

GREEN TRANSPORT TRAIL



The Green Transport Trail describes the green spaces you can see from the train, tram and bus during your journeys on public transport in The Beck Corridor.

The descriptions are read as though going from north to south or west to east. For a map of transport links in the area, please see 'Green Travel in the Beck Corridor' in this pack. More details on public transport are available from Transport for London on 0845 300 7000

Beckenham Junction → Beckenham Road → Avenue Road

Look out for gardens, bramble banks with trees, Buddleia, allotments and small areas of woodland along this transport route.



RAILWAY

London Bridge to Hayes Line

Lower Sydenham → New Beckenham → Clock House → Elmers End → Eden Park → West Wickham → Hayes

From Lower Sydenham station there are views of sports grounds through the trees. Also, a river that forms part of the Ravensbourne catchment supports kingfishers, heron, roach and specialist invertebrates. New Beckenham Station was opened in 1904 to enable two lines to be served (although the line which curves eastwards to Beckenham Junction is seldom used) and replaced the original 1864 station. A small trackside cottage and the remains of the platform can still be seen to the south. The mid-Kent line, on the Cator Estate, meant easy access to London for the inhabitants of expanding Beckenham. Look out for birds, foxes, various trees and wildflowers along the trackside. Towards Clockhouse there are views of allotments and a river. Clockhouse is named after a house once owned by the local Cator family of Beckenham Place. A road nearby is called Thayers Farm Road. 1885 records show a Thomas Hudson supplied farm produce of milk and meat to the district. From here to Elmers End station, the train passes beside Churchfields Recreation Ground, (9 hectares of open space with horticultural features, opened to the public in 1907), sports grounds, gardens and allotments, rich in slow-worms and amphibians. A tributary of the river flows here too and is commonly known as the Chaffinch Brook. The train then passes beside gardens, allotments, Elmers End Recreation Ground, sports grounds and Harvington Estate to Eden Park Station. There are large green sites of nature conservation interest about the area, including High Broom Wood. From here the train passes banks with trees, scrub, gorse and Buddleia and runs past sports grounds and the wooded Langley Park Golf Course to West Wickham.

Beyond, towards Hayes Station, there are wooded banks rich with species and views of gardens and sports grounds. The line crosses the Greenwich Meridian. The original Hayes station was opened in May 1882 and was then surrounded by meadows, trees and The New Inn public house. The station is the link to the London Outer Orbital Path, which leads to the nearby Hayes Common (rich in acid grassland, heathland and scrub) and the downland countryside beyond or to West Wickham Common and Spring Park.



London Victoria to Chatham Line

Kent House → Beckenham Junction → Shortlands

The train from Kent House eastwards crosses a tributary of the Ravensbourne and travels past sports grounds, allotments and wooded areas covered in flower- and berry-rich ivy. Take a look at the grassy banks and wide range of trees and shrubs lining the tracks from Beckenham Station towards Shortlands. The line runs parallel with a tree-lined street named Albemarle Road. John Cator's Beckenham Place estates were inherited by his nephew John Barwell Cator, but became neglected. It fell to another Cator, Albemarle Cator, to expand the developments of Beckenham and Blackheath and take advantage of the growth of the railway network during the early 19th century. Shortlands station was opened in 1858 and led to an escalation of building development, commencing in 1863 on the lands of nearby Shortlands House.



London Victoria/Blackfriars to Chatham/Maidstone Lines

Beckenham Hill → Ravensbourne → Shortlands

From Beckenham Hill the railway line passes through Beckenham Place Park, including Summerhouse Hill Wood. The park contains meadows and ancient woodland, including numerous oak, sweet chestnut, beech, hornbeam, rowan and wild service tree. The park and its Grade II listed building (briefly glimpsed) were once owned by the Cator family. The son of a Herefordshire timber merchant, John Cator (1728-1806) joined the family business which had relocated to a new London base in Southwark, and sought to capitalise on the growth of London by investing in property, mainly in south-east London and Kent. His father-in-law, Peter Collinson, was an early landscape architect and botanist and introduced exotic trees, shrubs and a lake (now drained) into the grounds. The estate was enlarged during his time, covering an area from Shortlands to Sydenham Hill. John was responsible for the layout of much of the area around Blackheath and Beckenham in the late 18th century.

The river runs close by and attracts water-birds such as moorhens and grey wagtail. It flows here in its natural bed and is flanked by willows. It rises at Caesar's Well at Keston Ponds to merge with the River Pool before reaching the Thames just above Greenwich at Deptford Creek. There were corn mills along much of the lower Ravensbourne until the end of the 19th century. Between Ravensbourne station, which was opened in 1892, and Shortlands station, the train passes gardens, vegetated banks and a golf course, through which a river tributary flows.

GREEN TRANSPORT TRAIL

BUSES

54

Elmers End to Woolwich

Along Beckenham Hill Road you can see glimpses of sports grounds, gardens and Beckenham Place Park and its golf course. It passes Stumps Hill Road, where there are views towards Crystal Palace. Some of the residents have planted wildflowers and erected bat, bee and bird boxes. On reaching Beckenham High Street, look out for trees, plants and wildlife at Beckenham Green and St. George's Churchyard. Hanging baskets and flower beds along the High Street can attract butterflies and bees. Along Croydon Road, travel past Croydon Road Recreation Ground where you will see a glimpse of a Victorian lodge at the entrance. The grounds aimed to benefit local citizens and those confined to the nearby hospital as it afforded "a pleasurable and cheerful prospect from wards". The flowers and fruit of the large horse chestnut trees along the road provide nectar and food for insects and squirrels. Look out for the heron sign at the triangular roundabout at Elmers End; the Beck Corridor supports some of the largest nesting colonies of herons in the Capital.

119

Bromley North to Purley Way

Along Wickham Road the bus drives past the private grounds of Bethlem Royal Hospital, which includes meadows and riverside woodland habitats of importance in London. You then cross the Borough Boundary, and the River Beck; look out for trees on either side and The Alders, named after a tree most commonly associated with wetlands. At the end of West Wickham High Street the bus takes you down Wickham Court Road (named after the Tudor building beside St. John the Baptist Church, visible at the top of the slope on reaching Addington Road). The bus travels past playing fields along Corkscrew Hill and Spring Park, an open space owned by the City of London. The bus turns left down towards Bourne Way and Hayes Railway Station. At this terminus, the ponds of Knoll Park and the heathland and acid grassland of Hayes Common are close by.

162

Beckenham to Eltham

From Beckenham Station, the bus takes you past Beckenham Green, with ornamental planting, and St. Georges Church, with lichen-covered gravestones. Along Wickham Road you can see allotments and the eastern side of Kelsey Park, a 32 hectare ornamental pleasure ground with natural woodland and lakes – the home of various waterfowl, including herons. The bus travels along Hayes Lane and turns down Westmoreland Road towards Bromley. Here it travels past South Hill Wood Park, rich in trees and ferns, and the closeby Kingswood Glen, which includes amphibian-rich ponds and oak woodland. Both are remnants of a much larger wood, shown on 1871 maps as Toots Wood.

194

West Croydon to Lower Sydenham

The bus passes close to Kent House Station. The area derives its name from a 178 acre farm that was very close to the old boundary between Kent and Surrey; the farmhouse dated back to 1240 but was demolished in the 1950s. Along Beckenham Road you pass Thayers Farm and Chaffinch Roads, lying alongside the Chaffinch Brook, which flows north to Cator Park, part of the former Beckenham Place estate. After passing Clockhouse Station, the bus turns into Croydon Road. Croydon Road Recreation Ground includes a Victorian bandstand, part of the outdoor entertainment of the 19th Century. At a triangular roundabout at Elmers End (junction of Croydon Road and Upper Elmers End) the green features a sign incorporating a heron. In the 1880s, sand was excavated from pits close by. On either side of Elmers End Road, you pass a number of houses
▶ **(194)** ▶ which hide green space sports grounds. As the bus drives towards West Wickham Railway Station, you pass the northern end of High Broom Wood and large front gardens, in which you may

spot butterflies and birds. The bus turns right into West Wickham High Street, where you cross the Borough Boundary and the River Beck just beyond the roundabout; look out for woodland on either side. Along Wickham Road the bus drives past the private grounds of Bethlem Royal Hospital, which includes meadows and riverside woodland habitats of importance in London.

227

Bromley to Crystal Palace

Along Beckenham Road you pass Clockhouse Station. The clock from the house after which the station is named was relocated to the old stables in Beckenham Place Park. Along Beckenham High Street the bus continues straight across the landscaped roundabout. Look out for the occasional hanging baskets and permanent flower beds which provide colour in this historic neighbourhood. Along Bromley Road there are numerous trees, gardens and flower beds. Look out for birds en route to Shortlands Station.

352

Bromley to Lower Sydenham

The 352 crosses over the Pool River and passes numerous sports grounds. On Worsley Bridge Road a number of native tree species have been planted for wildlife. The bus passes along roads named after fields of the Cator Estate Farm, including Brackley, Worsley, Park Road and Lawn Road. St. Paul's Church, on Brackley Road, was built as the Cator Estate Church in 1864. The first houses in the area were built in the early 1860's; the occupants were very wealthy and included many admirals, generals and knights. The bus turns down Copers Cope Road. Copers Cope Farm was one of the largest farms of the Cator Estate, covering 250 acres. The bus continues along Beckenham High Street, where you can see Beckenham Green (the site of flying bombs in the 1940's) and St. Georges Churchyard. The bus turns down Village Way, from where you see Croydon Recreation Ground, playing fields and Crease Park (named after a local Justice of the Peace). The bus turns down Stone Park Avenue where it passes the southern end of Kesley Park and crosses over The Beck. At the roundabout the bus takes you along Wickham Way and Red Lodge Lane. Look out for ancient trees on the road side and the variety of trees on the golf course, part of the former Langley Estate parkland. The bus takes you down The Avenue and close to Cupola Wood, an ancient woodland site.

353

Orpington to Addington

The bus passes along Addington Road, past the ancient woodland sites of Spring Park and Foxhill Shaw to the north and south. This once formed part of an extensive area of woodland stretching to Addington as recently as the 1870's. A layered hedge can be seen along the edge of the meadows. The area has archaeological interest, including the



old London-Lewes Roman road. The route takes you along Bourne Way to Hayes station and the historic village of Hayes beyond, which was described in a journal dated 1883 as 'a small straggling village situated on the slope of a hill, it consists merely of a few ordinary cottages and shops...'. Its name is thought to be derived from the Saxon word for hedge 'Haeg', though various spellings over time suggest a meaning of 'the village by the heath'. The area also included grand houses, such as 'Hayes Place' (no longer standing), home of Lord Chatham, the 'Great Commoner' and his son, William Pitt the Younger.

354 **Bromley to Penge**

Along Beck Lane you pass by allotments, through which the channelled Chaffinch Brook flows. Enid Blyton's family moved to the area in 1897 and she enjoyed exploring the brook. Along Churchfields Road, the bus turns right into Beckenham Road past Clockhouse Station, which was surrounded by fields in the 1880s. The Clock House was owned by Sir Percy Brett, who became Admiral of the Blue after a naval career which included conflict with Bonnie Prince Charlie. Later, Lady Byron lived in the mansion where she heard of the death of her husband Lord Byron in 1824. The bus passes through Beckenham town centre and into Foxgrove Road, along which wildflowers have been planted and bat, bee and bird boxes have been erected by residents. The bus goes along Downs Hill before driving up Ravensbourne Avenue and towards Ravensbourne station; both given their name by the nearby river to the east. The bus passes down Farnaby Road, across a golf course incorporating species-rich grassland in the roughs and large oak and willow trees. The bus then travels to Shortlands.

356 **Shirley to Upper Sydenham**

Along Elmers End Road lies Beckenham Crematorium and Cemetery, where Thomas Crapper and W.G. Grace are buried. The bus travels along Elmers End Road, past Eden Park station. Eden Park, which gives its name to a large district of Beckenham, was formerly called Eden Farm. The bus turns down Monks Orchard Road. To one side you can see the private grounds of Bethlem Royal Hospital; to the other, above the tops of the houses, the trees forming part of High Broom Wood, through which The Beck flows. The bus turns right along the southern end of the hospital grounds.

358 **Orpington to Crystal Palace**

Along Kent House Road the bus travels close to Cator Park. This was originally private landscaped grounds for the sole use of residents of Cator Estate but was opened to the public in 1932. The Pool River flows northwards through the park, eventually joining the River Ravensbourne at Catford. The bus continues past Clockhouse Station and right along Croydon Road past Croydon Road Recreation Ground. Past front gardens along Upper Elmers End Road, the bus turns left down South Eden Park Road. It passes allotments and the wooded side of Harvington Estate, where you catch a glimpse of the river before it continues under the road and through the former grounds of a pharmaceutical company. The bus turns into Hayes

Lane after the roundabout and left down Shortlands Road, towards the railway station. There are records of a 'Beating the Bounds' 18-mile walk starting from the station at 9am on April 20th, 1859. This practice involved the surveying of the boundary line enclosing the Parish (responsible to civic administration prior to the establishment of local government) to check for encroachments and management needs.

367 **Bromley to West Croydon**

There are two theories as to how Elmers End got its name. One, that a famous highwayman, Elmer, was hung at the crossroads, making it 'Elmer's end'; the other that there were numerous elm trees in the area and so 'Elms End'. Maps from the 1870's show the area as Elms End and it is likely that the discrepancy resulted on the naming of the railway station. From Elmers End Station, the bus passes green space at the centre of the roundabout, passing down Eden Park Avenue. It turns left down Village Way (which runs parallel to the old drive of the former Kelsey Manor), past Crease Park and Croydon Road Recreation Ground. Look out for lovely views over to Crystal Palace. The bus makes its way through Beckenham Town Centre and turns into Bromley Road, formerly the site of Beckenham's 'Old Manor'. At some flower beds, the bus turns into Oakwood Avenue and meanders through local streets towards St. Mary's Church, up on the slopes above Shortlands.

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These buses pass by Pickhurst Green and Cupola Wood. A number of springs occurred on the green. The green has a woodland pond. Old documents suggest that Pickhurst may have previously been called Pighurst, as herds of pigs grazed on the slopes of the area. Bats, particularly Pipistrelles, are known to feed over the trees and along woodland edges in the area. In the 1880's key residences existed here: owned by a coppersmith, the lodge of the former Pickhurst Manor, formerly known as Heavers and mentioned in 1693, was on the site now occupied by the United Reformed Church Hall; Pickhurst Farm previously occupied the site of Pickhurst Hotel; Pickhurst Mead was owned by a retired stokebroker.