



## London Loop

Section 23 of 24

Upminster Bridge to Rainham



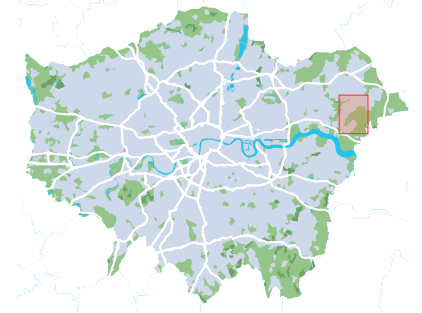
**Section start:** Upminster Bridge

**Nearest station to start:** Upminster Bridge

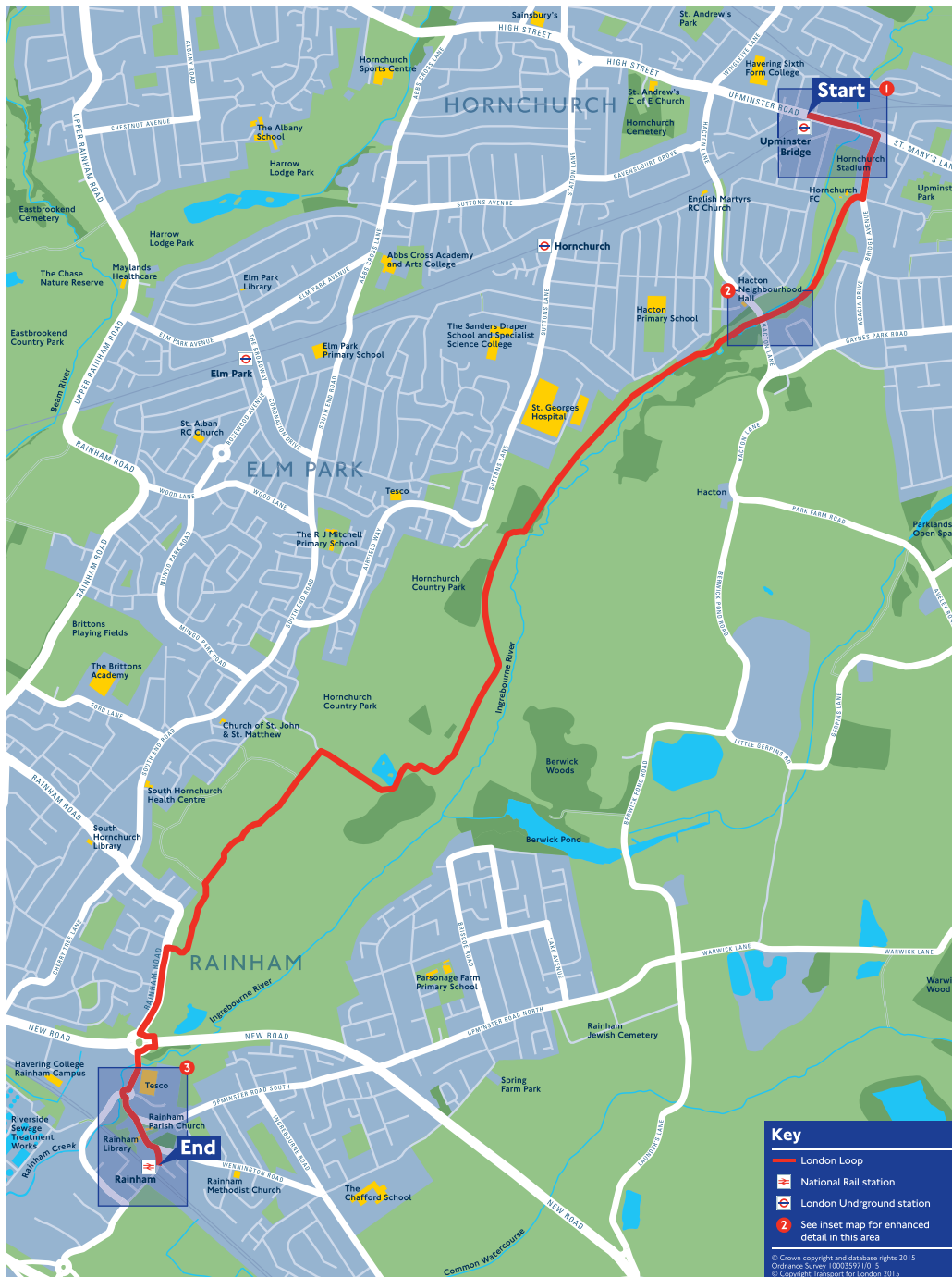
**Section finish:** Rainham

**Nearest station to finish:** Rainham

**Section distance:** 4 miles (6.4 kilometres)



### Introduction




This section starts with the fascinating Upminster Windmill and generally follows the River Ingrebourne.

You walk through Hornchurch Country Park which has gone through several phases as a farm, military airfield, gravel quarry and rubbish tip, until its acquisition in 1980 by the local authority.

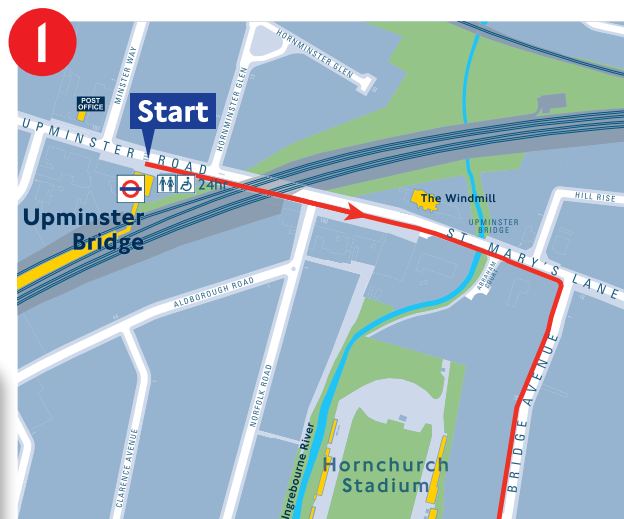
The terrain is almost completely level with tarmac or firm gravel paths and there are no stiles, so all this section is very accessible.

There are pubs at Upminster Bridge, Hacton Lane, Rainham Road, Rainham village, and cafes and toilets at Rainham and Hornchurch Country Park. There is also a toilet next to Upminster Bridge station.

## Directions

 **1** Leave Upminster Bridge station and turn right onto the busy Upminster Road. Go under the railway bridge and past The Windmill pub on the left. Cross Ingrebourne River and then turn right into Bridge Avenue.

To visit the Upminster Windmill continue along the main road for a short distance. The windmill is on the left.



### Did you know?

Upminster Windmill was built in 1803 by a local farmer and continued to grind wheat and produce flour until 1934. The mill is only open on occasional weekends in spring and summer for guided tours, and funds are currently being raised to restore the mill to working order.


Continue along Bridge Avenue to Brookdale Avenue on the left and opposite is Hornchurch Stadium. Go through the black metal gates into the stadium and down the drive.

Enter the car park and turn left towards the tarmac path to the left of the wooden fence. Follow the path along the green open space of Gaynes Parkway with the Ingrebourne stream flowing by on the right.

At the triangular crossing of paths keep right, and continue close to the stream before crossing it via the footbridge.

### Did you know?

The Ingrebourne River is your companion for most of this section of the LOOP. It passes roughly north east to south west through the London Borough of Havering and into the River Thames at Rainham Creek. Much of the river's route is classed as a London site of metropolitan importance because of the wildlife found here.

 **2** Turn immediately left once over the bridge and follow the Ingrebourne, now on the left, to the busy road called Hacton Lane. Cross here at the pedestrian crossing and continue straight ahead through the wooden gate and follow the path around Hacton Parkway Play Area.

Once past the play site, bear left across the open space to join the path on the riverside and follow the Ingrebourne Valley Greenway.

Continue on the tarmac path, past a stretch of houses behind fences, until reaching an open space to the right with a stretch of grass. Beyond is Newmarket Way.

Keep on the path past the footbridge and signpost on the left pointing to Hornchurch car park. Do not go over the bridge, keep ahead. Follow the Green Way track through a metal and wooden gate to enter Hornchurch Country Park.



### Did you know?

Hornchurch Country Park is a large area of glades, attractive mature woodland and meadows. It is hard to believe that this park, which was created in 1980 from a huge landfill site, sits on thousands of tons of household and industrial rubbish!

Shortly the path forks left to go past a children's play area on the right. Head to the left, away from the tarmac path, and follow the fence edge along the bank above the river.

## Did you know?

In the foreground is an incongruous concrete pillbox, a reminder that this site was once an RAF airfield. The airfield closed in 1962, but the air raid shelters, gun emplacements, turrets and pillboxes still show evidence of the airfield's defence.

Continue along the tarmac path, past the signpost to Albyns Farm Lake, and up the incline to enjoy the broadest view of the Ingrebourne Marshes. Keep following the track straight ahead along the bank, ignoring the paths going right, until finally the track turns up right to reach the lakeside with Albyns Farm in view across the water.



 Follow the track around to the left of the lake before turning right up to the farm. Go through the gate and past Albyns Farm, a beautifully-kept medieval manor now privately owned.

Soon an opening will appear on the left, with a path leading into open meadows. Take this path, keeping the hedge on the right until it turns into a wooden fence. Turn right through the first opening where, after a short distance there is a crossing of paths. Turn left on this wide gravel path as it gently climbs to the brow of the hill. Once at the top Rainham comes into view, along with the path ahead.

Continue ahead down the hill keeping a close watch for mountain bikes crossing the track and, at the junction with the path joining from the right, keep left towards the car park. Just after the car park take the turn right and head to the road crossing.


To leave the walk here, bus 103 will take you from the bus stops to Rainham or Romford stations.

Cross Rainham Road and turn left, following it past The Albion opposite to meet a major roundabout at the A1306, New Road. Cross back over Rainham Road at the pedestrian crossing, and turn right to follow the path around what is known as Dovers Corner.

Cross the A1306 at the next pedestrian crossing and turn right on the other side. Follow the path around to the left and go over the Ingrebourne River one more time. Continue past the large Tesco on the left.

Continue over Viking Way towards Rainham village and the station.



 **3** Once past the Tesco petrol station, the unexpectedly attractive village of Rainham comes into view along Bridge Road. This peaceful place, with The Bell pub on the left and the New Angel Inn opposite, is a perfect retreat away from noisy roads.

Before heading through the village to the station, it is well worth taking a moment to go over the footbridge opposite The Bell to discover Rainham Creekside Park.

## Did you know?

Right up to the 19th century Rainham Creek was navigable for sailing barges, and Rainham became an important place for shipbuilding, as the creek connected to the Thames. A wealthy sea captain, John Harle not only owned the wharves here, but used the profits to have the handsome Rainham Hall built in 1729.



To reach the station, head along Bridge Road and, where it divides, take the right fork called Broadway. Another right again leads into Ferry Lane to reach the station. From the bus stop by the War Memorial you can get buses to Barking, Elm Park, Dagenham East and Romford stations.

This section ends at Rainham station. To keep going onto Section 24, the final section of the LOOP to the Thames and Coldharbour Point, continue past Rainham station.