **Caffé Nero** on the right, with a **Pizza Express** 30m further along that side. In 80m cross **Dennis Lane**/Marsh Lane and continue along **London Road**, uphill for 200m, then flat for another 180m to **Stanmore Station**.

Country Park Extension

Bear left in a grassy area to skirt a stand of trees on its left-hand side (i.e.: ignore a right bearing path). In 30m *curve to the right* with the path and ignore a left fork gently uphill. You are in **40 Acre Field**, a large grassland with some dotted tree growth and in 50m follow a narrower grassy stretch between trees, by a **Nature Trail** signpost (backwards) on the left. In 25m the trees discontinue on the right and you ignore a right forking path. There are some housetops visible ahead (in **Edgware**) as well as a wooded ridge beyond. In 20m *turn left* with the path along the growth on the left, passing **Marker Post 23** on the Eastern Loop on the left (can be overgrown). You aim for a signpost visible ahead 80m away, walking to the right of a stand of trees and some bramble bushes, ignoring a left fork to a marker post and wooden gate.

By the Nature Trail signpost at a path T-junction, you have a low-level version of the views enjoyed a little later from the London Viewpoint: from Wembley Park via Central London to Hampstead Heath, with some of the City of London scrapers poking out above and beyond the Heath. *Turn hard left* from the previous direction along a grassy path and in 40m enter trees. In 30m by **Marker Post 20** of the Eastern Loop, you *turn right* through a wooden kissing gate 10m away. Ascend through a wood along a wide grassy path and in 60m pass **Marker Post 19** of the Eastern Loop. In 35m at a path junction by a marker post in a large meadow (**John Hall's Field**) and with a bench some 40m ahead, you *turn left*. In 35m pass **Marker Post 18** of the Eastern Loop and in 50m reach a path crossing by a marker post, with **Marker Post 17** of the Eastern Loop 20m away to the left. *Turn right* along the **line of an ancient trackway** from Stanmore to Bushey and pick up the directions above at the asterisk *).

Priory Park Shortcut

You continue along the **Deer Path** through some semi-open grassland (along the line of the original driveway to the house). In 50m pass **Marker Post 8** on the right (by an overgrown ruined building to the right; this was built just before WWII to house a **telephone exchange for the RAF Command Centre** at Priory Park) and in 60m you have the (private) **Heriot's Deer Park** on the left behind a high fence (with about 20 fallow deer). In 100m pass **Marker Post 7** on the left and in 250m pass the far corner of the fenced deer park by **Marker Post 6**. In 20m go through a metal kissing gate to

the left of a wooden field gate and in 60m pass **Marker Post 5**. [There is a second same marker post 5m to the right; this demarcates the **Parish Boundary** between Great Stanmore and Harrow Weald.] In 50m ignore a gravel-and-earth path on the right to a wooden kissing gate into grassland and in 50m pass **Marker Post 4**.

There is a stream on the left below and in 15m you cross it on the path. You ascend out of **The Dell** and in 40m pass **Marker Post 3** where a path joins from the right (there is a wild service tree on the right, with a V-shaped double trunk, an indicator of ancient woodland) and in 50m pass **Marker Post 2** where another path joins from the right (hornbeams dominate the wood here, another indicator of ancient woodland). [A **raised causeway**, like a miniature railway embankment, joins from the right behind; this was created for one of the Priory Park owners, so that they could ride around the park without going through any mud.] In 50m go through a wooden kissing gate to the right of a wooden field gate and in 55m the trees largely discontinue by **Marker Post 1** on the left. In 30m you reach a footpath marker post with a Bentley Priory Circular Walk marker, where a clear path across the large **Old Lodge Meadow** crosses the tarmac path. The Main Walk route crosses from the right.

Here you have a choice:

- For the **quiet finish** through residential streets and the Country Park, *turn left* across the grass and pick up the directions above in the main text at the quadruple asterisk ****).
- For the **main road finish** through the centre of Stanmore, continue in the same direction along the tarmac path across the grass and pick up the directions above in the main text at the quintuple asterisk *****).

Priory Park Extension

You follow the concrete **Weald Path** for 140m, going through a wooden gate en route, and in a clearing in a slight dip, *bear right* with the path and ascend back out of the dip to continue between trees. In another 130m go through a wooden kissing gate into **Spring Meadow**, an open grassy area and a Bird Protection Zone, with some striking views on the left across London. **Bentley Priory House** is protected by fences on the right but hard to get a glimpse of for all the trees and bushes. You gently ascend to the highest point of this route option by some ponds on the left and some benches as well as a WWII gun emplacement (aka a pillbox) to the right of the path. The views are the finest from those benches. Continue in the previous direction along the concrete path. In about 100m, 30m before a wooden kissing gate at the exit out of the park, [!] *turn left* along a clear path downhill through a grassy strip.

In 180m you walk between some trees and in 80m the path *bears right* more steeply downhill. In 90m go through a dip at the bottom of the drop, with an often dry channel, where another path joins from the left behind. You reascend through a grassy area and in 15m a clear path turns left towards a wood 50m away. This is an **early option to rejoin the Main Route**, which it meets in another 40m near the top of Summerhouse Lake by **Marker Post 15**. But continue ahead through the grass and at a fork, take the left path (which is a little wider) and in 50m enter trees. [!] From here you have partial **views back to Bentley Priory House**, namely the Italianate tower and the roofline. In 50m you are in another clearing and in 15m *fork left* along the left-hand side of the clearing. In 50m you pass an info panel about the regeneration of Spring Meadow and *fork right* to in 50m re-join the Main Route by **Marker Post 17** and *turn right*. Pick up the directions above in the main text at the triple asterisk ***).