

Hampstead Heath Saturday 26th May 2012

This walk has been organised by David & Gill Pick.

On the Capital Ring Walk 11 we passed north of Hampstead Heath. Since we have postponed the remaining sections till spring we thought it would be opportune to explore Hampstead Heath.

The city of London claim that “Hampstead Heath is one of London’s most popular open spaces, situated just six kilometres from Trafalgar Square. An island of beautiful countryside, the magic of Hampstead Heath lies not only in its rich wildlife and extensive sports and recreational opportunities, but also in its proximity and accessibility to millions of people. There is a zoo, an athletics track, an education centre, extensive children's facilities, three swimming ponds and a Lido.”

There are numerous literature references:

“Hampstead Heath was featured on the television programme Seven Natural Wonders as one of the wonders of the London area, with a focus on Parliament Hill to the south. The episode was presented by Bill Oddie, who lives in nearby Gospel Oak, and watches birds there regularly.

Whilst living in London, Karl Marx and his family went to the Heath regularly, as their favourite outing.

John Atkinson Grimshaw, Victorian era painter, painted an elaborate night-time scene of Hampstead Hill in oils. Hampstead Heath also provided the backdrop for the opening scene in Victorian writer Wilkie Collins' novel *The Woman in White*.

Hampstead Heath forms part of the main location for Will Self's 2006 novel *The Book of Dave*. Half of the book is set 500 years in the future, when all of London has been submerged by a catastrophic flood, leaving only the hilltops of Hampstead and the Heath as a tiny island - *The Island of Ham*. The parts of the book set in the present-day also make references to the Heath's high and dry location which would preserve the area in the event of sea level rises over 100m. Self writes, "...the Heath...this peculiar island, a couple of square miles of woodland and meadow set down in the lagoon of the city."

The radio story titled *The Strange Case of the Murder in Wax* written by Denis Green and Anthony Boucher and broadcast on January 7, 1946, featured a murderer who killed women on Hampstead Heath.

Mrs. Miniver, by Jan Struther, includes a chapter called "On Hampstead Heath", where actions take place.[35]

A crucial event at the beginning of the novel *Smiley's People*, by John LeCarre (1979), takes place on Hampstead Heath, which is also the site of subsequent investigations.[36] These scenes are also depicted in the BBC mini-series of the same name (1982)." etc.

So let's see what it is all about.

I propose we meet at Gospel Oak Station at 10.45 and explore the trail 2 Heath Circuit (~6 miles)

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Hampstead Heath is a wonderfully varied collection of natural habitats, historical features and beautiful views and landscapes. This leaflet provides three trails that will allow you to explore some of the Heath's very best places.

The information overleaf accompanies the marked trails on this map and gives you a flavour of the Heath's considerable historic and wildlife interest. To find out more phone the Education Centre on 020 7482 7073.

Hampstead Heath Trails



The Stone of Free Speech acted as a focus for political and religious meetings 200 years ago.

*"As often upon Hampstead Heath,
Have seen a felon long since put to death,
Hang crackling in the sun his parchment skin,
Which to his ear had shrivell'd up his chin."*

A poem from 1691 about the infamous Gibbet Elms **Trail 3**

*"What is the Bay of Naples, with its bitter,
relentless gentian blue overhead, and its sun-scorched,
dusty and grassless ground beneath,
compared to this view from Hampstead Heath?
Where else can you find such satisfying beauty?"*

The Contemporary Review, July 1894



Gorse is a typical heathland plant. In the last century it was used by washerwomen to hang out their washing.

210 268 H3 GOLDERS GREEN STATION NORTHERN LINE

North Circular (M1)

Childs Hill

'Get off the beaten track... use the map to explore your own trails.'



The Ice House is an old keeper's hut. Sir Thomas Maryon Wilson, who was the lord of the manor of Hampstead, built it as part of his plans to develop the whole of the East Heath area.

46 268 HAMPSTEAD STATION NORTHERN LINE

Hampstead

HAMPSTEAD HEATH STATION

24, 46, 108, C11

Highgate

Trail 1 Parliament Hill and the Tumulus
Starts and finishes at Parliament Hill café.
2.5km, 1.5 miles

Trail 2 Heath Circuit
Starts and finishes at Parliament Hill café.
9.7km, 6 miles

Trail 3 Sandy Heath and the Pergola
Starts and finishes at Golders Hill Park café.
2.7km, 1.7 miles

Walking conditions: Hilly in places. All routes generally follow main paths and should be easy to follow. Please note that the routes are not waymarked on the ground.

Limited mobility access: Varying gradients and surfaces may limit access for some on the trails. Please telephone 020 7485 5757 for details of the Heath Mobile loan service, which offers increased access on an electric powered buggy for people with limited mobility.

Dusk closing: Golders Hill Park, The Hill Garden, the Pergola and the Kenwood Estate close before dusk. See signs for details.

Car parking around the Heath is limited and you are encouraged to come here by public transport.

Please note that the map does not show all of the many informal paths

- Car park
- Refreshments
- Toilet, including toilet for the disabled
- Outstanding views
- Buses serving this point
- Railway station
- London Underground station
- Woodland and scrub
- Hedgerow / thin belt of trees or shrubs
- Made footpaths
- Unmade footpaths
- English Heritage area
- Fishing ponds
- 1 Swan pond
- 2 Leg of Mutton pond
- 3 Lily pond
- 4 Seven Sisters ponds
- 5 Whitestone pond
- 6 Vale of Health pond
- 7 Viaduct pond
- 8 Mixed bathing pond (No 3)
- 9 Hampstead No 2 pond
- 10 Hampstead No 1 pond
- 11 Wood pond
- 12 Concert pond
- 13 Stock pond
- 14 Kenwood ladies' bathing pond
- 15 Bird Sanctuary pond
- 16 Model boating pond
- 17 Highgate men's bathing pond
- 18 Highgate No 1 pond

