

Planes, pollution, planning and politics

A self guided walk near Heathrow Airport



Explore life in the shadow of one of the world's busiest airports

See and hear the impact of air and road traffic

Discover historic villages and regenerated green spaces

Find out the cases for and against airport expansion

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the stories of our landscapes
discovered through walks







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Planes, pollution, planning and politics

Explore life in the shadow of a busy international airport

Going for a walk close to one of the world's busiest international airports might seem a strange choice. Yet right on the edge of London Heathrow is a surprising landscape of natural scenery and historic villages.

Find out why this site was originally chosen for the airport and how politicians have struggled ever since to manage its growth. Stand on the centre line of a proposed new runway and hear arguments for and against airport expansion.



A plane landing at Heathrow runway 27L
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Experience for yourself the noise of aircraft and motorways and learn how they affect the air you breathe.



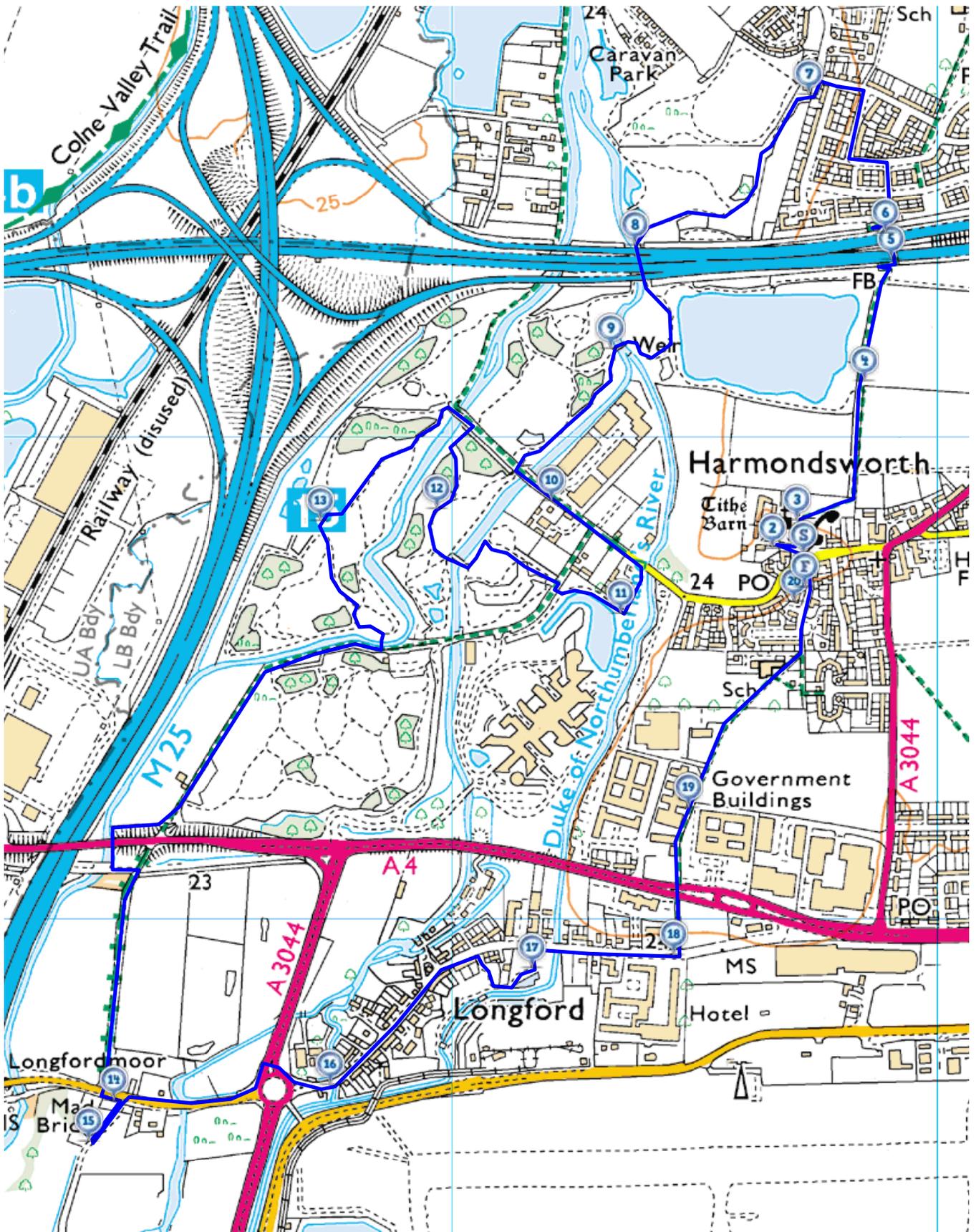
Rape seed field near Colnbrook
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On the other hand, discover how planning regulations have helped to protect buildings and preserve a green haven for birds and wildflowers.

Visit a barn which poet John Betjeman described as the 'Cathedral of Middlesex' and enjoy a restored moor that has earned the Wildlife Trusts' Biodiversity Benchmark.

This is a place where people and planes co-exist, and where planners and politicians battle over their future.

Route overview

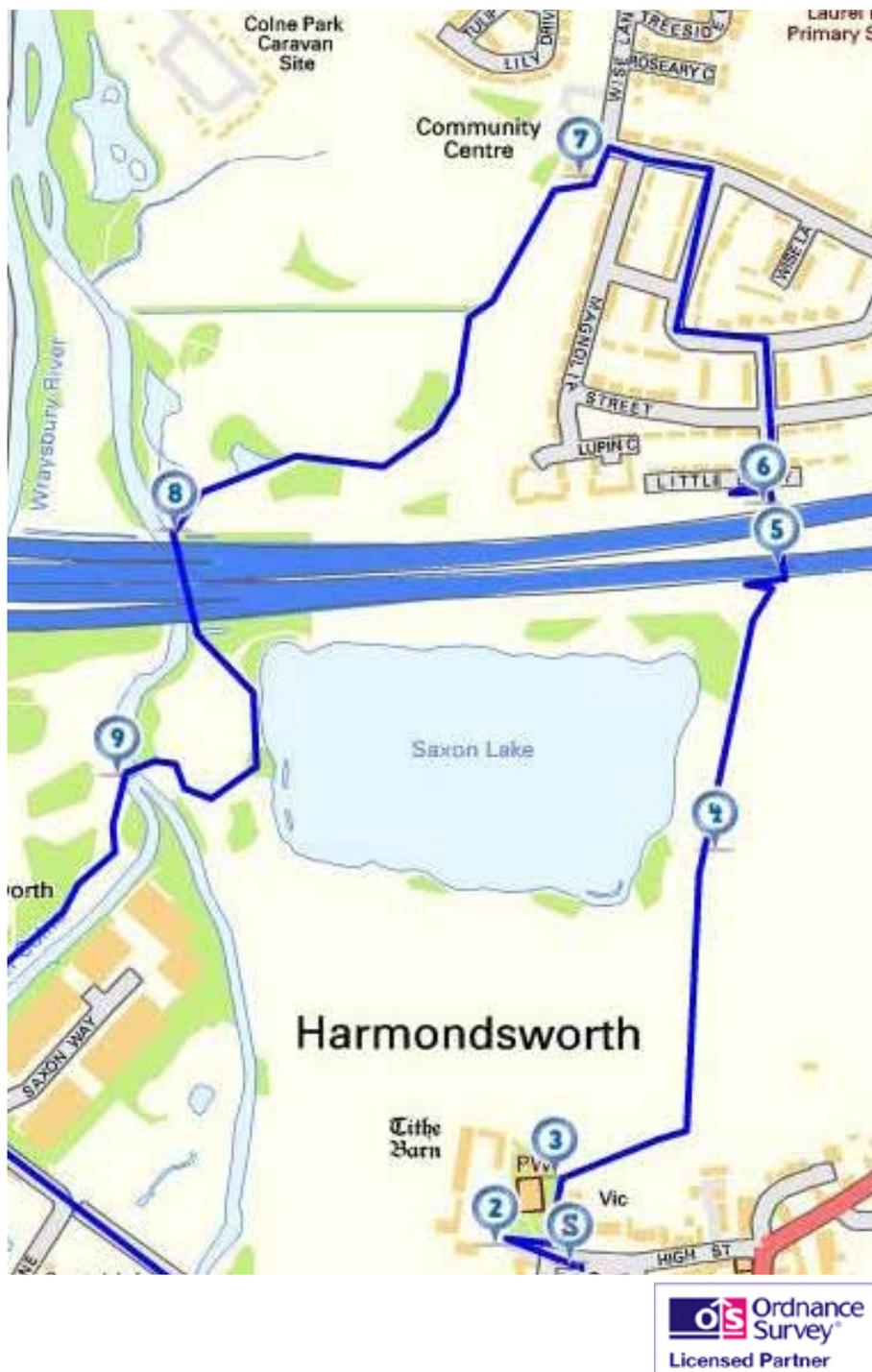


Practical information

Location	Harmondsworth, Middlesex (inside London Borough of Hillingdon)
Getting there	<p>Train - The nearest railway station is West Drayton (2 miles away). Regular direct services link to London Paddington, Reading, Bristol Temple Meads and Oxford.</p> <p>Underground - The nearest stations are Heathrow Terminal 5, Heathrow Terminals 1-3 and Hatton Cross.</p> <p>Bus - Served from Heathrow Central and Uxbridge (U3) and Hayes Town (350). Routes 222, 350, U1, U3 and U5 link West Drayton station and central London.</p> <p>Car - The main road into Harmondsworth is the A3044. Access is via Junction 4 of the M4 and Junction 14 of the M25. Some parking is usually available in Harmondsworth village.</p>
Start and finish point	Harmondsworth Village Green, West Drayton, Middlesex UB7 0AQ
Distance	5 ½ miles
Directions from railway and bus station to start	<p>You are advised to take a bus from West Drayton (routes 350 or U3) to Harmondsworth. The nearest stops to the village are on Hatch Lane at the end of Harmondsworth High Street.</p> <p>To walk from West Drayton station turn left and go up to the roundabout. Turn left at the roundabout and go under the railway bridge onto Station Road. Pass the library then turn right into Church Road. Turn into the park on the left. Follow the straight path through the park past Laurel Lane School and emerge by Rowan Road. You can now use the map on page 8 of this booklet to make your way to Harmondsworth Village Green.</p>

Level	Gentle – A mostly flat route through villages and parkland
Conditions	Good footpaths throughout, mainly on quiet roads. Two busy dual carriageways to cross. Be aware that Stop 15 especially can be very noisy.
Suitable for	Families – Take care when crossing the dual carriageways. Children of all ages usually enjoy the thrill of plane spotting. Dogs - Must be kept on a lead
Refreshments	There are some pubs along the route that serve food including The Five Bells in Harmondsworth (at the start/finish) plus The White Horse and Kings Arms pubs in Longford (after Stop 16). There are picnic areas on Harmondsworth Moor (Stops 11 to 13) so you may want to take a packed lunch.
Toilets	There are no public conveniences along the route. Customers can use facilities in the pubs.
Access information	The gate to British Airways Waterside (Stop 11) is locked between 6am and 10:30am Mondays to Fridays. Please use the alternative Direction 10 if you are doing the walk during these hours.
Places to visit	Harmondsworth Great Barn is managed by English Heritage. It is open from April to October on certain Sundays of each month. Free entry. Tel: 0870 333 1181 The Keyhole at Harmondsworth Moor is a good place for plane watching. You may want to bring binoculars.

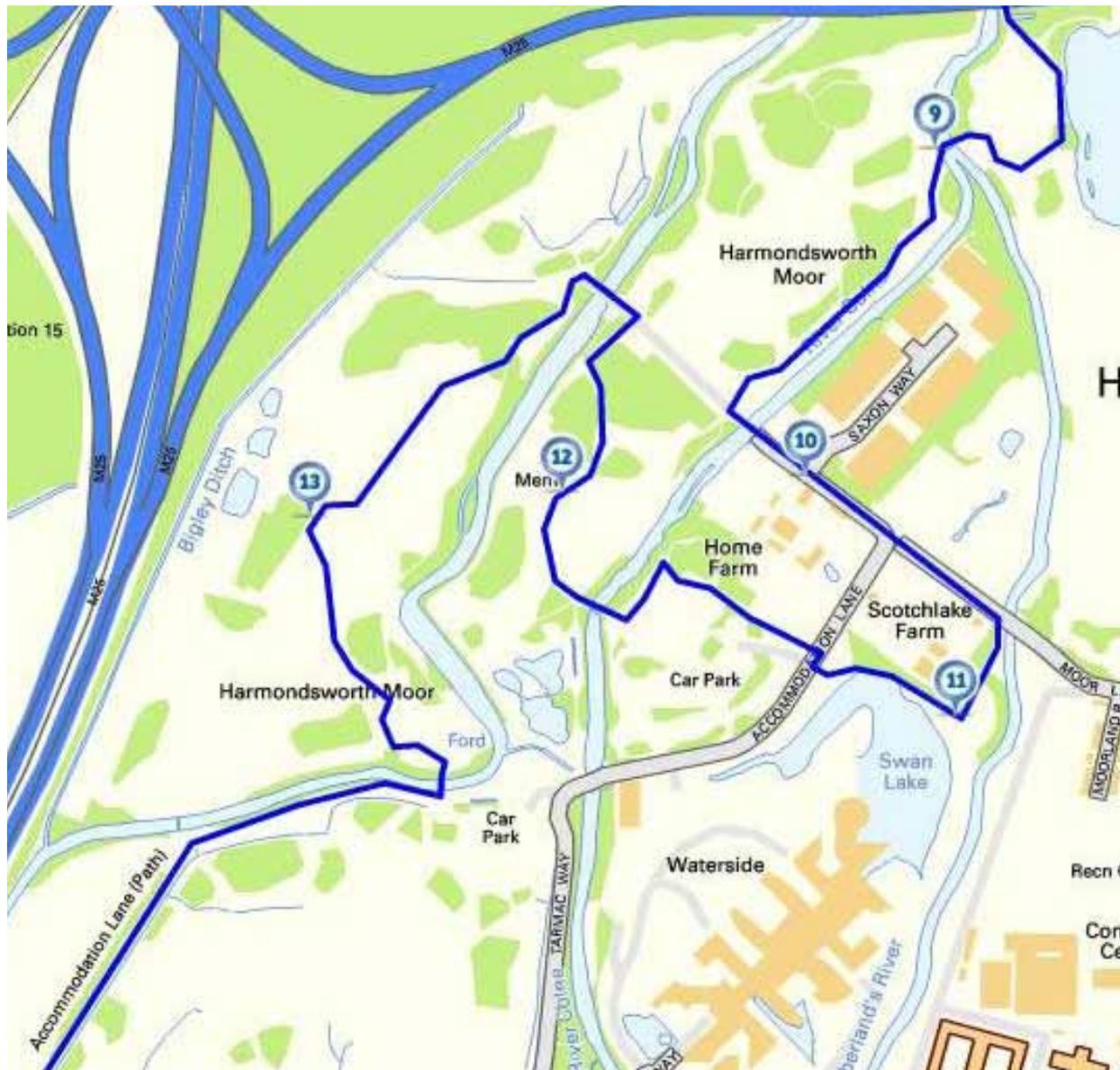
First part of the route



Stopping points

5. Harmondsworth Village Green
2. Harmondsworth Great Barn
3. St Mary's Church graveyard
4. Saxon Lake
5. M4 motorway bridge
6. Houses at Little Benty, beside the M4
7. Entrance to Colne Valley Park
8. River Colne, Colne Valley Park
9. Entrance to Harmondsworth Moor

Second part of the route



Stopping points

- 10.** Saxon Freight Centre, Saxon Way
- 11.** British Airways Waterside, Swan Lake
- 12.** Canadian Memorial, Harmondsworth Moor
- 13.** The Keyhole, Harmondsworth Moor

Third part of the route



Stopping points

- 14.** Kissing gate on Bath Road
- 15.** Under the flightpath, Bath Road
- 16.** King's Bridge over Longford River
- 17.** Green Gates, Longford
- 18.** Bus stop on Bath Road
- 19.** Colnbrook Immigration Removal Centre
- 20.** Harmondsworth Hall, Summerhouse Lane
- E.** Harmondsworth Village Green

Directions

These directions are for use with the audio commentary. Listen to each track then read the directions below to get to the next stop.

1. Welcome to Harmondsworth

Harmondsworth Village Green

Directions 1

Walk between the Five Bells Pub and St Mary's Church up to a large gate. You should be able to see a large barn on the other side. If you are here on a Sunday when the gate is open, go up to the barn. Otherwise look at it from the gate. Listen to Track 2.

2. The cathedral of Middlesex

Harmondsworth Great Barn, Manor Court

Directions 2

If you have come on a Sunday when the barn is open it is well worth a visit. When you are ready, go back towards the village green and enter the churchyard on the left. Go to the right of the church and stop in the graveyard. Listen to Track 3.

3. The price of peace

St Mary's Church graveyard, High Street

Directions 3

Follow the path through the churchyard and leave through the gate. Follow the footpath across the field for about 200 metres. Stop by a lake where a path joins from the left. Listen to Track 4.

4. On the centre line

Saxon Lake

Directions 4

Continue along the footpath with Saxon Lake on your left until you reach a pedestrian bridge crossing the M4 motorway. Walk onto the bridge and stop on the first span overlooking the carriageway. Listen to Track 5.

5. Motorway madness

M4 Motorway pedestrian bridge

Directions 5

Continue across the bridge and go through the gate at the bottom of the ramp. Listen here to Track 6.

6. Invisible irritants

Houses in Little Benty beside the M4

Directions 6

With your back to the motorway follow the road leading directly ahead then turn first left into Magnolia Street. After 150 metres turn right at the T-junction and continue for a further 200 metres to another T-junction. Turn left and immediately left again stopping at the kissing gate with a notice board by it. Listen to Track 7.

7. Green guardians

Entrance to Colne Valley Park

Directions 7

Go through the gate and follow the footpath for about 500 metres, stopping by the river just before a motorway bridge. Listen to Track 8.

8. Not so high speed

Bridge over the River Colne, Colne Valley Park

Directions 8

Follow the path under the motorway. Pass a path on the left and bear right. When you reach the other side of the lake take the first path to the right. After another 100 metres stop on a wooden bridge. Listen to Track 9.

9. Prospect park

Bridge over the River Colne into Harmondsworth Moor

Directions 9

Cross the bridge and take the path immediately to your left following close to the River Colne. Follow the riverside path until you reach the next bridge on your left. Cross the bridge into Accommodation Lane and stop by the entrance to Saxon Freight Centre. Listen here to Track 10.

10. Hub and spoke

Saxon Frieght Centre, Saxon Way

Directions 10

Continue along Accommodation Lane. After about 100 metres where the road turns left keep straight on. After another 100 metres, just before a bridge, go through a wooden gate to your right and join a footpath. Continue until you reach a lake with modern buildings beyond it. Listen to Track 11.

Note: The gate is locked between 6am and 10:30am from Monday to Friday. If you are here during these times then you will have to skip the next stop and follow these directions instead to arrive at Stop 12:

Return to the bridge and cross over, taking the path immediately to your left following the river. After 200 metres by another bridge take the path uphill to your right and stop after 100 metres by a memorial stone.

11. Part time parking

British Airways Waterside, Swan Lake

Directions 11

With Swan Lake on your left follow the footpath until you come to a signpost for Pulpit Bridge. Turn right and go through the gate. Cross the road and go through another gate towards a car park. Follow the footpath for about 200 metres to the bridge. Cross over and take the footpath straight ahead uphill. Stop after 100 metres by a memorial stone on the left of the path. There is a bench here to sit down on if you like. Listen to Track 12.

12. Political plotting

Canadian Memorial, Harmondsworth Moor

Directions 12

Continue along the footpath keeping left and until you reach a gate before a wide track. Go through the gate and turn left over a bridge. Go through the gate on the left then turn immediately left and then fork right following a signpost to The Keyhole. At the top of the hill stop at The Keyhole which is a feature made of large stone blocks. Listen to Track 13.

13. Terminal trouble

The Keyhole, Harmondsworth Moor

Directions 13

With The Keyhole behind you, make your way to the path and follow it round to the left towards the airport. Take the right fork down to the river. Cross the footbridge and turn immediately right. Follow this wide wooded track by the river and stay on it as it bends left by another bridge.

At a Public Bridleway sign take the right fork and pass under the road flyover. On the other side bear left then turn right to pass the old road bridge. Continue along the wooded track for 400 metres until you reach another road. Cross over and turn left. Stop by a kissing gate. Listen to Track 14.

14. Safety first

Kissing gate on Bath Road

Directions 14

Go through the gate, turn right and cross over the road. Follow the stony track and stop after about 100 metres at the top of the slope. Listen to Track 15.

15. Noise nuisance

Directly under the flight path by Bath Road

Directions 15

Return to the road, cross back over and turn right. After about 250 metres you will come to a large roundabout. Carefully cross the dual carriageway to the left of the roundabout. Take care with children here as vehicles can be travelling fast. Continue past the roundabout towards Longford. Stop after about 50 metres by a bridge which has a royal crest on it. Listen to Track 16.

16. Feeding fountains

King's Bridge over the Longford River

Directions 16

Continue along the road through Longford. Cross over to the White Horse pub. About 100 metres further look for a footpath on your right by a village notice board. Go through the gate and follow the path. Stop when you reach a large green box on the right. Listen to Track 17.

17. Going green

Green Gates, Longford

Directions 17

Continue along the path and rejoin the road. Turn right and continue by the road for about 300 metres. Stop by a bus stop opposite a Premier Inn hotel. Listen to Track 18.

18. A particular pump

Bus stop on Bath Road, Longford

Directions 17

Cross the road and take the footpath to the left of the Premier Inn hotel. When you reach the dual carriageway, cross over. Take great care because vehicles tend to travel fast here. Take the footpath immediately ahead of you away from the road. Stop after about 100 metres by the pale modern building on the left behind a high fence. Listen to Track 19.

19. An unfriendly welcome

Colnbrook Immigration Removal Centre, Colnbrook Bypass

Directions 19

Continue along the path past the Immigration Removal Centre and into a park. Pass Harmondsworth Primary School and bear left. When you join a road continue ahead for about 100 metres. Stop by Harmondsworth Hall on the left. Listen to Track 20.

20. Going green

Green Gates, Longford

Directions 20

Continue for about another 20 metres and stop when you are back at Harmondsworth Village Green. Listen to Track 21.

21. A particular pump

Bus stop on Bath Road, Longford

Directions 21

We hope that you have enjoyed the walk. You are now back at the Village Green where we began. You may like to explore the village and enjoy some refreshments at the Five Bells pub. To return to West Drayton station you can catch a bus from Hatch Lane at the end of the High Street.



Scenes from around Heathrow
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Further information

The Airports Commission

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/airports-commission

Colne Valley Park

www.colnevalleypark.org.uk

English Heritage - Harmondsworth Great Barn

www.english-heritage.org.uk/daysout/properties/harmondsworth-barn

Government Aviation Policy Framework

www.gov.uk/government/publications/aviation-policy-framework

Harmondsworth Hall

harmondsworthhall.co.uk

Heathrow Airport

www.heathrowairport.com

Heathrow Airwatch

www.heathrowairwatch.org.uk

The London Air Quality Network

www.londonair.org.uk

St Mary's Church, Harmondsworth

stmaryharmondsworth.webs.com

Credits

The RGS-IBG would like to thank the following people and organisations for their assistance in producing this Discovering Britain walk:

- **Members of the Discovering Britain team** for suggesting the walk and providing photographs
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