Green Chain Walk
Section 1 of 11
Thamesmead to Lesnes Abbey

Section start: Thamesmead
Nearest stations to start: Bus stop at Nickelby Close, Crossway - routes 229, 177, 401 or 472 from Abbey Wood towards Thamesmead
Section finish: Lesnes Abbey
Nearest stations to finish: Abbey Wood
Section distance: 2.6 miles (4.2 kilometres)

Introduction
Explore the ruins of a 12th Century Cistercian Abbey and visit one of the capitals finest nature reserves at Crossness. This section takes you from the River Thames at Thamesmead, a once self contained community aimed at providing housing set in landscaped surroundings and a network of footpaths and cycle ways away from traffic to Lesnes Abbey, built in 1178 from stone brought from Normandy.
Directions

From the Nickelby Close bus stop on Crossway, head towards Manorway green space. You can start the walk at the river by turning left and following the path to the Thames. Alternatively, turn right, head away from the river and follow the path into Manorway Green open space. Turn left along the path and then right to cross the Crossway Lake canal footbridge and enter Fieldfare Road.

Cross the end of Fieldfare Road and pass between numbers 70 and 71 to the green. Turn left and cross the footbridge towards the tump (a small hill). Leave the tump at the other end, continue through Curlew Close and first left into Gargeney Walk. Cross the footbridge, turn right and follow the canal under the road (the Crossway again).

Keep the canal to your right, follow the path through Crossway Park to the Green Chain signpost just before the pond. There are two routes across Eastern Way from here:
Continue around the pond, bear right and follow the path alongside Eastern Way, leaving the park to cross Eastern Way by the subway and concrete suspension footbridge. Turn left along Belvedere Road then right to Southmere Lake. Turn left before the lake behind the pavilion, to another Green Chain signpost.

Alternatively turn left at the signpost and follow the path to turn right under Eastern Way. Descend to Belvedere Road, follow the road and turn left to reach the same Green Chain signpost at the lake edge.

**Did you know?**
This whole area, close to the Thames, used to be swampy ground, known as Plumstead Marshes. Southmere Lake was constructed in the late 1960s at the same time as the first part of the Thamesmead estate. The lake is two metres deep at its deepest parts and is well stocked with fish, including large pike and carp.

Follow the lakeside path through Southmere Park past the adventure playground. Take the path, Abbey Way, directly southwards crossing Yarnton Way by the footbridge and on over Wolvercote Road. Continue along Abbey Way, cross over Alsike Road, the railway and Abbey Road by the footbridge, and enter Lesnes Abbey Park.

Continue up to the Abbey ruins. Follow the wooden marker posts around the ruins, through the gardens and enter the woods to reach the Green Chain signpost and join part of section two.

**Did you know?**
Lesnes Abbey was founded in 1178 by Richard de Luci and was dedicated to St. Mary and St. Thomas the Martyr. In 1524, Henry VIII's chief minister, Cardinal Wolsey, obtained permission from Pope Clement VII to close all monasteries in England and Wales with less than eight inmates. Lesnes, with only an abbot and five canons, became one of the first monasteries to be suppressed in England.

To reach Abbey Wood station, head back to Abbey Road and turn left. Follow the road and turn right onto Florence Road, just before the raised main road. Take a left into Gayton Road to reach the station.