

NEW RIVER WALK
ENFIELD TOWN TO ISLINGTON 'NEW RIVER HEAD'
Led by John Polley

Thank you for your interest in walking the New River from Enfield Town to New River Head in Islington. This is an all day walk of around 10.5 miles (17 km). You are welcome to join us for all, or part, of the route. Please refer to the schedule below for approximate timings/locations + nearby train stations.

Our walk starts at the 'Crown & Horsehoes' pub on the banks of the original New River Loop in Enfield Town. The pub is situated adjacent to one of the many cast iron bridges built for the NR Company at Bilston Ironworks near Wolverhampton in 1841.

We break for lunch at Avenue Gardens by Alexandra Palace station where there are seats, local shops & a pub. Short breaks are taken, in the morning at Deadmans Bridge on Green Lanes, Palmers Green & in the afternoon at Clissold House café, in Clissold Park at Stoke Newington.



When built the NR was around 40 miles (64km) in length, 10 feet wide & about 4 feet deep. The bed of the river was originally formed of puddled clay, which was far from watertight. Leaks were commonplace especially on the generally lower east bank (the left hand side as you walk downstream). Flooding of adjoining land led to numerous complaints from local landowners and work to repair & maintain the banks was ongoing.

The many loops, such as the Enfield Loop, allowed the NR to cross the many intersecting watercourses and to maintain it's natural downward flow along the 100 foot contour. It descended a mere 20 feet (5.8 metres) in the course of it's

journey towards London, an average of only 6 inches per mile - quite an achievement in the early 17th Century.

When the NR was constructed no means of pumping water existed. In later years the invention and increased use of 'modern' technology, starting with wind & horsepower, followed by the steam engine and latterly electricity, enabled the course to be shortened. The NR has been straightened and shortened over the years with the many loops being abandoned in favour of new tunnelled, piped or viaduct sections. The Enfield Loop itself is by-passed by three 54" diameter pipe runs built in about 1880. Enfield Council now own & maintain the loop, it being preserved as an amenity water feature only. The piped section was bombed & damaged during WW2 and the Enfield Loop was brought back into use as a main feed to the NR during the 1940-1950s.

Aside of the many changes, much of the NR you will walk today follows the original course constructed over 400 years ago between 1608 & 1613.

Some NR facts:

- The name 'New River' is incorrect. It is neither 'new' nor a 'river'. It is technically a canal or man made aqueduct.
- 48 million gallons of water per day (MGPD) is fed into the NR. The bulk is extracted from the River Lea at 'New Gauge' near Ware (22.5 MGPD) with the balance being extracted from the original source at Chadwell Spring & also from the more modern 1980s miniature borehole/pumping stations along the route
- Water takes approximately 2 days to flow naturally from the 'New Gauge' intake to the Stock Newington reservoirs
- The cost of building the NR was approximately £18,500



It is only in recent years that much of the NR has been made accessible to the public. In years gone by, you were not allowed to go near the river & certainly not to walk along the banks! I can well remember as a young boy in the 1960s seeing the banks regularly patrolled by uniformed security guards with Alsatian dogs! Like you, I am happy that we can now walk & enjoy most of the NR.













Please feel free to ask any questions you may have regarding the New River, either during the course of the day, or in the future.
I look forward to seeing you.

John Polley
(New River Action Group)
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The nearest railway station is Enfield Chase on the Kings Cross/Finsbury Park line which is about 5 minutes walk away. Alternatively Enfield Town stn (London Overground - Liverpool Street/Seven Sisters line) is about 15 minutes walk away. If you are coming by car there is ample 'on street' parking in the area.

At the end of the walk, you can take a bus or short walk to Kings Cross station to take the tube to Finsbury Park & the overground train back to Enfield Chase.

Walkers may join or leave the walk at any point. tube/rail stations on/near to our walk route are indicated by  or  below.

| Location | Distance (km) | Total (km) | Time |
|--|-------------------|------------|---------|
|  = station nearby | | | |
| Meet up | | | 9.45am |
| START - Enfield Town – ‘Crown & Horseshoes’ pub | 0 | 0 | 10.00am |
|  Enfield Chase | | | |
| Bush Hill Park - ‘Clarendon Arch’ | 2 | 2 | 10.40am |
| Winchmore Hill – ‘Highfield PS/Esso garage’ | 1 | 3 | 11.00am |
| Palmers Green -‘Hedge Lane’ | 1 | 4 | 11.20am |
| Palmers Green - ‘Deadmans Bridge’ –  Palmers Green | 1.2 | 5.2 | 11.45am |
| BREAK | 11.45am – 12 noon | | |
| Bowes Park – ‘Myddelton Road’ | 0.5 | 5.7 | 12.20pm |
| Alexandra Palace station –  | 1.5 | 7.2 | 12.45pm |
| LUNCH | 12.45pm – 1.30pm | | |
| Hornsey – ‘High Street’  | 1.2 | 8.4 | 2pm |
| Haringey – ‘Ladder’  | 1 | 9.4 | 2.15pm |
| Finsbury Park  | 0.7 | 10.1 | 2.45pm |
| Stoke Newington – Lordship Road/East/West reservoirs  Manor House | 1.4 | 11.5 | 3.15pm |
| Clissold Park – ‘Café’  Manor House | 1.2 | 12.7 | 3.45pm |
| BREAK | 3.45pm - 4.05pm | | |
| Canonbury station  | 1.3 | 14 | 4:40pm |
| Essex Road | 0.7 | 14.7 | 5pm |
| Islington Green – ‘Myddelton statue’  Angel | 0.7 | 15.4 | 5.20pm |
| Rosebery Avenue - ‘Sadlers Wells’  Angel | 1.1 | 16.5 | 5.45pm |
| END - New River Head/Claremont Square reservoir | 1.2 | 17 | 6pm |