

WALKING AROUND HANWELL



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This walk takes in some of London's unique open spaces. Protected from the urban sprawl to the west, the Grand Union Canal and Osterley Park provide a rare escape from the onslaught of traffic and noise in the surrounding areas.

With additional walking opportunities around the River Brent and Osterley Park, this area of London is a superb location for walkers.

HISTORY

The Grand Union Canal was instrumental in the development of this corner of London. Factories, foundries and wharves gradually replaced fields and farmland as the industrial age took control. On this walk, you will follow an historic transport link, steeped in industrial history which today provides a peaceful refuge worlds apart from its industrial past.

Boston Manor to Osterley Lock

Begin your walk at Boston Manor Tube Station and turn left along Boston Road. Opposite the Harvester pub-restaurant, turn left for the signposted canal walk. Cross Southdown Avenue and continue ahead entering the park. Immediately bear left and, following the waymarker, join the path next to the wooded area and sports pavilion. Continue ahead into the woodland again following the markers. When you reach the M4 bridge and the Grand Union Canal towpath, turn right and cross the footbridge. Osterley Lock is visible in front of you.

Osterley Lock to Norwood Top Lock

Just past the lock, the River Brent, which shares the course of the canal for some distance, leaves the canal over a large toothed weir. Continue along the towpath. Less than one mile from here are the six locks of the Hanwell Flight, a Scheduled Ancient Monument which raises the canal by 53 feet in a third of a mile.

Alongside the flight a high wall separates the canal and St Bernard's hospital, originally built in 1831 as a 'lunatic asylum'. The next bridge is the famous Three Bridges where road, rail and canal cross at different levels. This was one of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's



last engineering feats and is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument. At Norwood Top Lock leave the canal by crossing the white bridge.

Norwood Top Lock to Osterley Park

After crossing the bridge, walk towards the road and turn left into Poplar Avenue (it may say Melbury Avenue!) Continue ahead and bear right towards the main road, Tentelow Lane. Walking down this road for ten minutes until you reach the Plough Pub opposite a parade of shops. Turn down the side of the pub along an enclosed public footpath signposted St. Mary's Avenue. Continue over

the road and along the footpath which crosses a field. At the other side of the field climb the steps and take the bridge over the M4 motorway and past the farm gate to the park entrance.

The noise of the motorway soon subsides as you enter Osterley Park and admire the amazing farm and house with its walled garden on your right. The farm animals, open space and total serenity of the park makes you feel a million miles from London but you are actually only eight miles from Piccadilly Circus. Keep going down this track, through farmland and along an avenue of small-leaved lime trees, to a metal gate.



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Every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of all information given in this guide and British Waterways London does not accept responsibility for any changes that may have occurred since going to press. Thanks to John Ashley for original walk research. Walking alone in isolated areas is not recommended.

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Start: Boston Manor Station
Finish: Osterley Station
Distance: 4 miles
Time: 2 hours
Transport: Picadilly Line
Conditions: Mostly flat with some steeper gradients unsuitable for wheelchairs



Continue right, past the stable buildings and the main house.

Osterley House to Osterley Station

The original house on this site was built in the latter part of the 16th century for Sir Thomas Gresham but was modernised by Robert Adam in the 18th century. The house is now owned by The National Trust and is open to the public for tours and events. Visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/places/osterley for further information.

Continue past the house and circling the lake to the left, pass the information kiosk and the

automatic gate near the car park to enter Main Avenue. Following this path, head out of the park, passing the farm shop towards the road. Cross the road onto Thornbury Road and continue to the main A4 road. Turn right and Osterley station is about 200 metres on your right.

Other walks available in this series

- Little Venice to Camden
- Walking the East Ends Canals
- Islington to Limehouse Walk
- Walking in the Lea Valley
- Walking in Harlow
- Walking in Broxbourne

