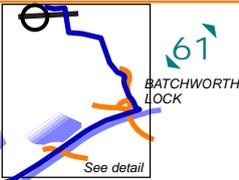


Rickmansworth to  
Watford circular walk

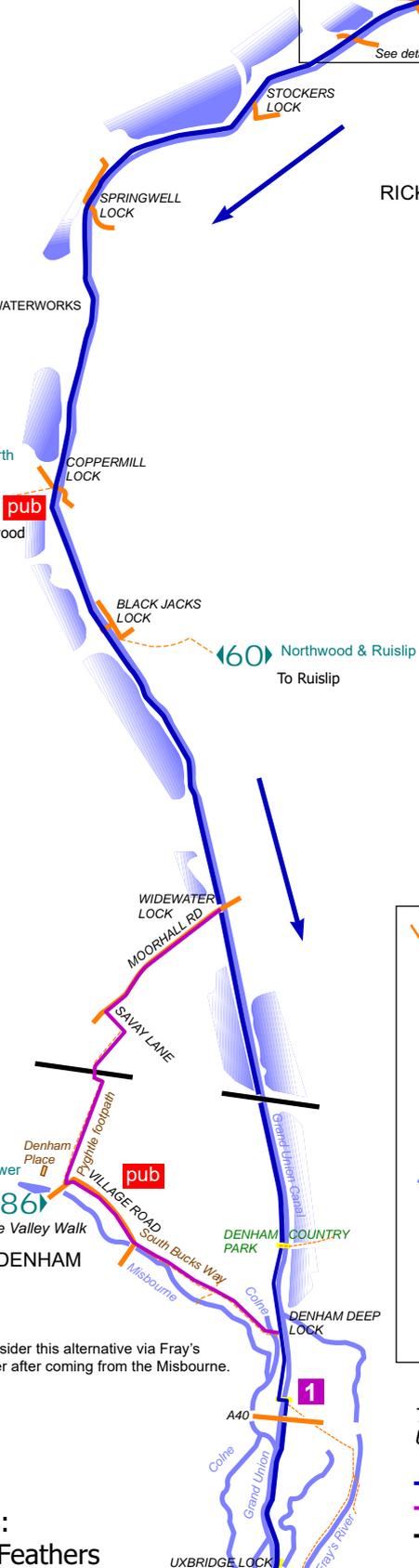
# Rickmansworth to Uxbridge along Grand Union Canal

RICKMANSWORTH STA.  
(Metropolitan Line,  
Chiltern Railway)

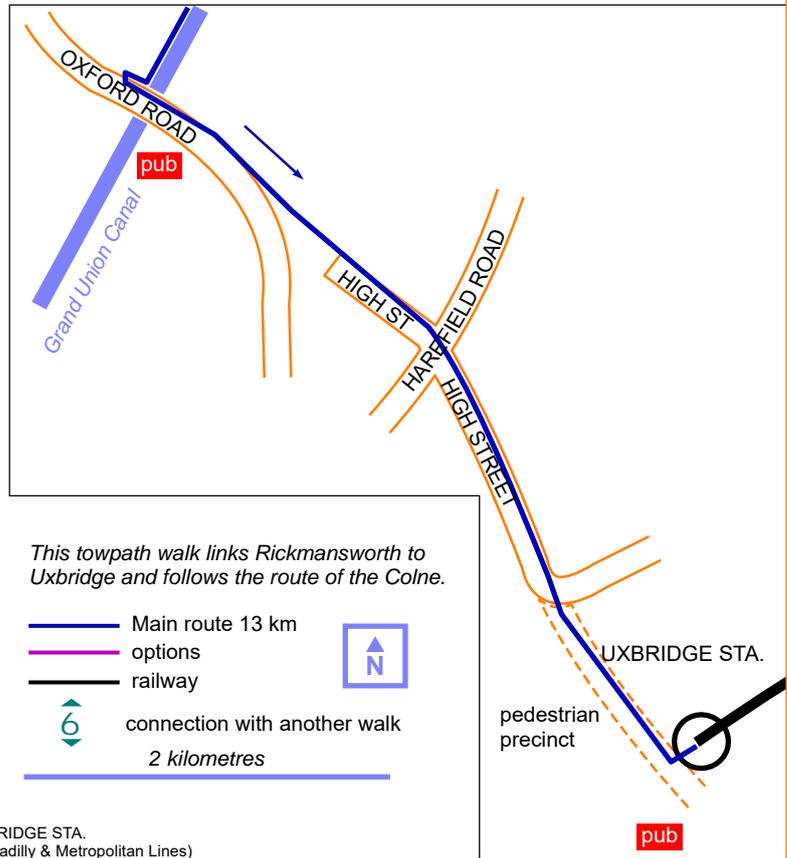


Chorleywood to Rickmansworth  
via Old Shire Lane

27



RICKMANSWORTH STA.



1 Consider this alternative via Fray's River after coming from the Misbourne.

- Pubs:**
- The Feathers
  - The Coy Carp
  - The Crown & Treaty
  - The Three Tuns

This towpath walk links Rickmansworth to Uxbridge and follows the route of the Colne.

- Main route 13 km
- options
- railway
- connection with another walk 2 kilometres



## walk notes

### **Rickmansworth to Uxbridge along the Grand Union Canal**

*This 13 km walk down the Colne Valley is a tranquil one until the M40 is approached near the end of the journey.*

*Once the picturesque town of Rickmansworth has been negotiated it is 'plain sailing' along the towpath with the canal on the left for most of the way and the river and reservoirs on the right.*

#### **Rickmansworth**

Rickmansworth has been inhabited since the stone age and the manor was in the possession of the abbots of St. Albans before the Conquest. The parish church tower is said to date from c14 William Penn lived in the High Street.

#### **The Canal**

The Grand Union Canal is the longest canal in the UK at 286 miles. The canal was never constructed as an entity, but is the result of amalgamations between 1894 and 1929 of several independent waterways — the oldest being the navigations around the River Soar in Leicestershire, part we walk along was the Grand Junction Canal, built between Braunston (between Daventry and Rugby) and the River Thames to improve the communications between Birmingham, the Midlands and London. It was fully opened in 1805. Branches were added: to Paddington (opened 1801), Buckingham (1801), Northampton (1815) and Aylesbury (1815). The Slough Branch was one of the last to be built (1882). Although the Grand Junction is a broad canal it was generally used only by narrow boats, except at the London end. In 1894 the Grand Junction bought the canals which now comprise the 'Leicester Line', then in 1929 the Regent's, Grand Junction and the two Warwick Canals merged and the result was renamed as the 'Grand Union Canal'.

The new company embarked on a large-scale modernisation programme to enable broad-beamed boats to work between London and Birmingham. Long lengths were dredged and strengthened with concrete bank protection. Bridges

were widened or replaced, and the narrow locks between Braunston and Birmingham were replaced with broad locks (the remains of most of the old locks can be seen alongside their larger replacements).

The ambitious scheme was completed in 1937 but much of the canal remained too shallow for broad boats to pass each other. However, narrow boats could now easily and quickly work in pairs. Traffic increased in the short term, but after the war the long-term downwards trend was relentless as canalside factories ceased using coal transported on the canal as a fuel or obtained it from other sources. Today, the Grand Union Canal is alive with pleasure boats, walkers, cyclists and day trippers.

#### **Colne Valley Regional Park**

The Colne Valley regional park is a 27,500 acre (43 square mile) area of parks, green spaces and reservoirs alongside the often multi-channel River Colne and the parallel Grand Union Canal.

The part we walk along is a distinct valley with rolling chalk hills forming the valley sides. The wide valley bottom has a wetland landscape including the Colne, Grand Union Canal and a succession of lakes. Ancient sunken lanes often link the settlements.

Former gravel pits have created a string of over 60 lakes running through the park from Batchworth Lake, Rickmansworth to Church Lammas, Staines. The network of footpaths and bridleways in the park offers excellent views of varied and picturesque sites many of which are now very important for wildlife

The formation of the park was initiated in 1965. The boundaries were drawn to include all the open land visible from the valley floor between Rickmansworth and Denham, rounded off to conform to recognisable features. For an excellent history see

<http://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/sites/default/files/Brief%20history%20of%20CVP.pdf>