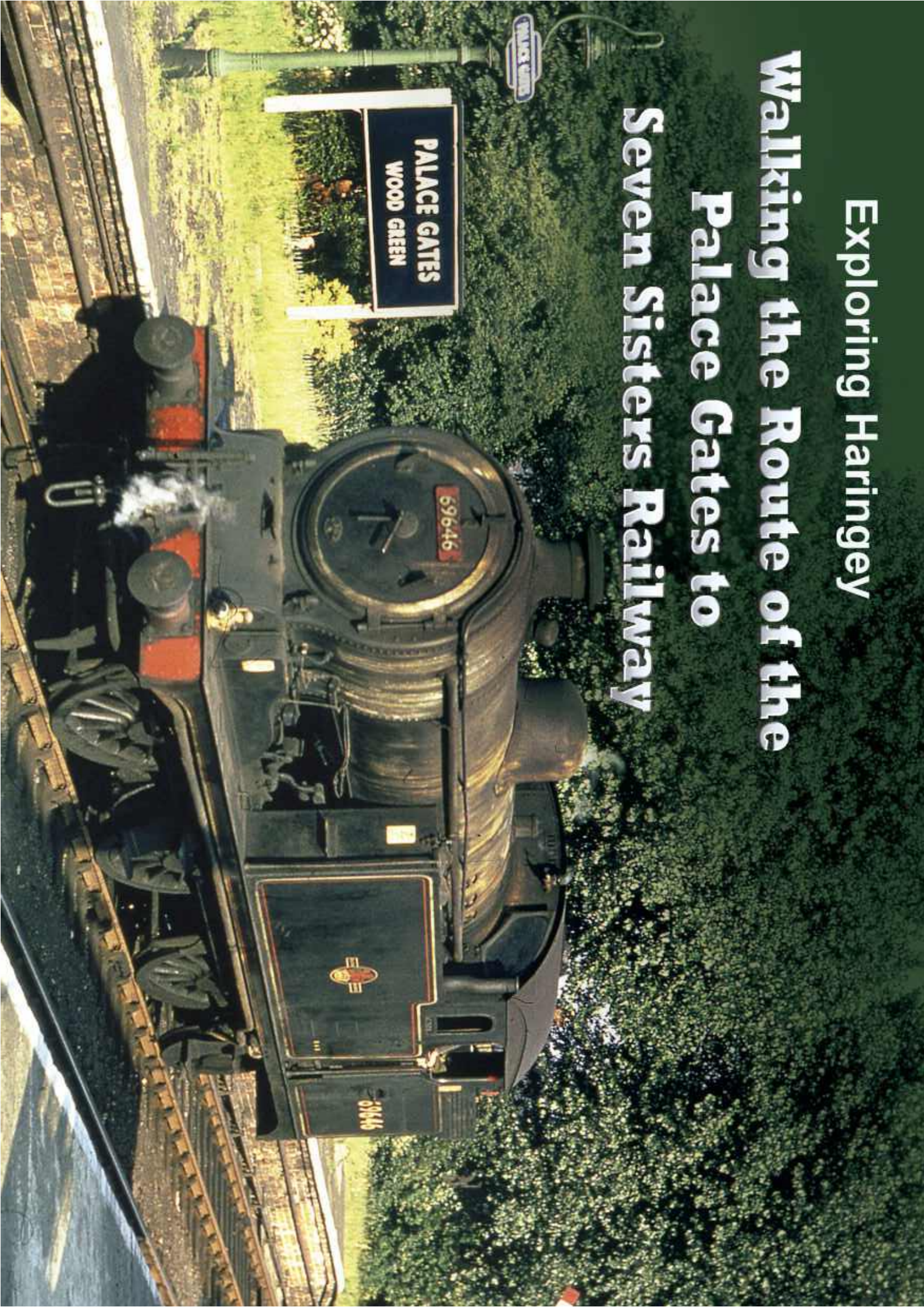


Exploring Haringey

Walking the Route of the Palace Gates to Seven Sisters Railway



PALACE GATES TO SEVEN SISTERS RAILWAY

This three mile walk follows the route of a railway which went from Palace Gates near Alexandra Palace in the west of the borough to Seven Sisters in the east.

The railway opened in 1878 and did not close until 1963. Its route went through the centre of Wood Green, under Westbury Avenue near Tunpike Lane, then on to West Green. Wood Green shopping centre (The Mall) and Wood Green Library were built on the site of the railway. Two stretches of the line have become allotments, others are housing estates. Remains of the railway, such as embankments and bridge abutments can be seen at various points.

To get to the starting point of the walk take the W3 bus from Wood Green or Finsbury Park to Alexandra Palace Station (make sure you get this bus stop because confusingly there are several bus stops with similar names on the bus route).

The walk starts outside the listed Starting Gate pub opposite the station. The pub, built in 1875, has had various names in recognition of the horse racing which took place in Alexandra Park from 1868 and continued right up to 1970. From the pub walk down St Michaels Terrace and turn into Dorset Road, the second turning on the left. The site of Palace Gates station is at the end of this street now occupied by modern houses. Although this was the terminus the line was linked to the Hertford branch of the main line in 1929. During the 1930s the link was occasionally used by excursion trains from Enfield and other stations on the Hertford line on their way to Southend or Clacton. The section of line between the station and the Hertford line is still in situ as a siding and the buffer stops can be glimpsed through the Travis Perkins works car park at the end of Dorset Road.



The Starting Gate Pub

Retrace your steps back down Dorset Road, cross Avenue Gardens and walk down the steps into Park Avenue. The line ran across Avenue Gardens on a low embankment and then crossed Park Avenue. The remains of the embankment and the bridge abutments can still be seen.

The next section is the only part of the line which is now unused and fenced off, enclosing what must be a rich nature reserve, designated by the council as an ecologically valuable site. To get round it, cross Park Avenue by the pedestrian crossing, turn left and take the first right, Wolseley Road. Continue through the passageway into Cumberland Road and come out onto busy Station Road - the road is named after the main line station now called Alexandra Palace and not a station on our line. It was on this corner that our railway crossed Station Road. Modern buildings now occupy the area but the site of the bridge can clearly be seen where the road dips. Whilst originally the bridge only allowed clearance for single deck buses (formerly single deck trams), only a few years before the line was closed work was carried out to allow double deck buses to pass under the railway.

The next section is totally obliterated - it ran where Morrisons, the library and the Wood Green shopping centre now lie - and it is necessary to walk along adjacent streets. Turn right along Station Road and cross by the pedestrian crossing. Take the first left, called Parkland Road although, confusingly, the old name of Caxton Road still appears on the first house. Where Parkland Road turns sharp right continue straight ahead along a passageway which takes you out onto the High Road almost opposite Argos. The line crossed Wood Green High Road on a bridge (see photo overleaf) and

there was a station here, originally called Green Lanes (later Noel Park and Wood Green), situated where Argos now stands. The bend in the High Road here was originally made so that the road could pass under the railway at a better angle.

Cross the High Road and walk down the alley which runs next to Argos. This brings you out onto Gladstone Mews which leads onto Pelham Road. You are here on the edge of the Noel Park estate, planned and built in the late nineteenth century. Turn right along Pelham Road and continue along Glynne Road. Straight ahead of you is the Sandlings estate, built on the course of the railway and Noel Park goods yard. The most pleasant way through the Sandlings estate is to turn right here and then left along a path bordering the estate. Beyond Sandlings the railway passed under Westbury Avenue. The road was humped to allow the railway to pass underneath. The hump is still there and the bridge hole used by the railway has been landscaped and laid out for pedestrians and cyclists.

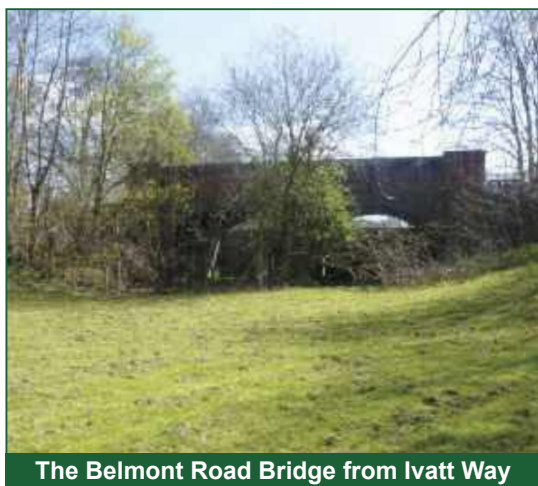
After Westbury Avenue the railway passed through an area which is now the well tended Mannock Road allotments, not accessible unless you know someone who will let you walk through. So turn right and walk along Frome Road towards Turnpike Lane station. Continue a little way along Westbury Avenue and then turn left through a little passageway into Langham Road. Facing you is the listed Turnpike Lane tube station. Turn left and you will start to come across a number of urban art projects on walls, shops and street furniture by the Turnpike Art Group (www.turnpikeartgroup.co.uk). Continue along Langham Road and then into Graham Road. This narrows and becomes Langham Place. At the end of Langham Place you can see where the railway emerged from what is now the Mannock Road allotments. There is a plaque in the pavement commemorating the railway and rails have been set into the recently built pavement although the gauge is somewhat more than the standard 4'8½"! There are other reminders of the railway here with images of a guard waving a green flag and a booking office window painted on the wall of an electricity sub-station.



Mural of ticket office by Turnpike Art Group

The line then continued through what is now a new estate, called Ivatt Way. Henry Ivatt was the Great Northern Railway's locomotive engineer, although his more famous son, George, worked for GNR's west coast rival and became Chief Mechanical Engineer of the London, Midland and Scottish Railway.

Ivatt Way is a cul-de-sac but, if you walk down it, you will be rewarded by a view of a double bridge which took the railway and adjacent sidings under Belmont Road. You now have to retrace your steps and turn right along Downhills Park Road, passing the former Belmont Road School, now council offices. At the roundabout, enter Downhills Park. Turn right and take the footpath along the edge of the park. Ahead of you are the grounds of Park View School in a shallow cutting. This is on the site of the railway line and its width here is accounted for by goods sidings beside the line. Look to your right and you see the double arch bridge, which you might have seen from the other side in Ivatt Way, through which the railway and the sidings extended under Belmont Road.



The Belmont Road Bridge from Ivatt Way

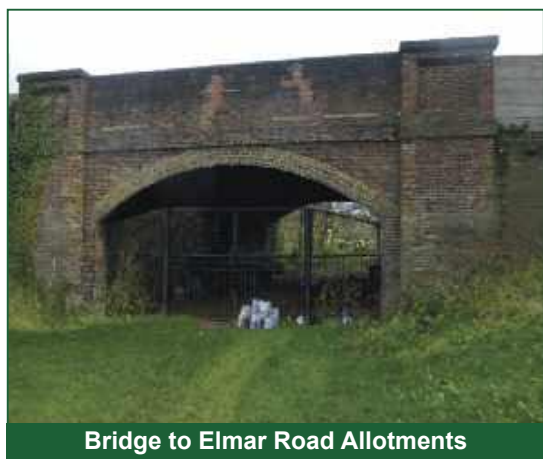
Turn left and walk along by the metal fence which borders the school grounds. Near the entrance to the park you can see three statues of famous Tottenham people – Luke Howard, Walter Tull and Nicola Adams. You go out of the park onto West Green. In 2012 major improvements were made to this area by the council in conjunction with Sustrans. Two-way traffic replaced the gyratory system and the entire north side was pedestrianised. There are wider pavements, newly planted trees and new attractive lamp posts in front of the 1899 listed former Tottenham School Board Offices (now the Wisdom School).

West Green station was on the site of the present entrance to Park View School. There is no trace here of the station but, on the other side of the road, a bridge parapet has been left to show you where the line passed under West Green Road. Beyond the parapet can be seen a modern estate on the course of the railway called Gresley Close, named after Sir Nigel Gresley, Chief Mechanical Engineer of the London and North Eastern Railway and the designer of Mallard which holds the record for the world's fastest steam engine.



Bridge parapet in West Green Road

Walk across West Green Common where there is a war memorial and also a plaque commemorating the Windrush generation. Cross West Green Road by the pedestrian crossing, turn left and walk along West Green Road. Pass Cornwall Road and Caradon Way. Turn right into Avenue Road and ahead of you the road rises over the old railway. Just beyond the bridge turn right onto a footpath. Go down the slope and behind you you will see the bridge hole. It is now the entrance to the Elmar Road allotments stretching along the course of the line. The estate here is called Sturrock Close, named after Archibald Sturrock, an early locomotive engineer for the GNR.



Bridge to Elmar Road Allotments

Return to Avenue Road, turn left and then right into Elmar Road opposite. Eventually Elmar Road turns left and brings you back to West Green Road. Continue along West Green Road past the Fountain pub which, with its garden, has been preserved following a vigorous campaign by local people. Take the next turning on the right, Kirkton Road. A short way along Kirkton Road a new set of decorative railings bars the way for cars. The railway crossed over a bridge at this point. A new development on your right and on the course of the railway is called Brunel Walk after the famous engineer.

Continue through the gap in the railings and turn left at the crossroads into Seaford Road. This bends to the right and you then turn left into Roslyn Road. Ahead of you is a small park called Brunswick Road Open Space. The branch line had its own platforms at Seven Sisters station built on an embankment on this site. A section of this embankment can still be seen. The line finally joined the existing line just to the south of the station.

From the park you can reach the entrance to Seven Sisters station (main line and Victoria Line) by turning right out of the park and left into Seven Sisters Road. Alternatively turn left and then right onto West Green Road for the 41 bus or numerous buses on Tottenham High Road.

PALACE GATES TO SEVEN SISTERS RAILWAY

ALEXANDRA PALACE STATION



Remains of the original bridge on Park Avenue



The bridge under Westbury Avenue leading to what is now Mannock Road Allotments



Sculpture in Downhills Park of 3 famous Tottenham people – Luke Howard, Walter Tull and Nicola Adams



The original bridge under Belmont Road leading to what are now the grounds of Park View School

KEY

- Route of the walk
- - - old railway
- original stations
- - - modern railways
- waterways

1/2 mile
500m



One of the many artworks created by the Turnpike Art Group



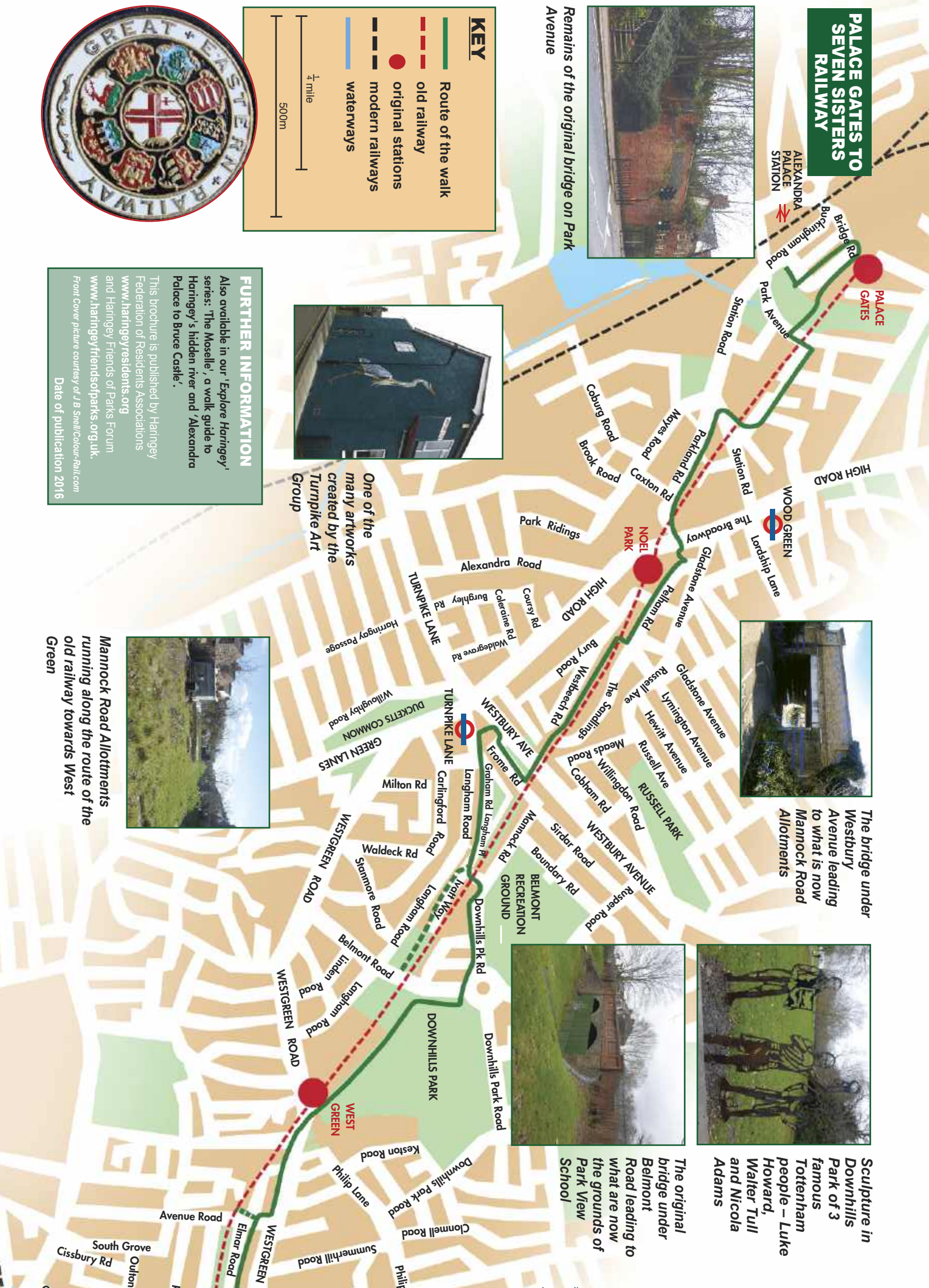
Mannock Road Allotments running along the route of the old railway towards West Green



FURTHER INFORMATION

Also available in our 'Explore Haringey' series: 'The Moselle', a walk guide to Haringey's hidden river and 'Alexandra Palace to Bruce Castle'.

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The line from Palace Gates to Seven Sisters

Noel Park Station



Non-railway enthusiasts might get rather confused about which railway this walk is describing because there have been three railway lines near Alexandra Palace. When the Palace opened in 1873 there was already the Great Northern Railway (GNR) main line which had the nearby station then called Wood Green (it is now called Alexandra Palace). This is the only railway still remaining.

In the same year the Palace opened, the GNR opened a branch from its 'Northern Heights' line at Highgate to Alexandra Palace, terminating right by the palace entrance which was then on the northern side of the Palace. The old station building

Courtesy of Mervyn Askew



The old West Green Station building on West Green Road

is still in use at the top of The Avenue as CUFOS (Community Use for the Old Station). The line closed in 1954 and is now part of the Parklands Walk.

The Palace immediately attracted large numbers of visitors so the Great Eastern

Courtesy of www.historyinpictures



Above: The old bridge where the railway crossed Wood Green High Road, where Wood Green shopping centre is now

If you are interested to find out more information about this little line one of the best sources, an article by Richard Matz, can be found at the following website:

<http://www.bowesandbonds.org/forum/topics/palace-gates-to-seven-sisters-the-lost-railway-line-of-bounds>

More photos of the line as it was can be found at Alan Swain's excellent website: http://tottenham-summerhillroad.com/early_railways_of_tottenham.htm

The line never attracted the hoped for passengers and the line eventually closed to passengers in 1963 at which time the only service consisted of a few peak hour trains to North Woolwich.

As you can see from the map the line had four stations: Palace Gates, Noel Park, West Green and Seven Sisters. There were goods yards at Noel Park and West Green. The footprint of the line widened at these points and these areas can still be discerned as you will see during the walk. Coal was the main goods handled but, until the Second World War, race horses were loaded and unloaded at Palace Gates destined for the race course in the park. In 1958 a grand exhibition of railway rolling stock was held at the Noel Park goods yard. Amongst the visiting locomotives was Mallard, the streamlined LNER Pacific which broke the speed record for steam in 1938, achieving 126 mph on Stoke Bank near Peterborough.



Thanks to www.tottenham-summerhillroad.com

Above: Mallard on show at the grand exhibition of rolling stock held at Noel Park goods yard



Ian Baker Collection