

CROYDON HERITAGE WALK

South Norwood

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NORWOOD JUNCTION



2

LIBRARY



3

CLOCK TOWER



4

FORMER POLICE STATION



5

STANLEY ARTS



6

WALKWAY



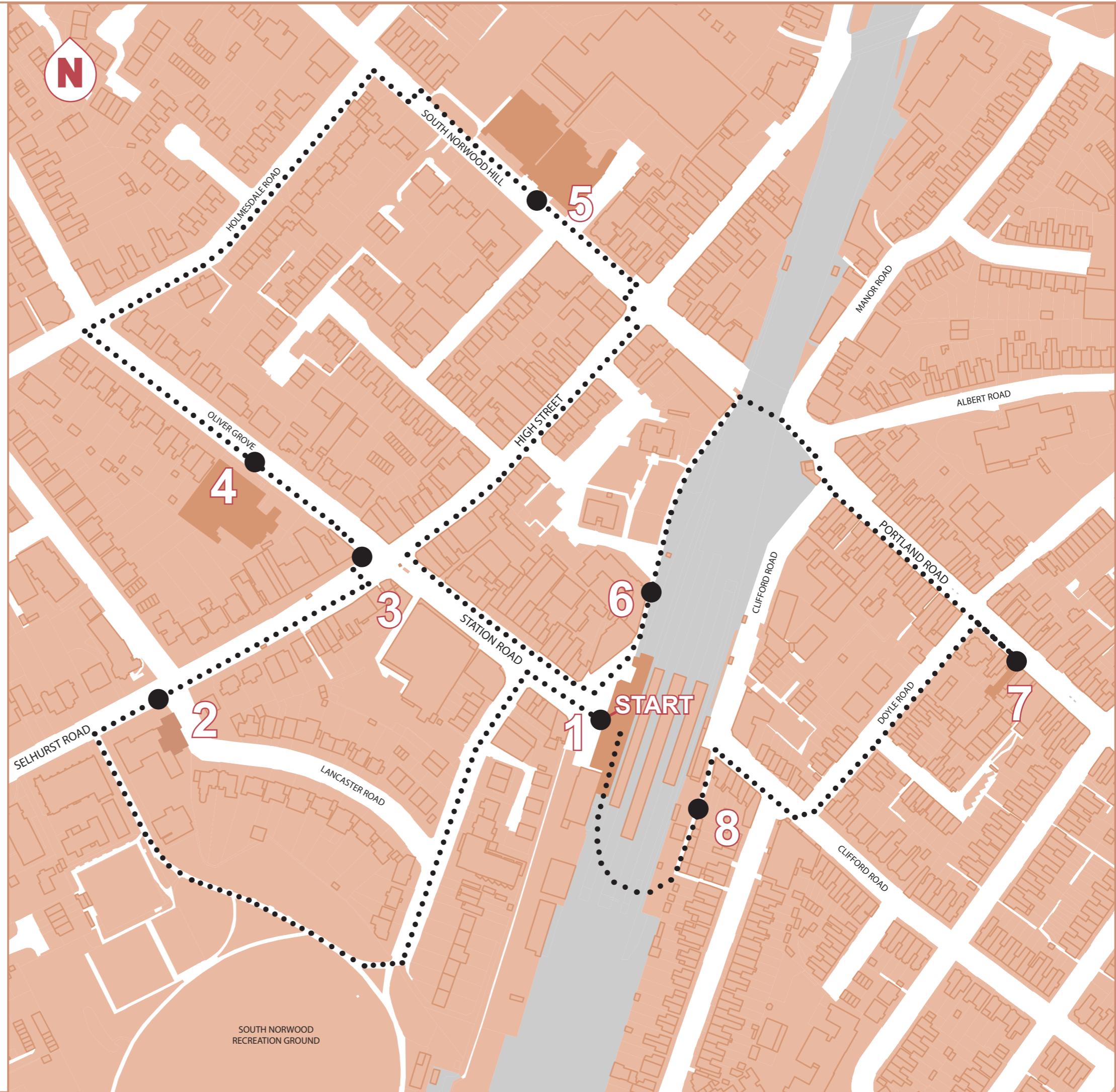
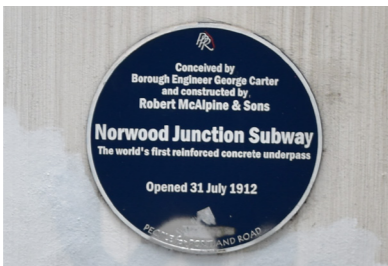
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SOCCO CHETA



8

SUBWAY



CROYDON HERITAGE WALK

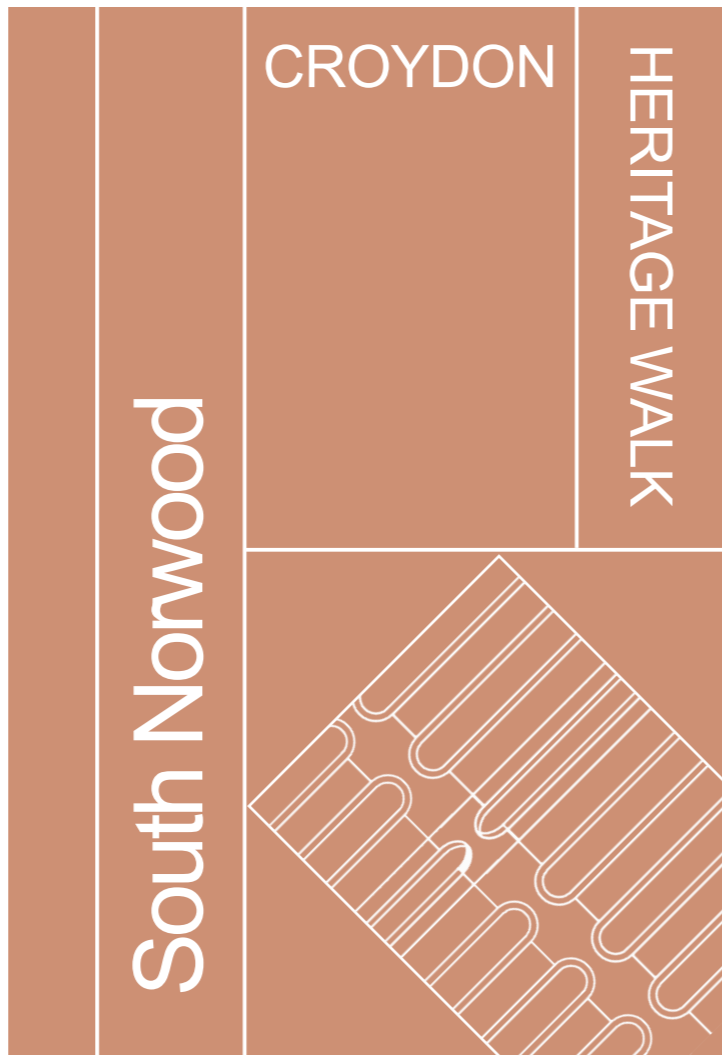
South Norwood

Distance: 2.5km
Time: 45 minutes
The walk includes no steep hills or steps

South Norwood has a rich history, but the town we see today dates mostly from the 1800s and early 1900s. Local industry boomed after the Croydon Canal opened in 1809, and the town centre expanded after the opening of the new railway station in 1839. The Victorian and Edwardian eras were a defining time for South Norwood, due to the ingenuity of its inventors.

This walk uncovers South Norwood's innovative past, exploring its historic streets, spaces and showcasing its greatest inventions.

Acknowledgement: Thanks to local historian John Hickman for his input and for all his work championing South Norwood's heritage



3 CLOCK TOWER

The impressive cast-iron Clock Tower is an iconic feature of South Norwood and stands at the heart of the community. It is a testament to the popularity of William Stanley. The local community opened the Clock Tower in honour of William Stanley and his wife, Eliza, for their golden wedding anniversary in 1907. Station Road is now home to the Clock Tower Market, a community-run monthly market.

4 FORMER POLICE STATION

From the Victorian times until around the mid-1980s, South Norwood's police station was located on the High Street. It is thought this was the police station mentioned in the Sherlock Holmes novel The Sign of the Four. In 1986 the police station was relocated, and Laing's Southern Region was awarded a contract by the Metropolitan Police for the construction of a divisional police station at South Norwood. The result is this bold, Post-Modern building. The station was closed in 2012 and converted into a Professional Skills Sixth Form School in 2018.

5 STANLEY ARTS

The Stanley Halls are unique examples of quirky Edwardian architecture. They were designed by William Stanley, inventor and local philanthropist, and built between 1903-11. The buildings reflect Stanley's interest in science, the arts and culture. When the Halls opened, they provided increased opportunities for local young musicians such as William Hurlstone, Samuel Coleridge Taylor and even Shirley Bassey to rehearse and establish themselves.

The venue continues to inspire creativity and innovation to this day. The Stanley People's Initiative (SPI) was set up in 2011 to manage the Grade II listed halls. Stanley Arts run events, offer performance spaces, and act as a hub for local businesses. Walk through the narrow passage to reach the courtyard, and feel free to take a pit stop here in the cafe.

Can you find a map of South Norwood on the pavement?

Outside the Jolly Sailor Pub on the corner is a map from 1836 showing the historic road layout, buildings and canal at this time

1 NORWOOD JUNCTION

Start your walk at the Norwood Junction Station. This railway was first authorised by an Act of Parliament in 1835, and the line ran from London Bridge to London Road in Croydon. South Norwood's station was originally located to the north of Portland Road Railway Bridge and was known as the 'Jolly Sailor Station' when it was opened in 1839. The station was relocated to its present site in the 1850s and later renamed.

Turn right and walk northwards through the recreation ground, which was laid out by the council after 1889 as important open space for the expanding town. In its heyday, it had a bandstand and flower displays. Some of the original trees remain, and the grand brick pillars at the north entrance of the park were placed there in 1902 after being relocated from the private estate nearby.

6 WALKWAY

This path beside the railway takes you past the former location of Stanley Works. Between Belgrave Road and Station Road was once a large Victorian factory, built by Stanley in 1875, which manufactured mathematical and drawing instruments. Although the original firm moved out in the 1920s, the factory remained in use by a joinery firm until the late 20th century. Sadly the factory suffered a disastrous fire in the 1990s and was converted to residential use in 2000. However, if you look down on the ground, you can see stones which have been laid out to mark the old footprint of the factory building.

You are near to the site of the pumping station for the London and Croydon Atmospheric Railway. This was rare and innovative Victorian technology, using air pressure to push vehicles through pipes.

7 SOCCO CHETA

Hidden on the busy Portland Road, this building has a long history of innovation and responding to the needs of its community. It was originally an early cinema known as the New Electric Theatre,

2 LIBRARY

The library is a striking, Brutalist building, which was purpose-built in 1968. The architect, Hugh Lea, worked alongside Croydon's Chief Librarian and the library team to design this new, innovative space. It is split over five levels and designed to be open, let in the light, and allow all members of the community to use the space together. Lea was the Croydon Borough Architect between the years of 1966-1973, and later became the Director of Development in 1972 until 1988.



Can you find a heritage treasure map on the ground near the library?

In 2006, Mosaic Art worked with local schoolchildren and the community to design and construct a mosaic inspired by the heritage of South Norwood. The mosaic contains clues about the area's history.

first opened in 1911. During World War II, it became a restaurant and after the war was used as a dining room for school meals. From March 1963, it was converted to the Socco Cheta Youth Club, which also became the home of Croydon Domino Club in 1971. They remain here today as part of Socco Cheta Community Hub (CIC), a consortium of local organisations who have come together to give a new lease of life to the building as a community hub.

8 SUBWAY

As you reach the station, head down the slope to the left to take the subway. Opened in 1912, this was the first subway in the world to be made out of reinforced concrete, a revolutionary engineering technique at the time.

The underpass is filled with artwork, showcasing the creativity of the community. In 2021, local organisation We Love SE25 commissioned artists to work with volunteers to create a bright, colourful mural at the Clifford Road entrance of Norwood Junction Foot Tunnel. Inside the tunnel are images of Victorian South Norwood, by artist Liane Lang who worked with local historian John Hickman and the Croydon Local Studies and Archives in 2012.