

THE VILLAGE OF NORTH LONDON

Trip overview

Distance	5.9 miles
Difficulty	Easy
Duration	2 hours
Traffic	Occasional fast moving traffic
Terrain	Hilly, short off road



[See this route on Google Maps](#)

Nearest station

Start/end: Hampstead Heath Overground

In the busy city of London, it's reassuring to discover peaceful corners such as Hampstead Heath. It is an area with a distinct village feel to it, which is all the more contrasting when you consider how near to central London you are. I was kicking myself that I didn't include this very special ride in the first edition. There's so much to experience here. You'll discover a secluded pergola, the swimming ponds of Hampstead Heath and sweeping views over London. Whilst this is a short ride, there's a decent amount of uphill cycling.



◀ A feeling of village life prevails in North London



Walking around the gardens of the Hampstead Pergola ▶



◀ The Highgate ponds are a peaceful spot to relax or, for the more adventurous, take a quick dip.

ROUTE DESCRIPTION

The London Overground provides bicycle friendly access to Hampstead. The ride starts just outside the station, in an area filled with small shops and excellent pubs. However, it's best to leave any eating to the end of the ride as there's a couple of big hills to tackle first.

After a short uphill section you reach Back Lane. Near here there are plenty of small boutiques specialising in everything from clothing to antiques. Continuing uphill you pass Hampstead Village and take a turn along back roads.

At the top of the hill you reach a small man-made pond. You really feel like you are at the top of London here.

The next part of the ride takes you to the undiscovered Hampstead Pergola. You'll find it by sneaking down Inverforth Close and keeping to the left. The garden is open until 6pm and the chances are you'll be one of only a couple of visitors.

The Pergola started life as an private Edwardian venue for garden parties and evening strolls. It was acquired by the then London County Council in 1960 and has been open to the public since 1963.

Pickup your bike again and head downhill for a short exploration of the gorgeous houses in this expensive part of London. Pedalling back up, you reach Hampstead Lane and eventually join the cycle path.

Turning left you enter Hampstead Heath. The Heath incorporates hilly meadows, large open grassy spaces and woodland to create one of the most beautiful spots for cycling or walking in London. Cycling is permitted on a couple of designated routes through the park which are shared with walkers. The official speed limit is 8mph so make sure you keep your fingers on the brakes. After all, there's no point speeding through such an extraordinarily beautiful area.

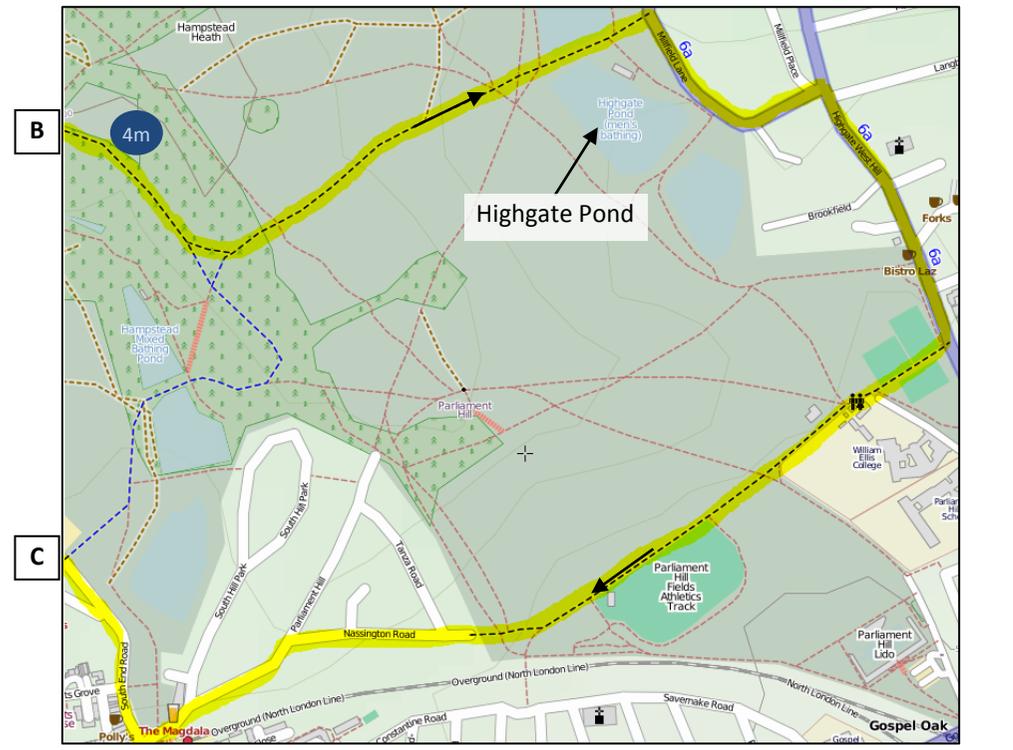
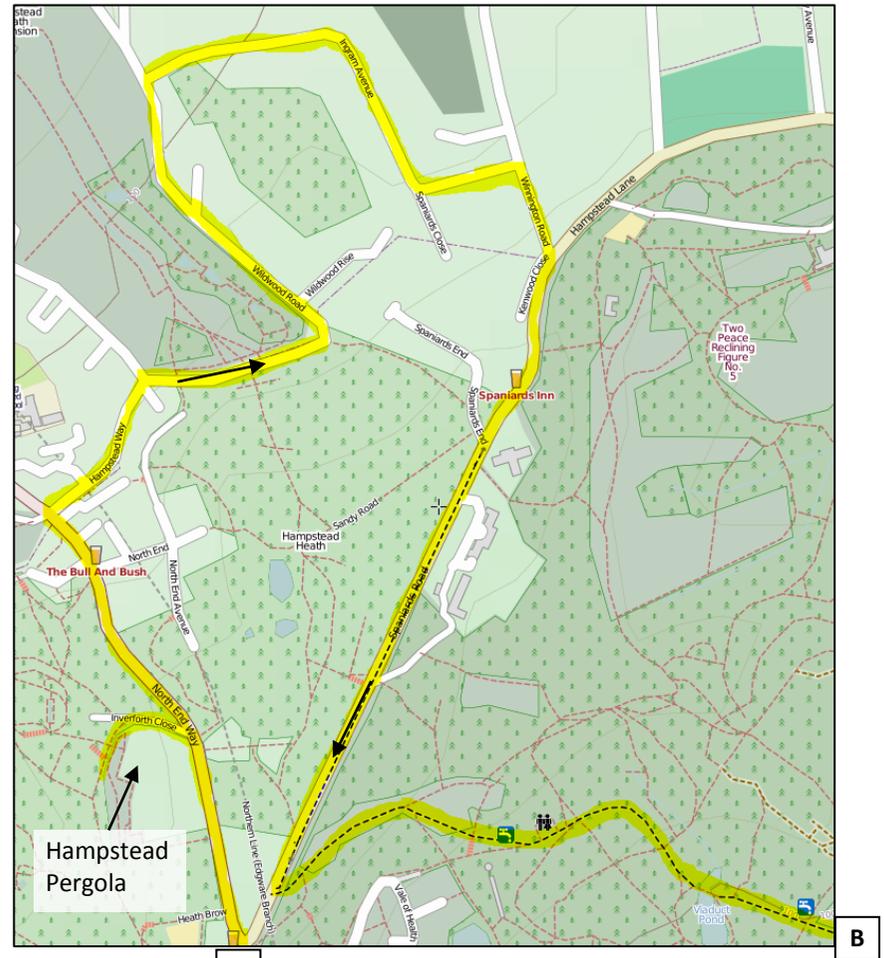
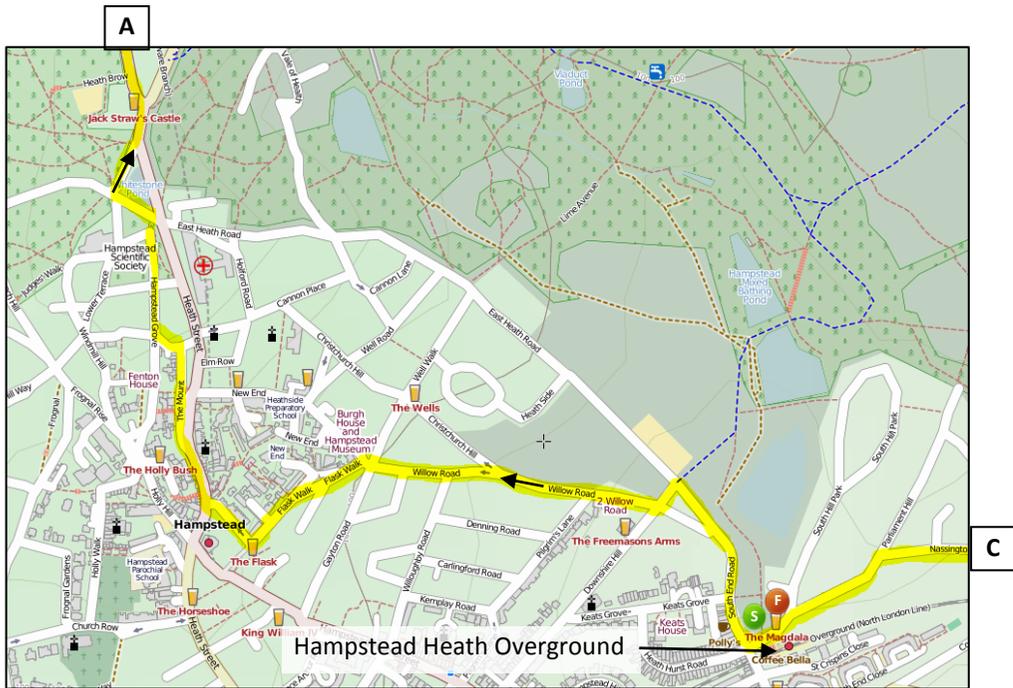
Follow the route through the park and to the Highgate ponds. If you've packed your swimming costume then the men's ponds are open for swimming on the right side of the route and the women's are slightly further North. There's also a mixed pond on the other side of Heath but this is only open in the summer.

Continuing you exit the park briefly to re-enter at Parliament Hill fields. If the sun is shining then this part of the route will undoubtedly be busy. There are some excellent activities in this area for kids which include the paddling pool.

You then pedal back to the station and take an optional detour uphill to Parliament Hill. This is one of the highest spots in London and provides splendid views.



▲ Green spaces with great views in Hampstead Heath



This is a sample route from the
London Cycle Routes eBook.

For the full version please see:

<http://www.londoncyclist.co.uk/routes/london-cycle-routes-book/>

