



Capital Ring
Section 14
Hackney Wick to Beckton District Park

Version 3 : August 2010



Start: Hackney Wick (TQ372845)
Station: Hackney Wick
Finish: Beckton District Park (Stansfeld Road)
(TQ422811)
Station: Royal Albert DLR
Distance: 5.2 miles (8.3 km)



Introduction: This is a surprisingly green, easy walk of just over 5 miles (8 km). The route passes the site of the Olympic Park so at times there may be diversions – which will be signed. Much of the route is on a traffic-free, firm level path which, uniquely, is on top of some of London's sewers. There are some gentle slopes and some steps, often with adjacent ramps.

The walk goes alongside Lee Navigation to Old Ford Lock, onto the Greenway, past the wonderful Abbey Mills Pumping Station and ends in Beckton District Park.

Pubs and cafés can be found at Hackney Wick, Plaistow and Beckton District Park.

Trains and tubes run from Hackney Wick, West Ham and Pudding Mill Lane and Royal Albert on the Docklands Light Railway, and there are many buses along the way. There is a link to the start of the walk from Hackney Wick Station, which is served by National Rail.

Directions: On leaving the station look out for the Capital Ring signs and follow them to the left along Hepscott Road to the main road. Turn left along Rothbury Road **A** and cross over the canal bridge. Then turn right down the steep cobbled ramp onto the Lee Navigation towpath.

The River Lea and Lea Valley and the canal known as Lee Navigation refer to the same piece of water. There were disputes about the spelling for a long time and to settle them it was decided that the natural aspects of the river, such as the river itself, would be LEA and manmade features such as the canal would be LEE.

Keep straight ahead on the towpath, going over the cobbled bases for the cranes that loaded and unloaded the boats.

Carry on to Old Ford Lock **B** where you cross over the River Lea which joins the Navigation here.

The route passes a red brick house with a large garden which was originally the Lock Keeper's Cottage but more recently was used for the Big Breakfast Show until it came to end in 2002. Some of the sets used in the show are still in the garden.

Go past the lock and follow the towpath under a bridge, left through a barrier and up a ramp to the Greenway. Turn right here.

The Greenway is on top of the Northern Outfall Sewage Embankment. It runs for nearly 6 miles (9.6km) from Hackney to Beckton where the sewage is treated before discharge into the River Thames. It forms part of London's extensive sewage system put in by Sir Joseph Bazalgette in the 1860s and much of it is still in use today. The Capital Ring follows this elevated pathway for nearly 3 miles (4.8km) with great views of the Olympic site.

The route crosses several tidal rivers known collectively as the Bow Back Rivers. The route briefly leaves the Greenway to pass under the railway bridge and then returns to the upper path. As it rejoins the Greenway you will see the welcoming blue metal banner with typical figures of people from the area.

Shortly after crossing Stratford High Street, you will go over the Meridian Line, also encountered on Section 3 at Downham.

The route now passes the star of the Greenway, the Abbey Mills Pumping Station, **C** a palatial structure built by Bazalgette in 1868. As the new sewers operated by gravity by the time sewage had reached the East End, it was over 13 metres underground. So, to get the waste back up to the surface, steam-powered pumping stations were built, like Abbey Mills, which was in use until 1996, when it was replaced by the shining silver building nearby. However, the old pumping station is still used during heavy storms and its historic pumps, now electric, are used around 30 days a year.

With its ornamental Gothic architecture, the old pumping station is used as a location for TV and film, featuring in episodes of 'The Bill', 'London's Burning', 'Hogfather' and 'Batman Begins'.

The route passes handsome Victorian school buildings on the left and on the right, the Memorial Recreation Ground and then the East London Cemetery. **D** A notable burial here is the World War I spy, Carl Hans Lody, one of the last people to be executed at the Tower of London in 1914.

The next part of the route goes past Plaistow, where there are cafés and pubs, and over several roads including Boundary Lane with its giant concrete cannon balls. Ahead, on the right, you can see Barking Creek Flood Barrier, 3 miles (4.8km) long and completed in 1982.

You will soon leave the Greenway and follow the route over the footbridge of the A13, Newham Way. **E** Follow the route via Roman Road to Beckton District Park. The route through the park winds along by part of a tree trail with unusual species from around the world.

Cross Tollgate Road **F** and continue into the southern part of the park. After the Will Thorne Pavilion on the left the route joins Section 15 - to continue, turn left down a wide, leafy path.

Otherwise follow the signs to get to Royal Albert Docklands Light Railway Station. **G**