THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF THE COLNE VALLEY

Points of interest/history

A) The Grand Union Canal was completed in 1805, linking London and the Midlands, and vitally important to Britain's Industrial Revolution. Denham Deep Lock is so called because at 11 feet it is the deepest on the canal. This was caused by mill owners on the River Frays (passing under the canal at the lock) insisting that the flow on their river was unaffected - hence the long stretch of canal ahead with no lock. John Fray was Baron Lord Chancellor of the Exchequer in the 1400s. He had considerable experience of rivers and mills around London and had a financial interest in Cowley Hall - a property in Hillingdon which adjoins the Frays River. The Frays River is fed by the River Colne at a weir north of Denham Lock. It runs parallel to the Colne for around four miles before rejoining it south of West Drayton. By 1641 the Frays River powered at least 5 mills. The last mill, Fountain's Mill in Uxbridge, was in operation until after World War Two.

B) There are occasional passenger trains from Marylebone to Denham and beyond. Enjoy the peace and birdlife of Savay Lake on your left and the second Lake on your right. HS2 is planned to cross the Colne Valley on a massive viaduct at this point and it is likely that this towpath will be closed for a significant time during construction.

C) Denham Quarry consists of some 182 acres of worked out gravel pits and agricultural land purchased by the GLC in 1976. It is now managed by Hillingdon Borough.

GRAND UNION CANAL

CIRCULAR WALK 12

4 miles

A peaceful stretch of the Grand Union Canal with views over magnificent lakes with thriving bird life.

Access:
No steep slopes, but some muddy paths in winter.

Refreshments: Cafés at the Colne Valley Park Visitor Centre (1), Fran's Tea Garden at Denham Deep Lock (2) and The Bear on the Barge Pub (3).

Public Transport:
Trains from London Marylebone and High Wycombe stop at Denham.

By Road: Denham Country Park and the Colne Valley Park Visitor Centre are sign posted from Junction 1 of the M40. Car park charges apply (all money raised goes directly to the management of Bucks Country Parks).

Postcode: UB9 5PG

OS Grid Ref: TQ 048 864

Latitude: +51.5671, **Longitude:** -0.4896

What3Words: reach.salt.inch

Explore the Colne Valley Park
Countryside on your doorstep

1) Leave the Colne Valley Park Visitor Centre, cross the roadway, go ahead past the mosaics and Roman Well (worth a look) and turn right with a hedge on your left which runs along the boundary of the golf course. Cross the road and continue in the same direction through the Country Park across low lying Misbourne Meadow, crossing the bridge over the River Colne from Buckinghamshire to Middlesex. At the Grand Union Canal turn left to Denham Deep Lock at Fran's Tea Garden. 📖 (A)

2) Follow the canal towpath for about 1½ miles, passing under the railway viaduct. 📖 (B) When you reach The Bear on the Barge pub, go up the steps on the left to Moorhall Road and turn right. Walk along the pavement and after approximately 300 yards turn right through the height barrier into Denham Quarry. 📖 (C)

3) The footpath first bears left and at the second green vehicle barrier turn right following the London Loop signs. Go through a gate and continue south down this straight path through woodland until a roadway is reached. Turn right following the Colne Valley Trail and London Loop waymarkers with HOAC Lake on the left and Harefield Marina moorings on the right. Major HS2 construction works here could have an impact on your walk. The track turns left, now with the Grand Union Canal on your right. Follow this for nearly 1 mile under the railway viaduct until a metal gate is reached.

4) Turn right just before the gate and cross the Grand Union Canal via the bridge. At the base of the bridge turn right, away from the towpath, following signs back to the start of the walk at the Colne Valley Park Visitor Centre. You will turn left and wind through the woodland of Denham Country Park, crossing the River Colne back into Buckinghamshire via a wooden bridge.