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Follow the signs to circle the capital

By Nick Young

“Where does that go?” An age-old question, and one that East Finchley residents may have asked about those green signs by the station pointing out the route of something called the Capital Ring. I followed those signs, initially out of curiosity. They took me on a 78-mile journey through parts of London that I would never otherwise have visited. For the Capital Ring, it turns out, is a circular walking route which connects areas of green space around inner London.



Your guide: Nick Young takes a short rest at the top of Barn Hill, Fryent Country Park, near Wembley. Photo Trevor Young

Glorious variety

It's a great way of seeing London for so much can be missed when travelling around by car or on public transport. At walking speed, you notice more and have more time to take it in. And, this being London, there are so many things to notice on the way, like quirky cafés,

fantastic views, street markets and even a floating bookshop!

The Capital Ring takes the walker through many open spaces, such as Finsbury Park, Wandsworth Common, Richmond Park and Fryent Country Park as well as our own Cherry Tree Wood.

There is woodland in the form of Highgate Wood and Oxleas Wood. There's a disused railway line, complete with an abandoned station, and one of the 'Magnificent Seven' Victorian cemeteries. It goes below ground level at the Woolwich Foot Tunnel and up high to Severndroog Castle, Crystal Palace Park and Harrow-on-the-Hill. There are riverside parts too, with walks along the Rivers Lee, Thames and Brent as well as the Grand Union Canal.

Planning your route

Officially it starts and ends at Woolwich, but would-be walkers can start anywhere along its length. It is divided up into 15 sections, each of which has public transport links at the start and the finish; East Finchley is part-way along section 11 which runs between Hendon and Highgate.



Arch-way: The walk follows the disused railway line to Finsbury Park. Photo Nick Young

So if you're up for a long-term walking challenge, why not follow the green signs? What with one thing or another, I managed to finish it in just under two years! The TfL website has plenty of information about each of the 15 sections: <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/walking/capital-ring>.



Turrets in the trees: The walk passes Severndroog Castle south of Woolwich. Photo Nick Young.

Voices sing as one

As part of the 'Destination East Finchley' community project, whose mission is to find reasons to bring together people who live and work in N2, Martin Primary School has launched an intergenerational choir.

Organisers say the choir welcomes children and their parents or carers and members of the wider East Finchley community, providing an opportunity for young and old to join together and sing in celebration of our diversity.

They have chosen songs which celebrate the area's multiplicity of identities and its global citizenship. A mother attending the choir with her daughters said: "My daughters and I really enjoy singing together and being part of this wonderful community project."

There are still places available to join the choir, which takes place every Thursday from 5pm to 6pm at Martin Primary School. The group will be performing at the East Finchley Festival on Sunday 25 June and also at the Martin School summer fair on 1 July.

Destination East Finchley is a lottery funded project celebrating the many stories of migration experienced by pupils and teachers at the school and by the wider community. For more information contact the school by email: office@martinprimary.barnetmail.net.

Summer fete

On 10 June there will be a Summer Fete at Nazareth House in East End Road, N2 with music, a barbecue, strawberries and cream, teas and cakes, games for children, a tombola and raffle with stalls selling bric-a-brac, plants, good quality clothes, cakes, books. Entry £1 for adults. Children free.

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