

**LONDON'S PARKS AND HEATHS; GOLDERS GREEN TO WESTMINSTER**  
**21 MARCH 2026**

**Travel Arrangements**

We will be catching the 8.46 am train from Bedford (Flitwick 8.56 am). Please meet at Bedford station no later than 8:30 am. A super off peak one-day travelcard is required, which costs £21.35. Alternatively, members can use the Group Save Scheme (no railcard needed) whereby groups of 3 or more can obtain similarly reduced tickets. This ticket covers all travel in and out of London, on the Underground and on the London Buses. We will be changing at West Hampstead to get the 328 bus to Golders Green station, with the aim of starting the walk from the station forecourt near the toilets, which open at 10:00 am, at about 10:15 am. Those proposing to make their own way there should be in the forecourt for 10:00 am and let the leader know that you expect to be there before the day of the walk.

The walk will end at Westminster Underground at around 4:00 pm. We can then get the Circle line to catch the Thameslink train for Bedford at Blackfriars. Anyone proposing to stay on in London should ensure that their Group Save party all travel together. It should be possible to arrive back in Bedford by 5:45 pm

**Walk Details**

The walk is a linear one of about 11 miles. It is mainly on hard surfaces and walking boots are not required. There is no need to do the whole walk. It is possible to do a morning walk and leave at Baker Street Underground after 6½ miles. There are also further options to leave the walk at Hyde Park Corner or Green Park Underground stations, which offer direct trains to Kings Cross St Pancras.

Within a ¼ mile of leaving the station, we enter Golders Hill Park and pass through it towards Hampstead Heath. There is an interesting mini zoo and we go past some of the enclosures. We enter the West Heath section of Hampstead Heath directly from the Park and climb gradually to one of the highest points (over 400 feet) at what used to be the Jack Straw's Castle pub. This was named after one of the leaders of the Peasants' Revolt in 1381, who allegedly addressed his supporters here from a hay cart.

After crossing the main road, we enter the main part of the Heath, with the oddly named Vale of Health down to our right. This was where a group of people from City of London escaped from the Black Death in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. A mile or so of walking brings us to Kenwood House, an 18<sup>th</sup> century mansion designed by Robert Adam and now owned by English Heritage. The Iveagh collection of paintings is worth a return visit. We will have our coffee stop in front of the house (toilets available). The walk continues for about 1¼ miles across the Heath, past Highgate Ponds to leave it near Hampstead Heath station.

A short walk brings us to the bus stop for the no 1 bus outside the Royal Free Hospital. We take the bus to Chalk Farm station from which it's a short walk to enter Primrose Hill, at over 200 ft one of nearest viewpoints to Central London. There is a vista board at the top explaining the sky line. This is the place in H. G. Wells' *War of the Worlds*, where a Martian war machine was left as a monument to show how near mankind came to disaster. On descending down from the Hill, we cross the main road and the Regent's Canal near the London Zoo to enter Regent's Park. After passing acres of playing fields, we reach the lake near the London Central Mosque. If the day is fine, we will picnic here for lunch near a café and toilets. Alternatively, if the weather is poor, we will eat at Marylebone station, where there are refreshments facilities and toilets. We will walk down the top part of Baker Street, where the morning walkers can leave us or double back from Marylebone station, if the weather is poor..

After lunch, we get the Underground from Marylebone to Notting Hill Gate, changing at Paddington. From there it is a short walk to Kensington Gardens to start a 4-mile route across the Gardens and Hyde Park. On entering the Gardens, we proceed to the front of Kensington Palace, where all the floral tributes for Princess Diana were laid out. The original house was acquired by William and Mary to escape the pollution of Central London and the palace we see today is largely the product of rebuilding by George I, using the architect, William Kent. On leaving the Palace we pass the Round Pond, beloved of Kensington nannies and their charges for sailing their toy boats and reach Prince Albert's memorial. It is 176 feet high and was designed by Sir Gilbert Scott in the Gothic Revival style. He also designed the façade at St Pancras station.

We continue to follow the south bank of the Serpentine and under the road bridge to enter Hyde Park. We shortly come to the water feature, which makes up the Diana Memorial Fountain. We can take a tea stop at that point, where there are a cafe and toilets. The walk continues past the Lido to the end of the lake, and a short detour is made to visit the memorial to the 52 people, who died in the 7<sup>th</sup> July bombings. After negotiating the roundabout at Hyde Park Corner, with its Wellington Memorial, we pass through part of Green Park, taking in the Bomber Command war memorial to emerge at the Victoria Memorial in front of Buckingham Palace. The last ½ mile of the walk takes us into St James's Park near some toilets and along the lake to leave the park near HM Treasury to emerge in Parliament Square for Westminster Underground. Look out for a few pelicans, which frequent the lake, one of which famously swallowed a pigeon.

Tony Sheward

tel: 01234 831388 (before the day of the walk) mobile:07745 655938 (on the day)

E:mail: [tony.sheward@btinternet.com](mailto:tony.sheward@btinternet.com)