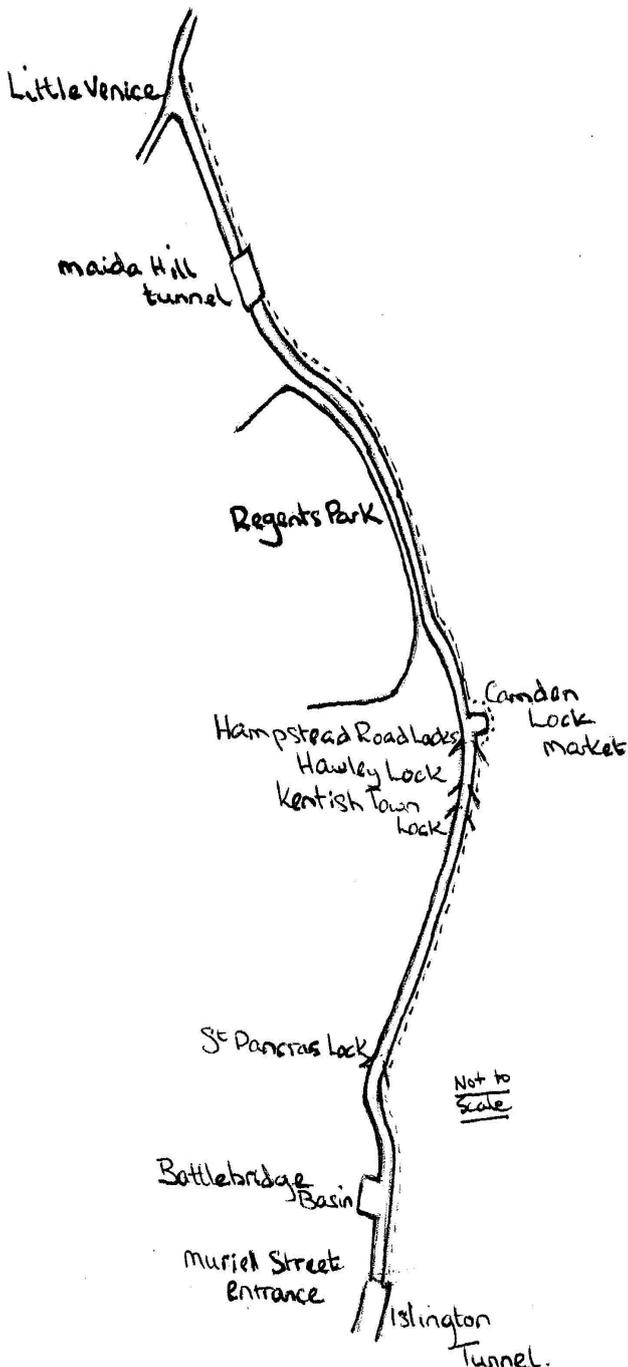


REGENT'S CANAL WEST

Islington to Little Venice (c3.5 miles)

The walk follows a well-maintained canal path, mainly level with one steep flight of steps. Open from 8am to dusk. Path used by walkers, joggers and cyclists, so the usual sensible precaution applies - keep to the land side of the path so it is the speeding cyclists and joggers who run the risk of falling in to the canal!

Islington to Camden Lock



1 Exit from Kings Cross into York Way and turn left up York Way. Turn right into Wharfdale Road, past a pretty mews and café, then left into Caledonian Road and onto the Canal Path at Bridge Three.



Mosaic near Kings Cross

2 The first leg of the walk goes past Battlebridge Basin, one of the larger basins on the canal, Camley Street Nature Park www.wildlondon.org.uk/Naturereserves/CamleyStreetNaturalPark and through St Pancras Lock, Kentish Town Lock and Hawley Lock. Along the canal tow path are a variety of canal side homes, converted warehouses, new build apartments, Victorian terraced houses and, of course, many narrow boats, as well as a variety of waterfowl.

3 After walking for approximately a mile, you will reach Hampstead Road Locks, more commonly known as Camden Lock, the home of Camden Lock Market. The market is a good place for a brief detour for snack and a drink, or a longer detour for some serious shopping. At the Lock there are toilets situated behind a red phone box used for security.



Notice the blue building on the opposite side of the canal with egg cups on the roof!

Camden Lock to Little Venice

1 Leaving Camden Lock the path passes along one side of Regent's Park. In Cumberland Basin on the left is the mooring of the exotic Feng Shang Princess Floating Chinese Restaurant. Just after Cumberland Basin there is a signpost indicating the route from the Canal to London Zoo (should you wish to leave the walk and visit the animals). Continuing along the canal path there is a free glimpse in to the Zoo with the Snowdon Aviary on the path side and the Into Africa exhibit area on the other bank. Look across the water to the Zoo and see if you can spot the hyenas.

2 Soon after Regent's Park are the Lisson Grove Moorings with its numerous residential narrow boats. The path is narrow through these moorings and is punctuated with raised concrete humps concealing power cables to the individual boats. Cyclists are not permitted along this section of the path and it is not suitable for wheelchair users (and would be a challenge for any buggy pushers). This part of the canal towpath is gated and closed from 6pm to 9am, with an alternative route clearly signposted.

3 After leaving the Lisson Grove Moorings and going through the Eyre Tunnel, the canal path is interrupted by the Maida Hill Tunnel. A steep flight of metal stairs leads to street level and a helpful notice board directs walkers



through Aberdeen Place to Blomfield Road to rejoin the canal. Crossing Edgware Road to reach Blomfield Road the canal can be seen emerging from the other side of the tunnel. Café Laville sits over Blomfield Road end of the Maida Hill Tunnel if refreshments are needed. (Note: this is close to the end of the walk).



4 Rejoining the Regent's Canal at Blomfield Road is a bit of a disappointment as the Blomfield Road Moorings are private and you have to walk along the road by the railings. After about 5 minutes walk and a little before reaching the road junction with Warwick Avenue, an open gate and some shallow steps allows public access to the canal towpath. It is now a very short walk to Pool of Little Venice (also known as Browning's Pool, after the Victorian poet Robert Browning who lived in this area).

5 Entering the Pool you pass the unique Puppet Theatre Barge www.puppetbarge.com. Located in the Pool is a narrow boat café, the Waterside Café. On one side of the Pool, running alongside Warwick Avenue, sit Rembrandt Gardens which offers a view over the canal and public toilets. From this end point of the walk Warwick Avenue underground station (Bakerloo Line) is only 3 minutes away; it is signposted from the Canal. Or, as an alternative return route, there is a waterbus service which operates from Little Venice to Camden Lock www.londonwaterbus.co.uk.

The Regent's Canal was built to link the Grand Junction Canal's Paddington Arm, which opened in 1801, with the Thames at Limehouse. The Prince Regent, later King George IV, allowed the use of his name for the project. It was opened in two stages, from Paddington to Camden in 1816, and the rest of the canal in 1820. The main centre of trade was the Regent's Canal Dock, a point for seaborne cargo to be unloaded onto canal boats. By the 1840s the railways were taking traffic from the canals and there were attempts made, without success, to turn the canal into a railway at various times during the 19th Century. In the latter part of the second world war (1939-45) traffic increased on the canal system as an alternative to the hard pressed railways. The last horse drawn commercial traffic was carried in 1956 following the introduction of motor tractors three years previously. By the late 1960's commercial traffic had all but vanished. www.canalmuseum.org.uk