

Barnet Healthy Heritage Walks

Welcome to Barnet Healthy Heritage Walks. These walks are designed to provide a gentle stroll of about 5 to 10 kilometres or 3 to 6 miles, approximately 5000 to 10,000 steps, taking in a few buildings and sites of interest, and where possible using green spaces and footpaths.

East Finchley to New Southgate Walk

This walk is in one direction from East Finchley to New Southgate, passing through Islington and St Pancras Cemetery, Coppetts Wood, and eventually arriving in Friern Park and the building which was previously Colney Hatch Asylum. There are eight stops on the tour. The walk is approximately 4.3 kilometres or 2.7 miles. We would ask that you take care walking through the cemetery area and not to stray from the roads into the undergrowth as this may be unsafe.

The entrance to the cemetery and start of this walk is accessible from the High Road by the 263 bus; the closest bus stops are Oak Lane (Bus Stops F or J) or Chandos Road (Bus Stops G or H). The nearest Underground station is East Finchley Tube station on the Northern Line which is 6 minutes by bus from East Finchley (Bus Stop F) or a 15-minute walk north along the High Road. For full public transport details please visit the Transport for London [website](#). There is a wide variety of shops and amenities along the High Road should you need refreshments for your walk. Please check cemetery opening times on their [website](#).

Audiotour part 1 – Islington and St Pancras Cemetery

You are standing at the entrance of the [Islington and St Pancras Cemetery](#) on Viaduct Road. Opened in 1854 by two inner London boroughs and still separately administered, this was the first cemetery created as a direct consequence of the Metropolitan Burials Act. That Act was brought in to alleviate health problems caused by overcrowded burial grounds in central London. Once part of Finchley Common, the original 87-acre cemetery has now expanded to cover 190 acres. There are hundreds of thousands of people buried in its grounds and is now said to be the most densely populated cemetery in Europe.



As you walk along Viaduct Road, keep to the left-hand side and be aware of vehicles entering or leaving the cemetery. Follow the road round to the left onto Circular Road until you reach the chapel which is point 2 on your map. Now pause the audiotour until you arrive at the chapel.

Audiotour part 2 - The chapel

The chapel in front of you, with its 100-foot spire, was designed by Barnet and Birch Limited. The company specialised in cemetery design; they also laid out and landscaped the ground of the cemetery. The first burial was conducted in August 1854. Interesting burials include Henry Croft, the original “Pearly King”. Croft was born in St Pancras Workhouse in 1861 and died in the same Workhouse in 1930. He was a council road sweeper and rat-catcher who decorated his clothes with mother of pearl buttons in order to show off and help him to raise money for charity. He became the “Pearly King” when he won a competition in 1883 for the Flashiest Youth in London. [Pearly Kings \(and Queens\)](#) grew into an important charitable tradition among London’s costermongers (street vendors of fruit and vegetables), even appearing in the Opening Parade of the 2012 Summer Olympic Games in London.

Another famous burial is the artist Ford Madox Brown (who lived from 1821 to 1893) who painted the morally-improving and historical pictures: ‘The Last of England’, depicting an emigrating couple in 1855 and ‘Work’ which he laboured on over a long period in the 1850s and 1860’s. His magnificent ‘Manchester Murals’ decorate the interior of that city’s town hall. His works are regarded as masterpieces of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood’s style, an influential art movement in the 19th century.

The strangest funeral? That of a well-loved clown, Billy Walton in 1897. As per his wishes, his cortège was accompanied to the grave, by his fellow circus artistes performing: sword swallowers, tumblers and trick pony riders. His hearse was one of the gaudy circus wagons and the circus band played ‘Down Amongst the Dead Men Let Him Lie.’ See the newspaper report [here](#).

There are accessible toilets in the chapel should you need to use them. *From Circular Road, continue to your right, past the chapel and head down Centre Avenue. On the left-hand side, you will pass a bench facing the road. A little further on you will come to another wooden bench, painted grey and against a tree. Set a*



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little back from this is a grave with a parachutist depicted on it, which is point 3 on your map. Now pause the audiotour until you arrive at this grave.

Audiotour part 3 - The Parachutist

At first glance the grave appears to be that of [Harry Gardner](#), the Lyceum clown. But the figure is that of Alfred Edwin Smith or possibly his wife Ellen “Countess” Smith. They were a couple who performed parachute jumps together in the 1890s and 1900’s. Note that the parachutist holds onto the parachute rather than being strapped up.

Continue down Centre Avenue, past East Road on your left and a white building on your right until you spot the rather grand Mond Mausoleum from the junction of Centre Avenue and Joint Road which is point 4 on your map. Now pause the audiotour until you reach the Mond Mausoleum.

Audiotour part 4 - The Mond Mausoleum

From the junction of Centre Avenue and Joint Road (on your left) it is easy to spot the large Mond Mausoleum to your right and up the small hill ahead of you. Thomas Braddell (who lived from 1884 to 1970) designed this striking building in the Ionic style and is based on the ancient temple of Nemesis in Attica in Greece. The materials are granite and Portland stone with a pediment supported by two fluted Ionic columns. It was built for Ludwig Mond (who lived from 1839 to 1909), a very successful German-born industrial chemist, who moved to Britain in 1867. Mond pioneered improvements in several fields of production including the recovery of harmful sulphur from by-products of alkali production for the textile industry, large-scale soda ash manufacturing, and cheap coal gas for industrial heating (‘Mond gas’). His discovery of nickel carbonyl enabled the commercial extraction of nickel from ore, leading to a successful international operation spanning mines in Canada to refineries in Wales. His companies included the Mond Nickel Co. and Brunner, Mond & Co., the latter being one of four highly respected companies that merged in 1926 to form ICI (Imperial Chemical Industries), one of the UK’s leading industrial powerhouses. Mond was noted too for his generous gifts to charity and donation to the National Gallery of a fine collection of 42 Italian paintings. A room there is named after him, he has a portrait in the National Portrait Gallery and a statue in front of his company’s factory in Winnington, Cheshire. The Royal Society of Chemistry still



awards the Ludwig Mond Prize Award for outstanding research in any aspect of inorganic chemistry.

Now continue to the left down Joint Road, you will walk past turnings onto Middle Road and New Road. Take the second left onto Roman Road and continue until you come to a small mausoleum on the right depicting a car crash, The Melesi Mausoleum which is point 5 on your map. Now pause the audiotour until you reach the Melesi Mausoleum.

Audiotour part 5 - The Melesi Mausoleum

You are standing in the Roman Catholic section of the cemetery, which was added in the 1890s, and originally had a chapel of its own. The friezes which surround the doorway show the death of Letizia Melesi. Letizia was brought up in Ireland but of Italian parents, and married Gaetano Melesi, a prosperous Italian wine merchant living in Shepherd's Bush. In 1913, Letizia was run over by a motor taxi cab on Holborn Viaduct on leaving church. She is depicted being borne aloft by angels, as it was believed that she went straight to heaven, having just been to confession and in a state of grace, free from sin. Gaetano commissioned the family mausoleum in 1922. He died in Spring of 1950.

Continue to the end of Roman Road and turn right on to Brook Road. Continue until you reach the back entrance of the cemetery. Please note there are accessible toilets in a red brick building to your left just before you exit the cemetery, should you need to use them. Turn left out of the cemetery where you will find the North Circular Road. Walk along the pavement to your left and take the footbridge across the busy North Circular. Once on the other side, facing the North Circular, continue to your left with bushes and wooden fencing on your left and the road on your right until you reach steps up into Coppetts Wood on your left which is point 6 on your map. Now pause the audiotour until you reach the entry point to Glebeland and Coppetts Wood Nature Reserve, identifiable by an old information board at the top of the steps.



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Audiotour part 6 – Coppetts Wood

Coppetts Wood, as it appears today, is not as old as many think. It is not on any maps prior to the 1860s when other well-known local woods (most notably Coldfall Woods) are mentioned, although it was once part of a large wooded area known as Finchley Wood that later became a common – the kind of place where fist-fights or horse races might be held or where highwaymen might prey on unwary travellers!

Coppetts Wood appears on the Ordnance Survey of 1863 as a well laid out plantation with straight paths leading through it and was probably established by William Curtis of Halliwick Manor in Colney Hatch, whose grandfather had purchased the plot during the enclosure of Finchley Common around 1816. By the 1870s the wood had deteriorated. It was the location of the shocking “Finchley Wood Murder”. In 1882, a gipsy, Peter Butler, who was looking for ponies that had strayed away from his camp, found the murdered body of Enoch Clark. Clark and another man, called John Baker, were two criminals from London who had burgled a local house the night before and retired to the woods to split ill-gotten gains. They started to drink some of the wine they had stolen and whilst drunk Baker, believing that Clark had been having an affair with his wife whilst he had been in prison, took the opportunity to murder his rival by brutally hacking him to death.

Continue along the woodland trail through the nature reserve - notable as a haven for fine specimens of oak, sweet chestnut, hazel and hornbeam trees, as well as grasslands and small ponds that attract small mammals, birds and insects. Turn right at the path T-junction. You will reach a fork in the path, follow the path round to the left. Continue down some steps with a metal hand rail on your left. You will come out on Colney Hatch Lane opposite The Betty and Asher Loftus Centre, part of a campus of social welfare facilities managed by Jewish Care including Rosetrees and Lady Sarah Cohen House. Cross over the road and turn left, continue walking up Colney Hatch Lane to Friern Barnet, then turn right onto Friern Barnet Road, which is point 7 on your map. Now pause the audiotour until you reach Friern Barnet Road.



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Audiotour part 7 – Friern Barnet Old Town Hall

A commercial centre developed around the intersection of Friern Barnet Lane and Colney Hatch Lane, with Woodhouse Road and Friern Barnet Road, as the local resident population grew and travellers passed through. This junction also became the location for the [Town Hall](#) for a new local council created in 1895, although the building you see today dates from the early 1940's. With its distinctive pared-down appearance, pale brown brickwork and clock on an octagonal copper-green lantern, its architectural style draws on the contemporary minimalist style popular in parts of continental Europe and was influenced by the design of Watford Town Hall. The Grade II-listed building now serves as a residential apartment block with several features retained that recall its role as council premises and as a war-time government 'nerve centre'.

Continue to walk east along Friern Barnet Road past Dwight School on your left and St John the Evangelist Church on your right. St John's church was built from 1890 as a chapel of ease for the ever-enlarging local Anglican community. In part, the design is modelled on a church in Germany admired by the first vicar. The Gothic Revival style building was designed by J.L. Pearson, completed after his death by his son, and finally consecrated in 1911. This Grade II-listed church contains fine stained glass by Clayton & Bell. Please visit the [church website](#) for opening times.

Across the road is [Friern Barnet Community Library](#) in a Tudor-style building dating from 1933. A public lending library first opened in 1934 and today, the building houses an even wider range of community activities.

Proceed along Friern Barnet Road until you reach the entrance to Princess Park Manor, which is point 8 on your map. Now pause the talk until you reach Princess Park Manor, previously Colney Hatch Asylum.



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Audiotour part 8 - Colney Hatch Asylum

The large building in front of you was originally Colney Hatch Lunatic Asylum, a psychiatric hospital for the poor of Middlesex which then included parts of London. It was in operation from 18 51 to 19 93 and at its height the hospital was home to 2,500 patients. The building was commissioned by the Middlesex Court of Magistrates, who were responsible for mental health care in the first half of the 19th century (look for the triple swords or 'seaxes' in the triangular pediment above the main entrance of the building – the coat of arms of the county of Middlesex). It was the second Middlesex County Asylum after Hanwell in west London. The architect was Samuel Daukes, whose Italianate corridor-plan design was based on the advice of John Conolly, the superintendent of the first Middlesex County Asylum. The foundation stone was laid in 1849 by Prince Albert – consort of Queen Victoria - and the completed building was opened on 17 July 1851, again by Prince Albert. The estate had its own water supply, chapel, cemetery, gas works and brewery, as well as a 75-acre farm estate for patients' therapeutic use. When first opened it was the largest hospital in the world and boasted the longest corridor until the 20th century. It started with a regime of relatively benign care in line with Dr John Conolly's teachings, which avoided the use of restraints. But the hospital ceased to be able to continue such care as the population of the asylum nearly doubled in the first ten years and the restraints had to be reintroduced. The name was changed in the 1940s to Friern Hospital and it closed in the early 1990s.

The hospital buildings were converted in the 2000's into 250 luxury apartments set in 30 acres of private parkland under the name of Princess Park Manor. The development attracts a wide variety of residents these days, including several media celebrities. The adjacent farm estate has been redeveloped into 700 executive homes and townhouses known as Friern Village.

This is the end of the audiotour.



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To make your way home, there are several bus routes from Bellevue Road bus stops. If you are travelling towards Edgware (221 bus) or Mill Hill (382 bus) via North Finchley, remain on the same side of the road as Princess Park Manor. Standing with the large building behind you, you will find the bus stop to the left. To travel in the opposite direction towards Turnpike Lane Station (221 bus) or Southgate (382 bus), the bus stop is located on the other side of the road to your right.

New Southgate National Rail station is nearby. Turn right out of Princess Park Manor along Friern Barnet Road then turn right along Station Road (A109), this should take approximately 5 minutes on foot.

For the nearest Tube station or other bus routes, Arnos Grove (on the Piccadilly Line) is a 13-minute walk. Turn right out of Princess Park Manor along Friern Barnet Road, then at the Betstyle Circus roundabout turn right into Bowes Road (A1110). Continue down Bowes Road until Arnos Grove appears on the left.

We hope you enjoyed this walk. Perhaps you might like to try one of the other walks in the Barnet Healthy Heritage Walks programme? Please visit our website www.barnet.gov.uk/heritagewalks to find out more.

If you would like to give feedback or comments or suggestions on the walk, please do get in touch. Details are on the website.

