

Main walk checked	Option a) checked	Option c) checked	Option d) checked
17 November 2024	17 October 2024	24 November 2023	24 November 2023
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Totteridge Circular

Meadows, woods and villages on the Northern Heights

Length:	Main walk	14.5km (9 miles)
	a) With short cut to lunch	deduct 1.3km (0.8 miles)
	c) Longer walk to Barnet	18.4km (11.4 miles)
	d) Longer walk to Cockfosters	20.1km (12.5 miles)
	e) Totteridge to Cockfosters short walk	8.5km (5.3 miles)

Toughness: Main walk 2 out of 10. Longer walk 3 out of 10

Maps: OS Explorer 173, OS Landranger 176

Features

This walk, reachable by Underground, explores an area of greenbelt that would have been engulfed by the 1930s expansion of London's suburbia but for the resistance of local residents. The result is a large chunk of countryside that intrudes into London on the so-called Northern Heights - the hills above and behind the more famous ones of Hampstead and Highgate. At one point on this walk you can actually look down on Alexandra Palace and Highgate Hill, and have the illusion that everything in between is still countryside.

Traditionally this area was haymeadows, providing fodder for the horses used for transport in London. These meadows are now the subject of benign neglect for the most part. Some are even returning to woodland, though others are still cut annually and produce some wild flowers in late spring. At one point on the walk you can see grazing cattle, and you visit villages that still manage to retain their character despite suburban London lapping at their doorsteps. There is also some woodland and the former boating lake of a grand house, now turned to a wooded wetland.

This is a good walk at any time of year, but is particularly nice in early spring when the woods around Darlands Lake have wood anemones, bluebells and other woodland flowers. Early April sees the many blackthorn bushes on this walk erupt into white blossom, though catching this at its best is tricky as it only lasts a couple of weeks. In late May and early June the fields after lunch (in the Dollis Brook valley) are awash with buttercups, and also in June the wetland at Darland's Lake has huge giant hogweed flowers. In autumn there is some fine leaf colour and lots of sloes to pick.

From November to March the paths are **very muddy** in places - the underlying soil here is clay, which retains water - though the route also has its fair share of dry gravel paths.

One other caveat: though this is a proper rural walk, urban noises do intrude a little bit. Depending on the wind direction and atmospheric conditions you can sometimes hear traffic noise from the (largely unseen) suburbs over the hills. In the middle part of the walk the (also unseen) A1 creates a background hum if the wind is westerly, though not if it is easterly. In addition the area is sometimes under the Heathrow flight path, though the aircraft are fairly high here and you may not notice them at all. Again this depends on wind direction, easterly winds again being better.

Walk options

There are five ways to vary the main circular walk. For options a) to d) simply follow the main walk directions from the beginning and you will be told when the time comes how to do the optional route. For option e), start with the directions in paragraph 168 on page 15.

a) Short cut to lunch. This takes a more direct route to the lunch pub in Mill Hill, missing out a hill climb, but also the interesting view down onto Alexandra Palace and Highgate Hill from the top. You see more of the picturesque village of Mill Hill on this route and it also passes the Summer House cafe, a possible lunch stop. It reduces the morning of the walk from 7.6km (4.7 miles) to 6.3km (3.9 miles), and cuts 1.3 km (0.8 miles) of options c) and d) below.

b) Ending via Totteridge village. This alternative ending takes you up into Totteridge village to the Orange Tree pub, a possible tea stop, and then across Totteridge Green and down suburban roads to Totteridge station. Its main function is to give walkers a pleasant pub stop just before the end of the walk and to introduce the village which still retains quaint rural touches (albeit with a busy road through it). It is the same length as the main ending.

c) Longer walk to Barnet. This extension takes you back into suburbia for a while and then up a pleasant hill to Hadley Green, a pretty green space surrounded by fine houses and the site of the Battle of Barnet in the War of the Roses. You can then loop back into Barnet for tea, returning from High Barnet station on the Northern Line. This makes a total walk from Totteridge of **18.4km (11.4 miles)**, though this can be reduced to 16.8km (10.4 miles) by a short cut.

d) Longer walk to Cockfosters. Branching off from option c), this route continues across the wooded Monken Hadley Common to Cockfosters, on the Piccadilly Line. This makes a total walk from Totteridge of **20.1km (12.5 miles)**.

e) Short walk from Totteridge to Cockfosters. This route takes you directly from Totteridge station to the route of option c) and then d) above, cutting out the main walk route entirely. It makes a short walk of **8.5km (5.3 miles)**. To do this option start with the directions in paragraph 168 on page 15. If only doing this option, you need not print out pages 4 to 10.

For ways to shorten the walk with buses, see **Transport** below.

Transport

The walks start from **Totteridge & Whetstone station**, the penultimate stop on the High Barnet branch of the **Northern Line** of the London Underground. The station is in zone 4. Aim to start at about **10.30am** from the station to get to the lunch pub in time.

Alternative endings finish in **High Barnet** or **Cockfosters** (Piccadilly Line), these stations are in zone 5. Oyster or contactless payment will usually be the cheapest option.

The main walk is well served with London Transport **buses**, all of which run every 13 minutes or so on weekdays and Saturdays, though only every 20 minutes on Sundays. The **240** goes from Mill Hill, the lunch stop, to **Mill Hill East station** and **Edgware**. Meanwhile the **251** links various points on the main walk route to **Totteridge & Whetstone** and **Arnos Grove** stations. You can also use the 251 to get to the lunch time pub by getting it to the Holcombe Hill stop, and then climbing the steep tarmac path up the hill signposted "The Ridgeway". At the top carry on along the road and the Three Hammers pub is in 350 metres on the right.

Lunch

The **Three Hammers** in Mill Hill, 020 8959 2173, 7.6km (4.7 miles) into the walk (6.3km/3.9 miles by the short cut) is the recommended lunch stop - an efficient chain pub run by Ember Inns, which serves food all afternoon. It has a variety of seating areas, including a small glassed-in patio and garden, and is large enough to accommodate a group.

Just before Mill Hill on **a) Short cut to lunch** (see paragraph 45 on page 7), **The Summer House** is the cafe of Finchley Nurseries. Situated 5.7km (3.5 miles) into the walk, this serves wraps, toasties and other hot items, as well as cakes and hot drinks, and has both pleasant garden seating outside and some inside tables. It is open till 4.30pm Monday to Saturday and 4pm on Sundays.

Another possibility, just beyond the Three Hammers on a short diversion off the main walk route is the **Rising Sun** (020 8959 1357) which offers Italian food "with a sumptuous Asian influence" in a table service restaurant (booking definitely advisable). It is closed on Monday, and only open in the evenings on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, but does food 12-2.30pm Thursday to Saturday and all afternoon on Sundays.

For **picnics**, the park just beyond the Three Hammers in Mill Hill (paragraph 57 on page 8) has a view over the north west of London and several well-placed benches. When the ground is dry in spring and summer, the greenbelt fields throughout the walk also have numerous pleasant places to stop.

On option **e) Short walk from Totteridge to Cockfosters** the **Ye Olde Monken Holt** pub on the edge of Hadley Green (see below) is a possible lunch stop.

Tea

Tea options by **Totteridge & Whetstone station** include **Nature's Nest**, 80 metres up the hill from the station on the left, a natural foods store which serves coffee and tea and has a few tables. It is open to 5pm Monday to Saturday, 4pm Sunday. Alternatively if you carry on up the hill another 200 metres to the high road there is a **Costa Coffee**, open till 5.30pm Monday to Saturday, 5pm Sunday, with the independent **Whetstone Coffee** just beyond it, open until 7pm Monday to Friday, 6.30pm Saturday and 6pm on Sunday.

There is also a pub - **The Griffin** - opposite Costa Coffee, but a pleasanter option if you fancy an alcoholic drink to end the walk is the **Orange Tree** in Totteridge village, reached by taking option **b) Ending via Totteridge village**. This upmarket pub offers comfortable seating, serves hot drinks, and has some outside tables by a duck pond (though next to a rather busy road). It is possible to do all the rest of the walk from this pub in the dark.

On option **c) Longer walk to Barnet, Ye Olde Monken Holt** is a pleasant, cosy pub which has a garden at the rear. Nearby is the **Huddle Caffe**, open to 5.30pm Monday to Saturday and 4.30pm Sunday. Otherwise, the best tea option is probably the **Patisserie Joie de Vie** at the bottom of the high street, open till 5.30pm daily, which has an excellent selection of cakes. A more traditional place, but popular with locals, is **The Coffee Bean** in The Spires shopping centre, which has nice cakes and seating in an open courtyard, and is open until 5 pm Monday to Saturday and 4pm Sunday. Otherwise there are two **Costa Coffees**, the Spires one being the best as it has some outside seating and is open to 5.30pm Monday to Saturday and 4pm on Sunday (the other, just beyond the Patisserie Joie de Vie has similar hours and no outside seating). There is also a **Gails**, open to 6pm Monday to Saturday and 5.30pm Sundays, and a **Caffe Nero** open 7pm Monday to Saturday and 6.30pm Sunday. If you want takeaway tea or cakes, there is both a **Greggs** and a **Wenzels Bakery** in the High Street.

On option **d) Longer walk to Cockfosters**, the **Cock Inn** is a modern but also very comfortable pub, with a back terrace and a garden. It serves hot drinks and very tasty food. The pub operates a "smart/casual policy at all times", but also says it is "casual before 7pm": walkers with muddy boots might still have problems, but we have been accepted there in the past. However for a more traditional tea an even better option is the **Trent Park Cafe**, a popular local haunt which has an excellent selection of cakes and other food. It is open in spring and summer till 7pm "if it is busy" (which it invariably is), but in winter closes with the park at dusk.

WALK DIRECTIONS

For option **e) Short walk from Totteridge to Cockfosters** start at paragraph 168 on page 15: for all other walks, start with the directions immediately below.

Totteridge station to Folly Farm (4.2km/2.6 miles)

- 1** Coming out of Totteridge and Whetstone station, cross the busy main road with care and turn right downhill.
- 2** In 150 metres, just before the end of the green space to your left, turn left down a tarmac path, with a stream, Dollis Brook, just about visible in the undergrowth to your right.
- 3** Stay on this path, ignoring a tarmac path that diverges to the right across a footbridge in 400 metres.
- 4** In another 400 metres veer right with the tarmac path across a footbridge and then follow it round to the left, with Dollis Brook now to your left.
- 5** In 120 metres pass through a gate and turn right uphill on a suburban road.
- 6** In 80 metres cross a fairly busy road (Longland Drive) and carry on up Laurel Way.
*This is the kind of **classic 1930s suburbia** that would have covered the whole area of this walk had it not been for the inhabitants of Totteridge village buying up manorial rights to the land in the inter-war years to prevent such development. After the Second World War greenbelt legislation was passed to preserve green spaces around London and thus the land was permanently protected. Notice that this is rather superior 1930s suburbia, with each pair of houses having a slightly different design. The houses also have large gardens - a more generous use of land than we can afford these days.*
- 7** In 100 metres ignore Ventnor Drive to the right but in 100 metres more turn right into Lynton Mead.
- 8** In another 100 metres turn left up Coppice Walk.
- 9** Ignore Southway to the right in another 100 metres, but in 70 metres more, just after the end of the last house on the right, **turn right through an easily missed gap** in the tree boundary onto a woodland path,

which turns left uphill, parallel to the road you have just left.

- 10** In another 200 metres, where you can see a grassy area ahead, the path forks. Take the right fork to emerge in 20 metres onto Totteridge Green (with a weeping willow to your right) and then fork left on a faint grassy path.

*This is one end of the village of **Totteridge**, which extends for a mile and a half along a ridge. Historically there was no village centre as such - just a scattering of houses along the Totteridge Green, which you are now crossing, and Totteridge Common, which you will see later.*

- 11** Keep straight to cross a road in 40 metres. Beyond it carry on across the grass, in 10 metres joining a gravel path that skirts around the right-hand edge of a pond.
- 12** Beyond the pond follow the gravel path downhill between high wooden fences, with a white house on the left.
- 13** In 200 metres this brings you out into the countryside. Keep on downhill on the gravel path, with a line of bushes to your right, and an area of scrub and small trees to your left.

The area to your left was a grassy field twenty years ago, but it was left unmanaged and this is the result: without any tree planting whatsoever, it is well on its way to becoming oak woodland. The bushes to the right of the path are mainly blackthorn and so are covered in white blossom in early April and sloes in autumn.

- 14** In 200 metres you pass a rusty gate by an oak tree and keep on downhill. In another 180 metres pass through a metal kissing gate and cross a stream (Folly Brook).
- 15** In 30 metres **turn right** through a gap into the scrub (*ignoring one 15 metres earlier, which is anyway almost completely overgrown now*).

***The next 100 metres can be a bit daunting** due to overgrown shrubs (though the author gave it a good clipping in November 2023) and can also be very muddy in winter: but persist, as things soon improve. This was a grassy field 20 years ago.*

- 16** In 10 metres pass around a rusted metal fieldgate. Carry on through dense blackthorn for about 20 metres

then into young oak woodland/scrub. The path unhelpfully divides here but any way ahead should bring you in another 70 metres to a kissing gate, the entrance to **Darlands Lake Nature Reserve**.

- 17 Go through the kissing gate and follow a gravel path alongside Folly Brook (*barely a trickle in summer*), ignoring a footbridge to the right in 15 metres. A field is visible through the trees to your left.
- 18 In 300 metres cross Folly Brook on a footbridge and carry on uphill, still on the gravel path.
- 19 In 130 metres you cross a plank footbridge and come to a staggered crosspaths, where you turn **left**, still on a gravel path.

*The area on the far (wood edge) side of the path to the **right** at the T-junction is a good area for woodland flowers in late March and April. It used to have a population of rare **snakeshead fritillary** flowers at that time of year, but sadly this seems to have collapsed in recent years (2023 and 2024).*
- 20 In 150 metres ignore a gravel path to the right into a more open space (though rapidly filling with scrub), but in 5 metres take the path to the **left** across a footbridge.
- 21 You can now see **Darland's Lake** to your right. Keep on along a path on an earth bank that is in fact the dam of the lake.

*It is almost impossible to believe now, but **Darland's Lake** was once the boating lake of a grand house up on the hill - **Copped Hall**. The area to the right just before you turned left across the footbridge (ie now behind you through the trees) was its formal manicured parkland, and the paths you are walking on were garden paths used by fine ladies and gentlemen to come down to the lake. But the house was demolished in 1929 and its parkland has now gone completely wild. The lake itself, which was originally twice as big as you see now, has partly silted up, creating a wooded marsh that is an important habitat for wildlife.*
- 22 In 100 metres cross a footbridge over the outlet to the lake, and follow a path alongside a wooded marsh (the part of the lake that has silted up).

You may see **giant hogweed** growing on this marsh in June, or the remains of it later in the summer. It is an unmistakably huge plant, quite out of scale compared to any other wildflower you may see. It was imported from the Caucasus in the Victorian era and has now gone native. If you see one of these plants do not touch it, as it causes skin irritation.

- 23 In 200 metres the path curves decisively left and in 150 metres more turns right across a footbridge. (*There are **ramsons** - wild garlic - to the left and right here in early spring, flowering in early May.*)
- 24 Beyond the footbridge the path again curves right. In another 150 metres you come to a path T-junction and turn left, on a path with fields left and scrub to the right (*the scrub area once again being remains of the formal parkland of Copped Hall: 100 metres along this path on the right is another place you may see **snakeshead fritillaries** in late March and early April.*)
- 25 In 180 metres you pass through a gate. Still on the gravel path, in 170 metres more you cross a shallow ditch on a footbridge. Beyond, turn left over another footbridge onto a path that initially runs along the wood edge, then along a wooded strip between fields, with a decaying fence (the former fence of the Copped Hall parkland) to your left.

*As you walk down this path, note the **grand houses** on the top of the hill to your right. These are houses on Totteridge Lane, supposedly owned these days by Premier League footballers.*
- 26 In 300 metres pass through a kissing gate and carry on diagonally across a field on a gravel path.
- 27 In 300 metres more exit the field through a kissing gate, to emerge onto the corner of a fenced-in path. **Here you have a choice.**

- **For option a) short cut to lunch**, (see Walk Options on page 2 for a description), getting you to lunch in 2.1km/1.3 miles from this point (and to **The Summer House** cafe in 600 metres), keep straight ahead along the path, with a field to your right and a stream (Folly Brook) to your left, and refer to the directions in paragraph 43 on page 7.

- **To continue on the main walk,** 3.4km/2.1 miles to lunch from this point, turn right uphill on the path and continue with the directions below.

Folly Farm to Mill Hill - main route (3.4km/2.1 miles)

- 28** In 600 metres near the top of the hill, a wooden slatted fence starts to the right.
- Just before this, look over the fieldgate to the right for a **view down onto Alexandra Palace** (to the left of the office building on the skyline. It may be hidden by a tree from this angle: if so you get a clearer view by going 20 metres back down the path). To the right of the view you can see **Highgate Hill** (again, somewhat below you) and - on clear days - **Canary Wharf** and the **Shard** peeping over the top of the hills. Before the office building was put up, there was a nice illusion that one was looking over uninterrupted woodland to Highgate.*
- 29** Carry on alongside the slatted fence for 300 metres to come to the main road, Totteridge Lane.
- You are now on **Totteridge Common**, a narrow strip down the centre of the village which must have been quite pleasant in pre-car days. These days people pay millions of pounds to live on this noisy road, because on both sides it enjoys uninterrupted countryside views. Mysteriously the **Long Pond** to your left is also popular with anglers, though a less tranquil place to fish is hard to imagine.*
- If you want to end the walk here there is a **251 bus stop** on the far side of the road which will take you back to Totteridge & Whetstone station.*
- 30** Turn left on Totteridge Lane. You can either cross the road to walk along a tarmac footpath alongside it (in which case you will have to re-cross the road in paragraph 34 opposite), but a prettier route, if a bit rougher underfoot, is to stay on this side of the road following the strip of grass between the Long Pond and the road.
- 31** At the end of the pond pass to the left of the bushes on an informal path. In another 150 metres skirt around the left of another pond on a narrow path beside a garden wall.
- 32** 100 metres beyond this second pond you pass the entrance to Ellern Mede Farm to the left. 30 metres beyond is a driveway to Denham Cottage and in another 70 metres a driveway to "Denham 43".
- 33** Beyond this keep to the left-hand side of the common on a path that in 40 metres veers left a bit through a clump of trees.
- 34** In another 150 metres this comes to a gravel track (marked "45 Foxwood" if you are approaching it along the road). Turn left on this.
- 35** In 10 metres (40 metres if coming from the road) veer left off the track before house gates onto a footpath which passes through a kissing gate in 10 metres and carries on down downhill under trees.
- 36** Follow this path all the way to the bottom of the hill (two downhill sections with a long flatter one in between). It is mainly enclosed by shrubs and trees, but fields are visible at times left and right (more so in winter than in summer).
- 37** In 700 metres cross a footbridge and pass through gates to cross a horse exercise track and start to climb slightly uphill, with a chainlink fence to the left.
- 38** In 130 metres go through a kissing gate and across a tarmac drive to carry on uphill with a hedge to the left and a field fence to your right.
- 39** In 300 metres more pass through two metal kissing gates and carry on through a wooded area on a fenced path.
- 40** In 200 metres there is a primary school to your right, and in 100 metres you come to the road, with **Mill Hill School** visible ahead. Turn right on the road.
- 41** In 150 metres you pass **Sheepwash Pond** on your right.
- Here animals being driven to slaughter in London were traditionally washed before the journey down to the city.*
- London Transport bus number 240** goes from the stop on the right-hand side of the road just beyond the pond to Mill Hill East and Golders Green stations on the Northern Line.
- 42** In another 100 metres the **Three Hammers** pub, the lunchtime stop, is on the left.

After lunch resume the directions in paragraph 57 on page 8. Also follow these directions for lunch at the **Rising Sun** and a good **picnic** spot.

The **240 bus stop** to Edgware is 30 metres down the road to the left just beyond the **Three Hammers**.

Folly Farm to Mill Hill - short cut (2.1km/1.3 miles).

- 43** Having kept straight ahead at the junction in paragraph 27, in 120 metres pass through metal kissing gates to cross a farm track and keep straight on.
- 44** In 250 metres pass a wooden building with a fence alongside it on your right. In 30 metres more turn left up a tarmac driveway.
- 45** In 10 metres more turn right through metal barriers onto a cricket ground to carry on along its edge (ie with the pitch to your left).
 - For **The Summer House** cafe, a possible lunch stop, ignore this right turn and keep on up the tarmac driveway. In 300 metres turn right into Finchley Nurseries. Turn right in 50 metres just before the shop to find the cafe round behind it. After lunch return to the tarmac driveway and turn left. In 120 metres, to avoid walking all the way to the far end of the cricket pitch, turn left through a metal car-blocking barrier onto a tarmac track which runs along the pitch's top edge. In another 100 metres pass through an (unofficial) gap in the hedge into another field. Go very slightly left across this, heading for an initially not very visible gap about midway along its far side: pass through this and continue with paragraph 49 opposite.
- 46** At the end of the pitch cross a plank bridge into the next field and go half left across it to a point about midway along its left-hand edge.
- 47** In 150 metres pass through a gap into the next field, marked by two posts (one now covered in ivy, so not very visible).
- 48** Cut across the corner of the next field, roughly in the same direction as before, heading for a gap (not visible to see until you get to it) halfway up its right-hand edge 120 metres away.

When you get close to it, you can see this gap is marked by a footpath post.

- 49** Pass through this gap and over a ditch. Beyond, cross a track and veer left on a path that is initially under trees but in 60 metres emerges into an area dotted with young trees (*another field reverting to woodland...*). Follow a grassy path diagonally across this.
 - 50** In 200 metres turn right onto a gravel track.
 - 51** In 20 metres more, at a three-way junction, go left to pass through a kissing gate in 10 metres. Carry on uphill with a wooden fence to your right.
 - 52** In 200 metres cross a stile onto a road and turn left uphill on it.
 - 53** In 180 metres you come to a main road. Cross at the traffic lights 10 metres to the right and turn right uphill on its far side.
- This is the village of **Mill Hill**, which was until quite recently full of convents and other religious establishments. One, now converted into flats, can be seen to the right.*
- 54** In 170 metres veer left up Milesplit Hill, soon passing to the right of the village pond. At the end of the pond turn right up High Street.
 - 55** In 130 metres rejoin the main road and carry on up it. In 150 metres more you pass the somewhat ridiculous "Gate of Honour" of the private **Mill Hill School**.
 - 56** In another 350 metres you come to the **Three Hammers pub** on the left.

*100 metres before the pub, opposite the second memorial obelisk, note **Sheepwash Pond**, where farm animals being driven to London for slaughter used to be washed before descending to the city.*

London Transport bus number 240 goes from the stop on the right-hand side of the road just after the **Sheepwash Pond** to Mill Hill East and Golders Green stations on the Northern Line. To get the same bus to Edgware, turn left down the road just after the **Three Hammers** to find it on the left in 30 metres.

After lunch continue with the directions overleaf. Also follow these directions for lunch at the **Rising Sun** and a good **picnic** spot.

Mill Hill to the Totteridge Academy (4.3km/2.7 miles)

- 57** Coming out of the Three Hammers, turn left on the main road along the top of the hill. In 100 metres veer left into a park to follow a path along its right-hand edge.
- This is a possible **picnic** spot. In 90 metres, at the far end of the park, you get a **view** sharp left of **Wembley Stadium** and the west of London. In the far distance you can sometimes see the **North Downs**, Greensand Ridge and **Leith Hill**.*
- 58** At the end of the park re-join the road and carry on past a convent turned into a housing development on your left.
- 59** In 100 metres, as the road curves right, keep straight on down a car-wide tarmac path, signposted to Highwood Hill. This descends in 100 metres more to a road junction.
- The **London Transport 251 bus stop** to Edgware is the one on the triangle of grass ahead of you. For the 251 bus to Totteridge & Whetstone or Arnos Grove stations, go ahead at the road junction and the bus stop is 40 metres ahead on the left.*
- For lunch at the **Rising Sun** pub carry on up the steep hill ahead (Highwood Hill). The pub is in 350 metres, at the top of the hill. You need to retrace your steps to this point after lunch.*
- 60** To continue the walk, **do not cross the road ahead** but instead **turn right**. In 30 metres, by the Old Forge on the right, cross the road with care - there is a **blind bend** to the right - and go through the double metal kissing gates ahead into a field.
- 61** **Ignore** a fieldgate and kissing gate ahead along the edge of the field, and instead **veer half right** between two trees to a metal kissing gate two thirds of the way along the far side of the field.
- 62** In 80 metres pass through this kissing gate and cross a footbridge. Again **ignore** the metal kissing gate 20 metres ahead and instead **turn half right** across the grass, to cross a tarmac drive by the corner of a hedge. Pass around the hedge corner and carry on up a path to pass through a kissing gate in 20 metres

- 63** Beyond the kissing gate you are in a field. Keep straight on, passing to the right of the fenced compound 40 metres ahead, and carrying on along its fence.
- 64** In 170 metres, where the fence veers left, keep straight on to pass through a metal kissing gate in another 50 metres. Keep straight on, with a fence to the left, to another kissing gate in 60 metres, ignoring a track turning right.
- 65** Beyond the kissing gate cross a footbridge and pass through yet another kissing gate. Beyond, veer left uphill on a fenced path.
- 66** In 120 metres more pass through yet another (completely unnecessary!) kissing gate and carry on uphill on the fenced path.
- 67** In 150 metres pass through a wooden gate and turn left for 10 metres to come to the main road. Cross this with care and turn right on the far side.
- The **251 bus stop** here takes you to Totteridge & Whetstone or Arnos Grove stations.*
- 68** In 50 metres, just after a white house and before another, turn left up a public footpath signposted to May's Lane. After 5 metres this joins a gravel drive.
- 69** In 50 metres, where the drive ends, pass through a wooden kissing gate and on down a path between fences.
- 70** In 70 metres you emerge into a another former pasture field that has largely reverted to woodland. *(It is in fact hard to believe it was ever a grassy field. Note that not a single one of these trees was planted: this is just what happens if you do nothing to a field for 20 years...)* Keep straight on downhill through this, on a clear path.
- 71** In 350 metres, at the bottom of the hill, turn right at a path T-junction. In 50 metres you emerge along the edge of a field.
- 72** You now keep along the left-hand edge of six fields *(the seventh has a line of mini-pylons across it - see paragraph 78 overleaf)*, with a ditch sometimes visible to your left *(Dollis Brook, but it has not much water in it here)*.
- 73** In more detail: In 150 metres pass into the next field and keep to its left-hand edge on a path double fenced-off from the rest of the field.

- 74** In 80 metres fork **right**, keeping to the fence(s), ignoring a path to a kissing gate ahead
- 75** In 170 metres more the path enters a tunnel of scrub, and in 70 metres more you pass through a metal kissing gate into the next field.
- 76** In 150 metres, at the end of this field, pass through two metal kissing gates with a plank bridge between into the fourth field. The path serpentine along its edge. (*Do **not** take any apparent path forking right about halfway along this field: instead keep to the hedge on your left-hand side.*)
- 77** In 300 metres pass through a double metal kissing gate into the fifth field, and in 150 metres go through a gap into the sixth field. Here **take the path that forks half right** to a gap about 80 metres up its far edge. (*This path is not so obvious in summer, when you can if you like just stick to the main path along the field edge.*)
- 78** In 100 metres pass through this gap* into the seventh field, which has a line of mini-pylons going from left to right across its middle. **Turn right along the near edge of this field** and follow it as it curves left to intersect the line of pylons.
- * In winter, if this gap is flooded, turn left along the hedge for 40 metres to find a crossing with a plank bridge*
- 79** When you get to the pylons, **turn right to leave the field** in the direction of the pylons but then in 5 metres, **immediately beyond the field boundary, turn left** through a gap in another hedgerow. Keep straight ahead along the left-hand edge of the field beyond.
- 80** In 150 metres, at the far end of the field, turn right up its far edge.
- 81** In 150 metres, at the top of the field, pass through a gap in the field boundary into an area of rough grass and young trees. Turn left in 20 metres to follow its bottom edge.
- 82** In 35 metres you pass into another field (which usually has shorter grass).
- 83** In another 80 metres, at the end of this field, pass through a gap in the fence to come to an avenue of trees (with paths right and left). Go right for 5 metres and then left (so resuming your former direction) to cross a footbridge and pass through a gap into another field.
- 84** Keep straight ahead across the next field. In 90 metres exit it by a gap in a decaying fence and turn left on a car-wide gravel and earth path.
- 85** In 20 metres turn right across (*or bypass on a cut-off path...*) an **easily-missed stile** with a plank bridge before it (***not** the stile to the right in another 10 metres*) and carry on into a small wood.
- 86** In 30 metres, where the wood opens up a bit, veer right to exit into a field in another 45 metres. Turn left along its edge (ignoring an isolated stand of trees ahead), which curves right in 30 metres.
- 87** In 40 metres the field edge turns left again. In another 30 metres turn right across the middle of the field on a grass path.
- 88** In 70 metres, on the far side of the field, ignore a small gap into the wood ahead and instead turn left along the field edge.
- 89** In 80 metres turn right through a car-wide gap in the hedgerow into the next field. (*This gap is a quagmire in winter, unfortunately. At such times, explore the hedgerow to the right for alternative paths, eg the small gap mentioned in paragraph 88.*)
- 90** Once in the next field, keep straight on, aiming for the right end of a clump of small trees (*including quite a few cherry plums*) midfield 60 metres ahead.
- 91** Pass to the right-hand side of the clump and at its end, in another 60 metres, take a grassy path forking left, more or less straight on across the field, heading for the left-hand end of a clump of trees on its far side.
- 92** In 80 metres pass to the left of this clump and carry on, curving right up a narrowing neck of the field.
- 93** Exit the field at the top of the neck in 60 metres more, coming out onto a tarmac path with a lamppost and a metal fence to your right. **Here you have a choice:**
- **For option b) Ending via Totteridge village** (2.7km/1.7 miles from this point, *turn right* up the tarmac path and refer to the directions in paragraph 101 overleaf.
 - **To continue on the main walk** (2.5km/1.6 miles from this point),

and also for option **c) Longer walk to Barnet** (6.5km/4 miles from this point) or option **d) Longer walk to Cockfosters** (8.2km/5.1 miles from this point), carry on with the directions in paragraph 94 below.

Totteridge Academy to the playing fields (1.1km/0.7 mi)

- 94** Go straight ahead across the tarmac path into a field and immediately turn left alongside a green metal fence.
- 95** In 80 metres, at the fence corner, turn right along the edge of the field
- 96** In 250 metres cross into the next field and bear slightly left across it, heading for its far left-hand corner (where there is a gap, a green metal barrier, and a road beyond).
- 97** In 250 metres squeeze around the right-hand end of the green metal barrier and **cross the road with care** (fast traffic at times). Turn left along pavement on the far side of the road.
- 98** In 50 metres turn right up the entrance to a car park, passing a building with a corrugated metal roof to the right
- 99** In 130 metres pass through posts at the end of the car park to emerge onto a recreation ground. Keep along the tarmac path on its right-hand edge.
- 100** In 350 metres, in the far corner of the recreation ground, and just before you come to a hedge and houses ahead, there is a tarmac path to the right.
Here you have a choice.
 - **For option c) Longer walk to Barnet** (4km/2.5 miles or 5.4km/3.3 miles from this point) and option **d) Longer walk to Cockfosters** (7.1km/4.4 miles from this point), ignore the path to the right and carry on along the tarmac path around the corner of the recreation ground and up its far edge. Refer to the directions in paragraph 114 on page 11.
 - **To end at Totteridge & Whetstone station**, take the path to the right and follow it along the bottom of the valley, with Dollis Brook to your right (hidden by trees for the most part) for 1.4km until you come to a main road. Turn left uphill on the road and the station is in 60 metres on your left.

For tea, carry on beyond the station for 80 metres to find **Nature's Nest** on the left. Or keep on uphill for another 200 metres to the traffic lights at the top of the hill (with **The Griffin** pub on the other side of the intersection) and turn left for 80 metres to find **Costa Coffee**, with **Whetstone Coffee** just beyond it.

To Totteridge station via the village (2.7km/1.7 mi).

- 101** Carry on uphill on the tarmac path between fences covered by hedges.
- 102** In 250 metres pass a redundant metal barrier and carry on up an earth path.
- 103** In 80 metres you emerge onto the end of a suburban road. Keep straight ahead up a tarmac path to the right of a white house ahead.
- 104** In 150 metres cross a driveway and pass through a wooden kissing gate to keep on up an earth and gravel path.
- 105** In 250 metres pass to the right of a metal gate and turn left on a main road (Totteridge Lane).
- 106** In 150 metres cross a side road and go over a grassy triangle to the left of a war memorial to cross another branch of the side road and carry on along the main road, slightly to the right.
- 107** 100 metres beyond this veer left into **St Andrew's** churchyard and go diagonally across it, passing to the left of a "1000 year old yew", to emerge through the gate on the far side. Turn left, taking the tarmac path separated from the road by a broad grassy strip.
- 108** In 100 metres cross over Northcliffe Drive. In another 70 metres ignore a double driveway to the right leading from the black gates of two houses, but in another 40 metres take the next driveway to the right, leading from house number 34.
- 109** **Cross the very busy main road with great care** (patience is often needed) and turn left on the far side. In 30 metres the **Orange Tree** pub, a possible tea stop, is on the right.
- 110** Coming out of the pub, or walking past it if not stopping, carry on down the main road past the pond and St Andrew's School. In 60 metres, just past the end of the school, veer right across Totteridge Green, heading for a large oak tree on its far side (or a point

about 130 metres from its far left-hand edge).

- 111** Pass to the left of the oak tree and carry on for 50 metres more to cross a minor road. Beyond, pass through a gap between trees and across a narrow grassy strip to emerge at the top of a suburban road (Greenway, though not named here).
- 112** Keep on down this road, ignoring ways off, until in 750 metres you get to a T-junction with a busy road (Longland Drive). Turn left on this and follow it for 170 metres to a crossroads with the even busier Totteridge Lane, ignoring a side road to the left (Hill Crescent) halfway.
- 113** Turn right onto Totteridge Lane and carry on uphill to find **Totteridge & Whetstone station** uphill on the left in 250 metres.

For tea, carry on beyond the station for 90 metres to find **Nature's Nest** on the left. Or keep on uphill for another 200 metres to the traffic lights at the top of the hill (with **The Griffin** pub on the other side of the intersection) and turn left for 80 metres to find **Costa Coffee**, with **Whetstone Coffee** just beyond it.

The playing fields to Hadley Green (2.8km/1.7 miles)

- 114** In 300 metres, at a T-junction, turn right to exit the recreation ground in 40 metres and turn left on a suburban road. *You are now on the **London Loop** and you can follow its signs, if you wish, all the way to Cockfosters (though in places they are missing).*
- 115** In 170 metres a road - Sherrards Way - joins from the right. In another 250 metres turn right on the busy main road, passing under a large railway bridge (the Northern Line to High Barnet).
- 116** Cross the main road at the pedestrian lights just after the bridge and go up a side road - Potters Lane - which curves left uphill.
- 117** In 200 metres the road starts to curve right. In another 40 metres turn left down steps into a grassy area, following the London Loop sign, and keep to its right-hand side. **High Barnet station**, with its clanking trains, is visible (or at least audible...) to the left.

- 118** In 130 metres ignore a road to the right and keep straight on, merging with a tarmac path down the right-hand side of the open space.
- 119** In 130 metres more exit the green space and turn right along a row of houses, ignoring a path ahead (*unless you want to abandon the rest of this option and **go direct to High Barnet station**, in which case take the path ahead and then turn left on the road for 200 metres to reach the station entrance*).
- 120** In 70 metres merge with a busier road and carry on downhill, at some point crossing to its left-hand side.
- 121** In 200 metres, just beyond a post box, turn left up Burnside Close.
- 122** In 70 metres follow this road around to the right and carry on up a tarmac path between fences.
- 123** In 70 metres more, when you come to a road, turn left through a wooden kissing gate into a part-wooded green space. Carry on straight ahead along a clear path which follows the bottom left-hand edge of a hill.
- 124** In 150 metres follow the path as it veers left through a wooded boundary, ignoring a grassy path up the hill to the right. Ignore another path to the right in 20 metres, to carry on through the wooded boundary and emerge in another 20 metres at the bottom of a field. Turn right uphill on a broad grassy path.
- 125** You now follow this path all the way uphill. In 400 metres, near the top of the hill, you pass a metal bench.
*Turn around here to enjoy the **view**. You are looking south south east, and while there are no major landmarks to be seen, there is a nice sensation of climbing up and out of the city Go 20 metres to the left of the bench (when facing the view) and the tall buildings you may be able to see in the distance are developments in Stratford around the 2012 Olympic park. Walk another 20 metres to the left and you can see the tops of the towers of Canary Wharf peeping over the hill to the right, though trees are starting to obscure this view. Central London is out of view to your right.*
- 126** After the bench the path runs along the edge of trees to your right. In 250 metres you pass through a wooden

kissing gate onto a road, with **Hadley Green** ahead.

*In front of you is the site of the **Battle of Barnet**, one of the decisive battles in the Wars of the Roses, which was fought between the competing royal claimants of the houses of Lancaster and York on Easter Sunday, 14 April 1471. Where you are now standing were the lines of King Edward IV, and opposing him on the opposite side of the green was the army of Henry VI, led by the Earl of Warwick. Warwick was known as the "Kingmaker" because he had first supported Henry VI, then switched sides to put Edward IV on the throne, and then fallen out with Edward and re-installed Henry. But in the Battle of Barnet he was to get his comeuppance. The battle was fought in early morning mist and in the confusion Warwick's troops started fighting with each other. Suspecting treachery by Warwick's younger brother Lord Montagu (and thus perhaps by Warwick himself), Henry's troops fled and Warwick was killed. Edward remained on the throne till his death in 1483, when the Wars of the Roses resumed once more.*

127 Here you have a choice:

- **For a short cut to High Barnet station** saving 1.6km (1 mile) on the option c) route by cutting out a circuit of Hadley Green, turn left and in 100 metres you come to the top of Barnet High Street. Turn left down this and resume the directions at paragraph 137 overleaf.
*(If doing **option d) Longer walk to Cockfosters** you can also use this short cut to get to the Ye Olde Monken Holt pub or the Huddle Cafe for a possible early tea stop. On **option e) Short walk from Totteridge to Cockfosters** either might make a lunch stop. In both cases you then need to return to this point to continue the walk.)*
- **For a tour of Hadley Green** and the attractive village of **Monken Hadley** - also for option **d) Longer walk to Cockfosters** and **e) Shorter walk from Totteridge to Cockfosters** - cross the road, turn right along the edge of the green, and continue with the directions in the next paragraph.

Hadley Green to High Barnet station (2.6km/1.6 miles)

*Also follow these directions to carry on to **Cockfosters**.*

- 128** In 300 metres, just before a road T-junction, a plaque on a house to the right marks a house where the Victorian missionary and African explorer David Livingstone lived. Cross the road here to carry on along its right-hand side (thus veering right at a T-junction).
- 129** In 80 metres merge with another road and keep right into the centre of **Monken Hadley** village. In 130 metres you pass its church, and 40 metres beyond it the **old tollgate** and the tollgate keeper's cottage (*which today would make a fortune from all the cars that pass through it.*)

Here you have a choice:

- To continue on option **c) Longer walk to High Barnet**, turn around and retrace your steps back up the road to the green and carry on with the directions in paragraph 130.
 - For option **d) Longer walk to Cockfosters** and **e) Short walk from Totteridge to Cockfosters**, carry on through the tollgate and refer to the directions in paragraph 142 on page 13.
- 130** When you get back to the green, veer left up the side road that you came along before, but in 20 metres turn right to cross it and follow a grassy path across the green, passing to the left of a clump of trees concealing a pond in 15 metres.
- 131** At the end of the pond take the grassy path more or less straight on, and in another 50 metres, with a larger pond to the right, keep straight on across a plank footbridge.
- 132** After the bridge veer right under a weeping willow to join a car-wide tarmac path leading away from the pond in 30 metres. In 20 metres this becomes a gravel track, which leads past a house to the main road in another 40 metres.
- 133** Cross the road (*once the **Great North Road** to Scotland*) and turn right on the grass verge for 30 metres. In another 30 metres turn left up the drive to Windmill House.

- 134** In 60 metres, two thirds of the way along the drive, turn left down a grassy path, in 15 metres crossing over a tarmac footbridge with a waste bin beyond it. Beyond, go straight ahead down the middle of the green, ignoring paths off to the left and right, and with the road roughly parallel to the left.
- 135** In 250 metres cross a tarmac drive and beyond this carry on along (or merge with) the right-hand edge of the green, at first on a gravel drive and then in 40 metres on a path.
- 136** In another 150 metres the green ends at a side road, with a cream-coloured house opposite (Caroline Cottage). Go left here for 40 metres and then right on the main road into the centre of **Barnet** (*properly Chipping Barnet.*)
- 137** In 60 metres on the right is the **Ye Olde Monken Holt** pub, a possible tea stop. 70 metres beyond it on the left is the **Huddle Caffee**. Otherwise the high street proper starts in another 150 metres after a major road joins from the right.
- 138** 120 metres after this on the right is the entrance to The Spires shopping centre: inside this you will find a **Costa Coffee** with outside seating in 80 metres, and **The Coffee Bean** 100 metres further on in the next courtyard, also with outside seating.
- 139** Alternatively, carrying on down the high street (or turning right out of The Spires if you have stopped there for tea), 10 metres after the entrance to the Spires, you pass **Gails** on the left-hand side, then 20 metres later **Greggs**, with **Caffe Nero** 20 metres beyond that.
- 140** In another 60 metres **Wenzel's Bakery** is on the right, and in 70 metres more you come to **Patisserie Joie de Vie** on the left. The road curves left past a church at this point. 25 metres beyond the Patisserie is another **Costa Coffee** (no outside seating).
- 141** In another 60 metres, at a major road junction, keep straight on downhill. **High Barnet station** is in 350 metres on the left, just after a road junction.

Monken Hadley to Cockfosters (3.7km/2.3 mi)

- 142** After passing through the tollgate, cross to the left-hand side of the road.
- 143** In 70 metres cross a side road, Camlet Way, and follow a broad grassy path slightly to the left, onto **Monken Hadley Common**.
- 144** In 30 metres you emerge onto a mown grass area, a cricket pitch. Veer right along the edge of this, passing a bench under an oak tree in 10 metres.
- 145** In another 30 metres, just before two mid-sized oak trees with another bench in front of them, veer right into the rough grass on a car-wide grassy path that in 10 metres comes alongside a pond. (*In winter, simply keep to the left of the pond*)
- 146** Follow the path past the pond (with the pond on your right) and on downhill, with a road 50 metres to your right and a faint ditch to your left (concealed by fresh vegetation in late spring or early summer).
- 147** In another 60 metres take the left fork downhill, still on a car-wide grassy path and still with the faint ditch to your left.
- 148** In 50 metres ignore grassy paths left and right and keep on towards the trees. In 20 metres, at a T-junction just before the wood, turn left across the ditch and then in 5 metres turn right on a clear earth path that descends gently into the wood.
- These days we take for granted that places called "commons" are thickly wooded, but this is a relatively recent development. Like so many English commons this area would have been relatively open until the 1950s due to the grazing of animals. Only since grazing ended has it become the wood you see today.*
- 149** Follow this path downhill, with a ditch to your right.
- 150** In 700 metres, where a broad path joins from the left, and where your way ahead is decisively blocked by a thicket of holly and trees, turn right across a footbridge made of three railway sleepers (*not the two sleeper bridge 80 metres before*).
- 151** Immediately turn left, so the ditch is now to your left, hidden a bit by brambles initially. (*Fallen branches*

were blocking the start of this path in November 2023, but could be circumvented by walking 30 metres further on and curving round to the left past them).

- 152** In 150 metres the brambles once again force you to veer away from the ditch, which now disappears from view.
- 153** In another 70 metres, just after the main path bears slightly left, **fork right** on a broad path that curves right for 30 metres, and then straightens out with a grassy clearing visible 70 metres ahead.
- If you miss the above junction, you come in another 40 metres to a crosspaths where the way ahead is a much narrower path: turn **right** here on a path between brambles to come in 70 metres to the grassy clearing mentioned in the next paragraph. If you are completely lost, walk straight ahead till you come to the railway line (the noise of the frequent passing trains should guide you) and turn right along it to find the bridge mentioned in paragraph 157.***
- 154** Emerging into the grassy clearing and keep straight ahead across it.
- 155** On the far side, in another 70 metres, the most obvious exit is straight ahead through a gap in the trees to a parking area. But a slight short cut is a path just to the left of it that cuts off a corner of the wood. (*Ignore other paths more directly left from the clearing.*)
- 156** In 60 metres you **either** emerge into the parking area and turn left through a metal barrier onto a track, **or** if you took the cut-off path, you come out just to the left of the barrier and turn left onto the same track.
- 157** Either way, 100 metres after the barrier cross a railway bridge over the mainline into Kings Cross.
- 158** Beyond the bridge follow the main path, a tarmac track, as it veers downhill to the right.
- 159** In 500 metres you come out into a more open area. Keep on the now stony path down its right-hand edge.
- 160** In 200 metres you are back in the woods again. In another 80 metres turn left up a stony path. (*This path takes you on a short diversion up to a lake. If you do not want to do this, ignore the left turn and stay on the main path. In 100 metres or so you*

cross a stream on a brick bridge, and then you can continue the directions in paragraph 163 below.)

- 161** In 80 metres you come out in a small glade with a lake visible through the foliage ahead right. Ignore the path ahead along the lakeside and instead turn right across a footbridge (possibly initially hidden by foilage) across the outlet stream of the lake, and then follow a footpath along the bottom edge of the lake.
- 162** In 30 metres turn right down steps (or take the path to the right just after the footbridge - it comes to the same thing) and walk alongside the outlet stream for 40 metres towards a brick bridge. When you get to the bridge, turn left uphill on a wide stony path.
- 163** Follow the broad path uphill, ignoring all ways off. In 400 metres there are wooden garden fences to the right. In another 80 metres ignore a path forking right to a road to keep just inside the wood.
- 164** Ignore a path to the left in 40 metres, to emerge in 20 metres more onto a grassy strip, with houses to your right. Carry on uphill.
- 165** In 270 metres where the grassy strip ends, pass another old tollgate to leave Monken Hadley Common and carry on down a road.
- 166** In 70 metres you pass the **Cock Inn**, a possible tea stop, on the right.
- 167** Immediately beyond the Cock and Dragon, you come to a three-way road junction. **Here have a choice:**
- **To go directly to Cockfosters station**, turn right at the junction, taking a minor road with playing fields to the left. In 30 metres, where the road curves right, keep straight on down a narrower No Entry road. In 300 metres turn left with the road to come to the main road in 100 metres: use the subway 30 metres to the right to get to Cockfosters tube station.
 - **To go to Trent Park Cafe**, keep straight on at the junction. In 80 metres cross the very busy main road with great care and turn right along its far side. In 70 metres turn left into the gates of Trent Park. Follow the road for 220 metres, until you come to a monument. Here fork left. The **Trent Park Cafe** is in 100 metres in the middle of

the car park. After tea, return to the main road and turn left to find Cockfosters station in 250 metres.

***Cockfosters tube station** is a fitting place to finish this walk. Here is another place where the tide of 1930s suburbia came to an abrupt end. The substantial Modernist station, full of the optimism of the era, was almost certainly designed to serve housing developments that were never built. As it is the line runs through countryside on its left-hand side until it gets to the first stop, Oakwood*

Totteridge station to the playing fields (1.4km/0.9 mi)

*These directions enable you to start from Totteridge and create a short walk of 8.5km (5.3 miles) to Cockfosters. If doing this option, you do **not** need to print out pages 4-10.*

- 168** Coming out of **Totteridge and Whetstone station** turn right downhill on the road.
- 169** In 60 metres turn right onto the uppermost of two tarmac paths leading off into a green space.
- 170** In 300 metres you pass a field boundary and then three more in the next 300 metres.
- 171** 170 metres after the fourth field boundary the green space narrows to a width of about 50 metres between trees and scrub. Here merge with the left-hand path.
- 172** In 300 metres more, just after you pass through a line of metal posts, ignore a suburban road to the right and keep on through a gap 50 metres ahead into a recreation ground. Take the path up the right-hand side of this and continue with the directions in paragraph 114 on page 11.