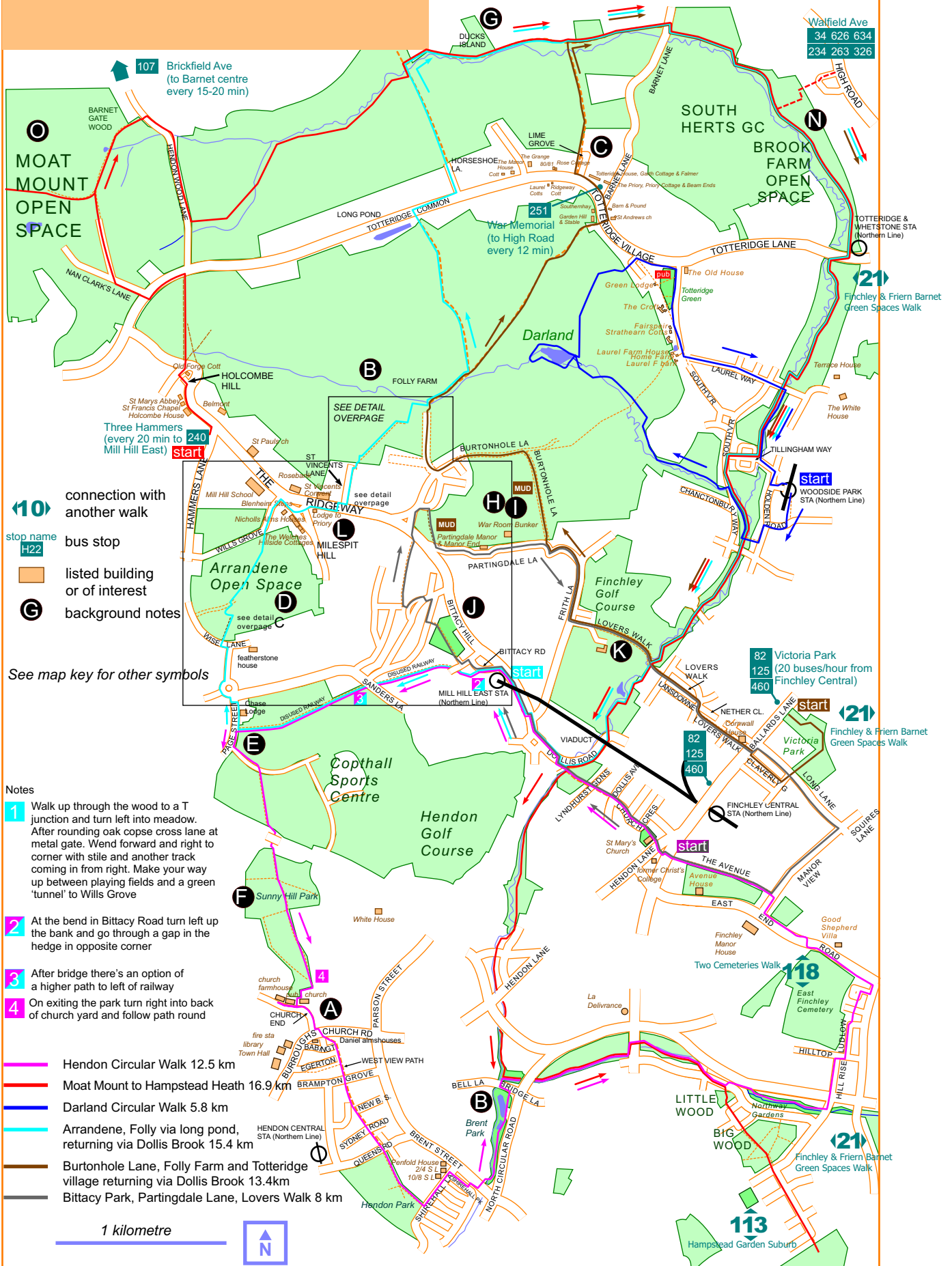


Six Walks West of Finchley

Moat Mount Park
(from Edgware)

292
606

start

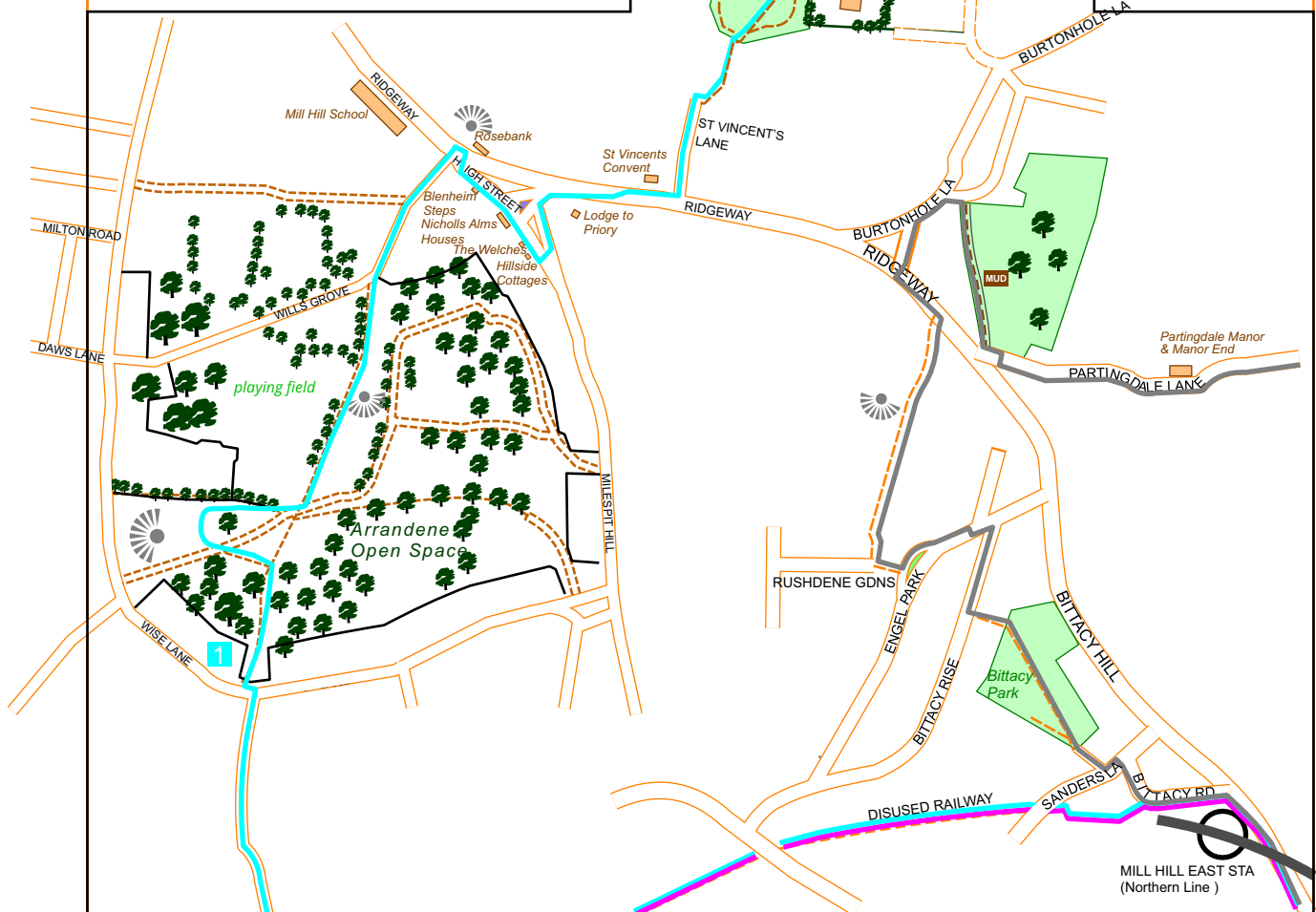
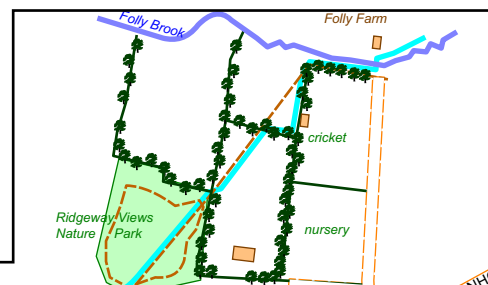


Six Walks West of Finchley - detail for Arrandene walk

DETAIL FOR
PREVIOUS PAGE

- Hendon Circular Walk
- Arrandene, Folly via long pond,
returning via Dollis Brook
- Bittacy Park, Partingdale Lane, Lovers Walk

1 Walk up through the wood to a T junction and turn left into meadow. After rounding oak copse cross lane at metal gate. Wend forward and right to corner with stile and another track coming in from right. Make your way up between playing fields and a green 'tunnel' to Wills Grove



walk notes

The bulk of these walks is in Hendon, across the Dollis Brook from Finchley. They make use of three brooks which ultimately combine to form the Brent. The top two thirds of the map is in Green Belt land. There are many walks charted here - these are my own suggestions, but walks can be recombined to suit.

A Hendon

By the time of the Domesday Book, Hendon was a unified manor, belonging to the Abbey of Westminster, and created out of four separate estates - Lothesleage, Heandun, Bleccanham and Codanhlaw, consisting of several settlements, of which Hendon Church End is a key one, and with a population totalling less than 300. With time, the centre moved to Brent Street and subsequently to the Burroughs and to the area of the new tube station.

B Folly Brook

Folly Brook is 3.6 km long. Unlike the Dollis Brook much of it is not accessible for walking.

Darland Lake Nature Reserve

The site was once part of Copped Hall (Totteridge). From 1780 it was occupied by William Manning MP, and his son Cardinal Manning was born there. Darland's Lake was created as an ornamental lake by damming Folly Brook, probably by William Manning's wife, Mary, with advice from Humphrey Repton.

The lake is very shallow, with extensive reed beds, and the reserve also includes woodland. It has a diverse range of breeding birds and eighteen species of mammal have been recorded, including stoat and weasel. It is also of value for grass snakes, amphibians, fungi and invertebrates. Herons and snakes head fritillaries are often in evidence.

C Totteridge Village

Totteridge Village goes back to Saxon times. It still has a rural feel and contains many large houses of the affluent, and ancient buildings. It is on the ridge between the Dollis and Folly Brooks with fine views to the south.

D Arrandene Open Space

Arrandene Open Space is a large area of pasture divided by ancient hedgerows, and is one of London's rare traditionally managed old hay meadows. It contains numerous uncommon plant species characteristic of unimproved grassland, such as greater bird's-foot trefoil, common knapweed and ox-eye daisy. Trees include the uncommon wild

service tree; breeding birds include spotted flycatcher, lesser whitethroat, reed bunting and skylark. It was purchased by Hendon Council in 1929 to preserve it for public recreation at a time when the area was rapidly developing.

E Copthall (Mill Hill)

The origins of the name Copt Hall, Copped Hall and Copthall is obscure but copped is defined as rising to a point, head or crest. Not much is known about the origins of Copt Hall, Page Street. It was rebuilt by Randall Nicoll between 1624 and 1637, as the seat of a branch of the Nicholl family.

It was demolished in 1959 and replaced by Randall Court but the name lives on in the Copthall Sports Centre.

F Sunny Hill Park

Sunny Hill Park used to be Sunnyhill Fields, and was owned by Church Farm, whose house adjoining Hendon Church was for a long time the Church Farmhouse Museum. In 1921 Hendon Council purchased 16 acres for a park, which opened in 1922, and in 1929 it was enlarged when further land was acquired. An area with scattered trees in the south-east corner was formerly part of St Mary's Churchyard, an important archaeological site with evidence of Roman and Anglo-Saxon occupation. The park still has hedgerows showing former field boundaries and mature trees.

G Mays Lane and Duck Island

Duck Island is the oldest settlement on Mays Lane. Some time after the enclosure of Barnet Common in 1815, a few houses were built here, and by 1861 there was a small tin chapel and school. In 1895 Bells Hill cemetery was opened for High Barnet, and in 1896 a new church, St Stephens was built.

H Frith, Partingdale and Dollis

By the time of the Domesday Book, Hendon was a unified manor, belonging to the Abbey of Westminster, and included lands granted to the Abbey by Walter del Frith in 1222. The lands of Frith and Newhall lay in the north east of the parish adjoining the Finchley border, bounded on one side by Dollis Brook; they consisted in 1754 of Dollis, Frith, and Partingdale farms, and more. The estate was split up after 1809 into the three farms. Frith Manor House, near the junction of Frith Lane, Partingdale Lane, and Lullington Garth, was built in 1790, when the adjoining Frith farm-house was converted into offices and

servants' rooms. The manor-house, a stuccoed building with wings, was said to contain a 16th-century stone fireplace and linen-fold panelling brought from elsewhere. It was gutted by fire in 1957.

Manor End

On Partingdale Lane there are two grade II listed 'buildings'. One is Partingdale Manor and Manor End, an attractive stuccoed building.

❶ War Room

The other listing is a well-preserved war room bunker, the sole survivor of four 1950s regional command centres that served London during the Cold War, designed to protect its occupants from the effects of nuclear attack. During much of the 20th century the possibility of the breakdown of central government control was a constant concern, so to counter these threats, the country was divided from the 1920s into 12 Home Defence Regions, each to be controlled by a Regional Commissioner in case of emergency. Initially these regions were run from existing government offices, or improvised shelters in basements. However, in the early 1950s, each of the Regional Commissioners was provided with a War Room, in an attempt to protect them and their staff (of around 50), from atomic bombs. The surviving components include steel exterior doors, a ventilation system complete with plant and exterior flues and baffles and a generator plant.

❷ Bittacy

The fields here belonged to All Souls College, Oxford from 1442. Below Bittacy was the settlement of Dollis.

The modern era arrived when Mill Hill (later Mill Hill East) station opened on the Great Northern Railway's suburban line to Edgware, and the North Middlesex Gas Company built a gasworks in the 1860s. A pub and a few gas workers' cottages appeared nearby but the railway service to London was slow and indirect so commuters were not interested and the surrounding area remained as farmland. In 1909 the Middlesex regiment moved into the Inglis barracks, which had replaced Bittacy Farm. A council estate, including flats, was built at the foot of Bittacy Hill in the mid-1920s. Further up the hill and over on the Frith manor lands, roads were laid out in the years before and after the Second World War. The barracks later became the base for the British Forces Post Office, which has since moved to RAF Northolt.

The Inglis barracks closed at the end of 2007 and plans were drawn up for the construction of around 2,200 new homes on the 83-acre site, using different developers. The locally listed officers' mess (1904) has been retained and converted into apartments.

Meanwhile, Crest Nicholson redeveloped the disused gasworks site with 250 homes, accompanied by a Waitrose supermarket.

❸ Finchley Golf Club

A wealthy Victorian businessman, Henry Thomas Tubbs, created himself an estate, with a Neo-Jacobean mansion called Nether Court (by Percy Stone), between 1880 and 1883. It was described as "the largest Victorian house built in Hendon Parish", and is now the clubhouse at Finchley golf course. Later boundary changes brought the land into Finchley.

The 15-bedroom house was accessed by a long drive from Gordon Road and had a small entrance Lodge, a river bridge over the Dollis Brook and an artificial lake. The driveway was closed in 1967 and the lodge demolished around the same time.

Of note is the main staircase with its stained glass windows, portraying initialled monograms of Tubbs and his wife flanking the Tubbs Heraldic Arms, whilst below there are three cartoons representing three moments in the daily life of a farm labourer and his family: "Morning", "Noon" and "Night".

After Tubbs' death, in 1917, the estate was eventually purchased in 1929 for the *Finchley Golf, Sports and Social Club Ltd*, by Finchley Council, and Golf course architect James Braid laid out the 6300-yard course around it.

❹ Mill Hill

Evidence of a Roman presence is indicated by artefacts unearthed at Copthall. Anglo-Saxon charters mention a settlement called Lothesleage - somewhere along the Ridgeway. By the Norman conquest, the area had coalesced into the Manor of Hendon and was owned by Westminster Abbey. The manor windmill is thought to have been located on the highest ground, in the Mill Field, and gave its name to Mill Hill, whose village centre was probably around the Angel Pond at the top of Miles Pit Hill: with cottages, alehouse and almshouses dating from 1696.

By the early 18th century the upland prospect had attracted estates with large houses, many of which exist today, including Rosebank (used as a Quaker Meeting House), Littleberries, Jeannettes, Highwood House

and Holcomb House.

In the 19th century many institutions acquired land along the Ridgeway. A Nonconformist School (1807) – now Mill Hill School; the Wilberforce Anglican church (1833); many Roman Catholic institutions and St Joseph's college (1869+).

With the coming of two railway lines (1867) and better roads, the focal point moved downhill as housebuilding took off, initially in the Poet's Corner and Mill Hill East areas, but later to the lower end of Lawrence Street which was renamed The Broadway.

The original railway line from Finsbury Park via Finchley to Edgware was never successful and after the northern line linked through, the line west of Mill Hill East was closed, leaving a track that forms part of one of the walks.

M Dollis Brook

Dollis Brook(named after the settlement named Dollis?) is over 13km long, rises on Moat Mount Open Space and flows eastwards through Totteridge Fields and other open

spaces to King George V Playing Fields. The brook then turns southwards through Brook Farm Open Space and Whetstone Stray to merge with Folly Brook. From there it formed an Anglo-Saxon boundary between the hundreds of Ossulstone and Gore and between Finchley and Hendon. It flows between back gardens to merge with Mutton Brook to form the River Brent.

N Dollis Brook Viaduct

The Dollis Brook railway viaduct opened in 1867 as part of Great Northern's branch line from Finsbury Park to Edgware. It is the highest point above ground level on the London Underground reaching nearly 60 feet (18 m). The railway originally continued to Edgware but was later discontinued at Mill Hill East, the track was taken up and the route forms part of one of these walks. To find out why such a massive engineering feat was taken for so little reward see

<http://www.tonero.me.uk/railsthrofinchley2.htm>

N Brook Farm Open Space

Like much of the area, this farm was used to produce hay for London's horses. The regular harvesting created a special habitat where certain flowers and insects thrived. In summer fields are rich with the different colours of wild flowers and grasses.

Moat Mount Open Space

In 1726 Hendon sold off its manorial demesne lands. In the north an estate called Moat Mount was created, and a large mansion complete with ornamental gardens and a lake constructed. Lands were sold off in 1906 and 1923. The house was reduced in size after a fire, and Moat Mount Countryside Park created, owned by the London Borough of Barnet.

P The Decoy

A duck decoy was constructed by the monks of Westminster Abbey in medieval times. Decoy Wood became part of Brent Bridge House. In 1935 it became a park, when Decoy Farm was demolished.

