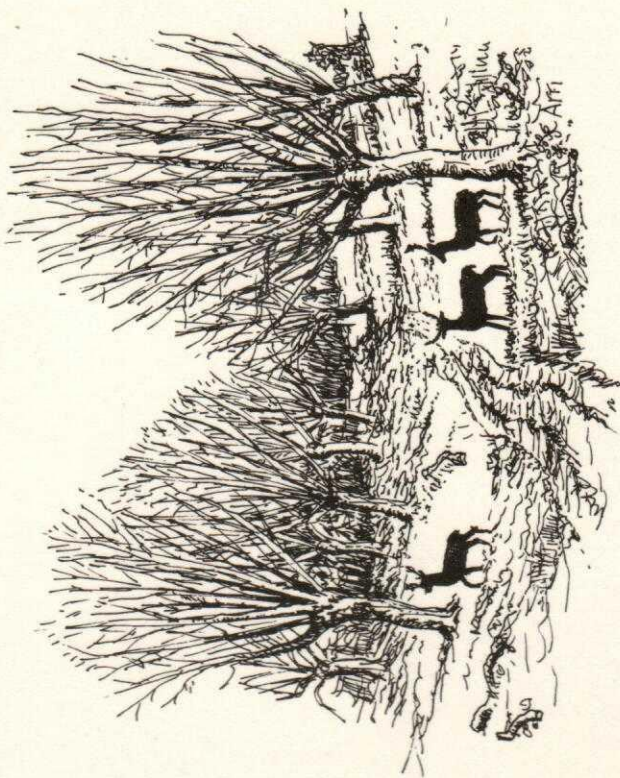




CORPORATION
OF LONDON

EPPING FOREST



CENTENARY WALK

Manor Park – Epping

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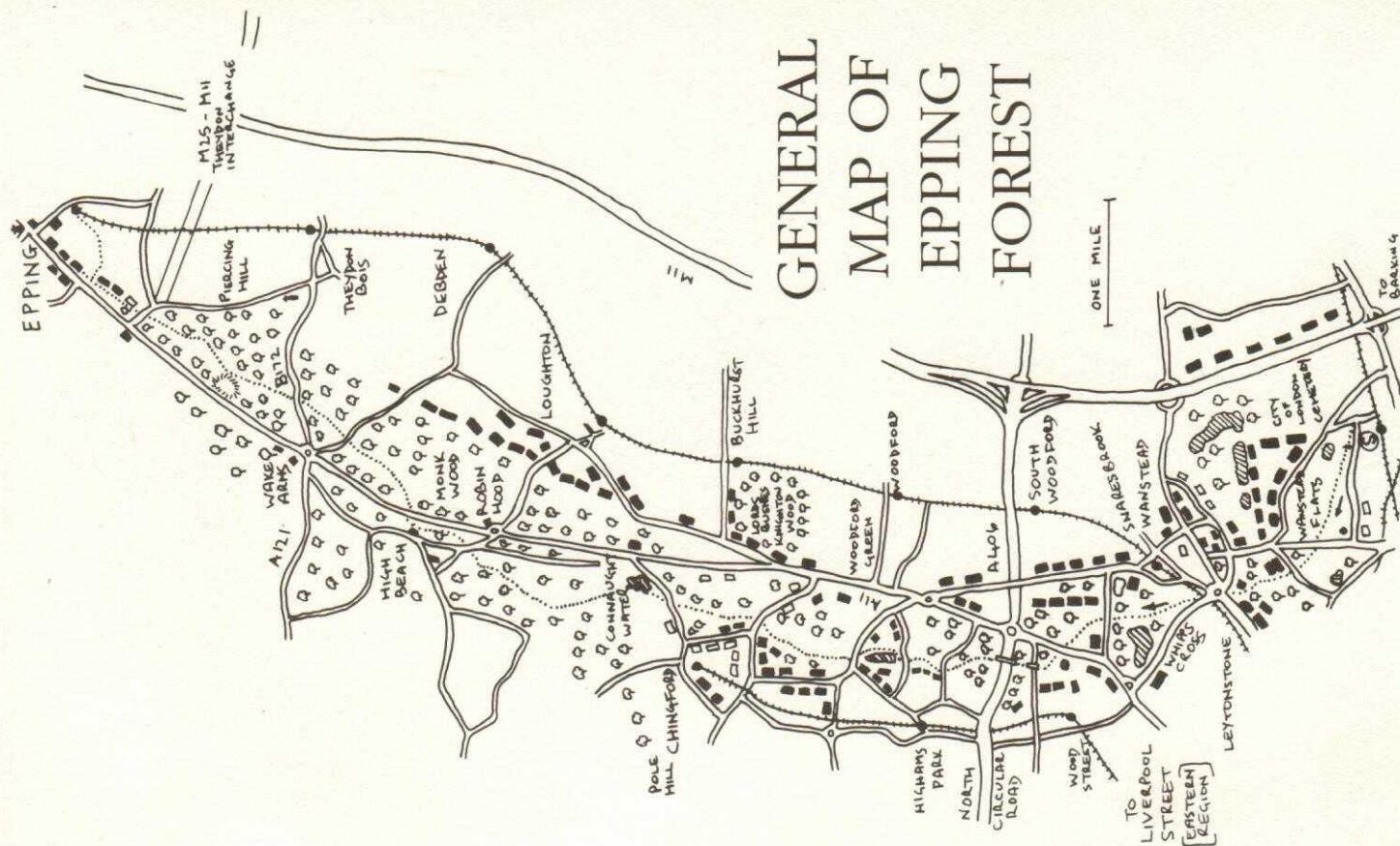
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1878 - 1978 Centenary Walk

Manor Park Epping

By
Fred Matthews
and
Harry Bitten



EPHING FOREST CENTENARY WALK

Epping Forest is the remnant of the great forest which at one time covered the whole of the southern part of Essex from Romford Road to Great Dunmow. It was a Royal Hunting Forest and consisted of agricultural land as well as wooded areas. Many of the trees in what, centuries later, came to be known as Epping Forest were pollarded, that is lopped at around 9 feet from the ground. This management practice provided a continuous source of kindling wood and prevented the regenerating tree growth from being browsed by deer and cattle which were present in increasing numbers as centuries went by. Evidence of past pollarding is present everywhere in the woodland. The Forest now covers some 6,000 acres and stretches from Forest Gate (at one time one of the gates to the Forest) to beyond Epping, a distance of over 12 miles. It was saved for our enjoyment by the Corporation of London (the present owners and Conservators of the Forest) who were supported by the Commons Preservation Society and their chief officer, Sir Robert Hunter, who later joined in the formation of the National Trust. As a result of their efforts Parliament passed the Epping Forest Act of 1878. It was to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the passing of the Act that this walk of some 15 miles through the full length of this beautiful forest was devised.

The route starts in the Borough of Newham, which originated the idea of the Centenary Walk, and is intended as an introduction to the delights of walking in the Forest in all its aspects. From the urban fringe with its playing fields the walk passes through the rather narrow part of the Forest by Highams Park lake to the 16th Century Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge at Chingford.

Beyond Chingford the route becomes both more hilly and tree covered. After passing Connaught Water, one of the largest of the Forest ponds, named after H.R.H. The Duke of Connaught, the first Ranger of the Forest who was appointed by H.M. Queen Victoria, the walk mainly follows the tracks used for horse riding but usually there is room to walk in the Forest beside them using the tracks as a guide. This is not only more pleasant walking but leaves the tracks to the horse riders who in some parts of the Forest are restricted to these rides. The walk connects with the Three Forests Way (a 60 mile walk linking the three forests of Epping, Hainault and Hatfield) at High Beach. Here the Conservation Centre which is open daily except Mondays and Tuesdays between Easter and October and on Saturdays and Sundays during winter months, should be visited for its exhibitions of items of interest in the Forest. The route also connects with the Essex Way, a walk of 81 miles to Dedham which starts at Epping Station.

By using public transport facilities around the Forest the walk can be carried out in sections, if preferred, instead of tackling the whole 15 miles at once. Stout shoes are advised as the Forest can be boggy in parts.

The Forest has appeal at many levels and can be appreciated for its wide variety of natural features, animal, bird and plant life, its long and complex history, or simply as a large open space with many recreational possibilities. Its management is a major challenge to the Conservators who have to try to reconcile the many conflicting pressures arising largely from its accessibility to the millions of people who live within easy reach of it.

Most of the Forest has now been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by the Nature Conservancy Council which has in discussion with the Conservators also produced a Management Strategy setting out guidelines for future action.

There are a large number of books on the flora, fauna and history of the Forest which can be read as an aid to your enjoyment of the walk. The following are recommended as an introduction:- "Epping Forest" by A. Qvist, the former Superintendent of the Forest, "Portrait of Epping Forest" by Sir William Addison, and "Short Walks in Epping Forest" by the present Authors. Looking forward to fine days, happy walking and another 100 years of Epping Forest.

Fred Matthews,
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Glen View, London Road, Abridge, Essex.

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Countryside Officer,
West Essex Group,
Ramblers Association,
9 Frederica Road, Chingford.

TRANSPORT

BRITISH RAIL

From Liverpool Street to Forest Gate, Manor Park, Highams Park or Chingford. From Gospel Oak to Wanstead Park.

LONDON UNDERGROUND

Central Line to Leytonstone, Snarebrook, Loughton, and Epping.
Victoria Line to Walthamstow Central and thence British Rail to Chingford.

BUS ROUTES

The routes listed below were correct at January 1991 but should be checked if you wish to use them as they are liable to alteration at any time:-

OPERATOR	ROUTE & SERVICE No.
LT W.15	HACKNEY CENTRAL STATION to WALTHAMSTOW via Leyton and Whipps Cross
TW 20	WALTHAMSTOW to DEBDEN STATION via Whipps Cross , Woodford and Loughton
LT 25	VICTORIA STATION to BECONTREE HEATH via Stratford and MANOR PARK
LT 56	SMITHFIELD TO WHIPPS CROSS via Hackney Downs & Lea Bridge
TL 66	ROMFORD to LEYTONSTONE, Green Man via Newbury Park and Gants Hill
LT 86	STRATFORD to ROMFORD via Forest Gate, Manor Park & Ilford.
LT 101	NORTH WOOLWICH to WANSTEAD STATION via East Ham & MANOR PARK
BL 108	LEWISHAM TO WANSTEAD STATION via Blackwall Tunnel & Leytonstone, Green Man
LT 123	WOOD GREEN to ILFORD via Forest Road & Woodford, Waterworks Corner
LT 144	MUSWELL HILL to CHINGFORD STATION via EDMONTON
LT 148	DAGENHAM to LEYTONSTONE, Green Man via Goodmayes & Ilford
LT 162	MAYESBROOK PARK to WANSTEAD STATION via Barking, Upton Park & Wanstead Flats (not Sundays).

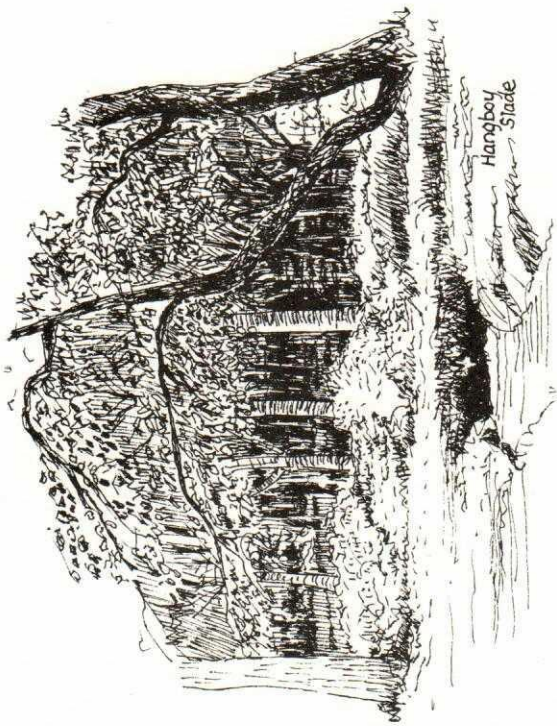
GG 179	BARKING to CHINGFORD STATION via Ilford & Woodford (not Sundays)
W 201	ONGAR to LOUGHTON STATION (BUCKHURST HILL STATION SUNDAYS) via Epping
LT 257	STRATFORD to CHINGFORD MOUNT via Whipps Cross & Walthamstow
TW 275	WALTHAMSTOW to BARKINGSIDE via Highams Park & Woodford Castle (not Sundays)
GG 313	POTTERS BAR to CHINGFORD STATION via Enfield & Ponders End (not Sundays)

OPERATORS:-

BL Borough Line	GG Grey-Green	LT London Transport
TL Towlink	TW Thamesway	W West's Coaches

TOILETS

Wanstead Flats (Lake House Road), Leytonstone, High Beech, and on the Wanstead Park alternative route by the Temple in Wanstead Park.



The first part of the walk from Manor Park Station to the Green Man, Leytonstone is covered by alternative routes. The main route is more direct but the alternative is interesting and more varied taking in the lakes

in Wanstead Park with their bird life and a walk beside the River Roding. This adds 2.5 miles to the walk. (For the alternative route see page 13).

NOTES:— The area around the Green Man may be affected at some time in the future by the building of the M11 Link Road.

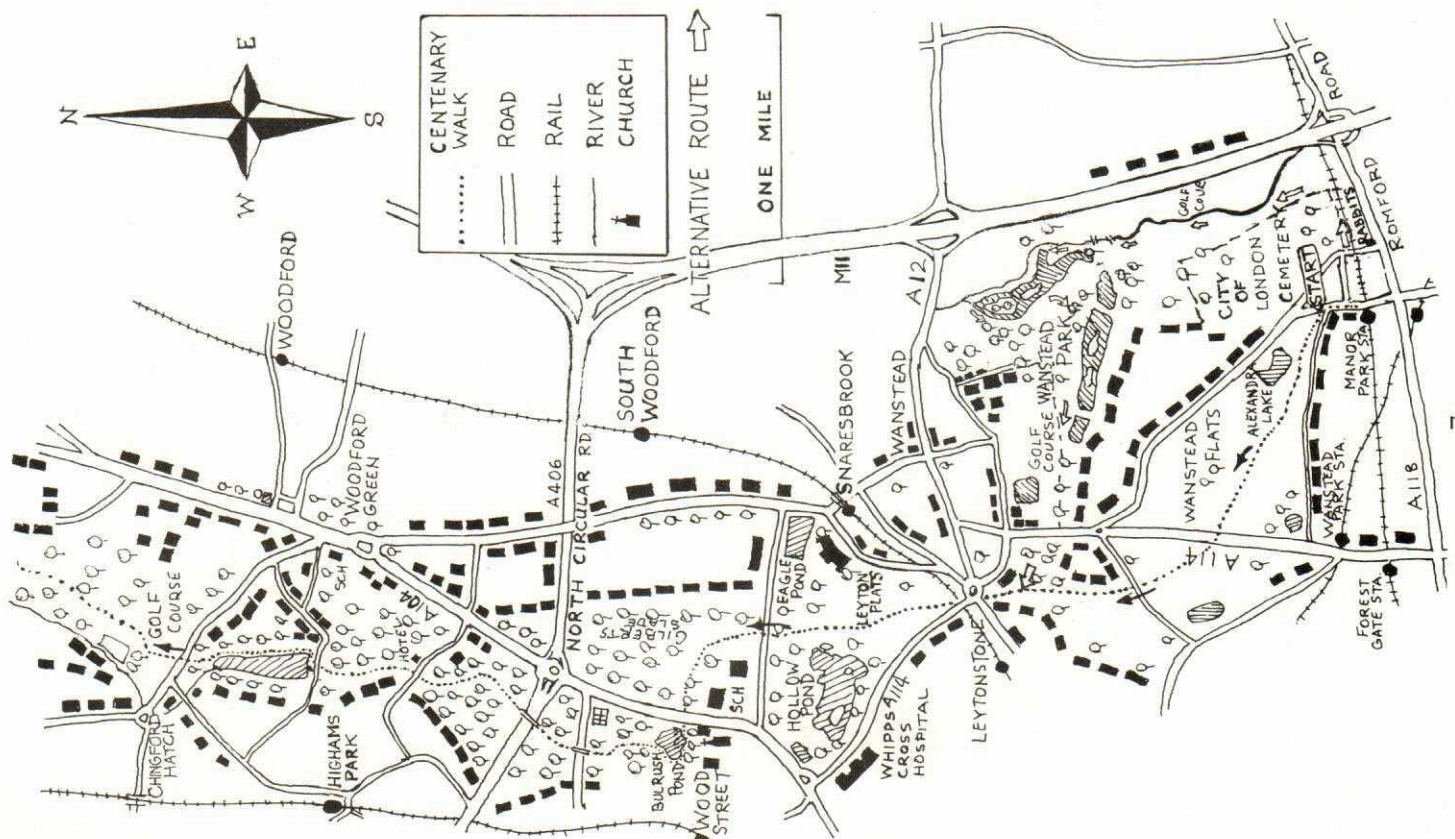
Throughout this work the word Forest is used with reference to Forest land and may refer to wooded or open areas.

CENTENARY WALK MAIN ROUTE

From Manor Park Station walk towards the Forest (which can be seen from the Station). Cross road and continue with houses on left and Forest on right. Cross Chapel Road on left and enter open Forest on your left. Walk half left on path across the green to pass a pond on your right and continue ahead on edge of mown grass playing field with rough ground on your right. Beyond this continue towards righthand edge of group of trees ahead. Cross a track and continue past the righthand edge of second belt of trees and ahead (rightish) along a path towards the lefthand edge of a third belt of trees at a road. (This is to the right of two tall tower blocks to be seen in the distance). Cross road and continue along path (a little overgrown) still heading towards the tower blocks. Path bears rightish then more definitely right towards the lefthand edge of houses on your right. Cross road and turn left for about 5 yards then (when road bears left) turn right walking on Forest edge beside a track on your right.

When track bears rightish (at a thicket ahead) follow path leftish and go over a track (between lampposts). Continue into the thicket and at fork keep leftish on main path with road away to your left. Continue into the thicket and at fork keep leftish on main path with road away to your left. Continue on to red-brick wall ahead which surrounds the Friends Meeting House where the alternative route rejoins the main route.

Turn left with the wall on your right and at corner turn right and walk across Forest (leftish) towards a large road direction sign at the road junction. Cross the small road at the junction and continue (left) into an ornamental garden. Continue through the garden and at the far end leave the garden by the bus station at the Green Man, Leytonstone (2.5 miles). Go down subway under roundabout. Turn right (signposted Holly Road) and over open space in middle of roundabout then go through further subway and left up steps to a road. Turn left with houses on right and



at junction cross road ahead. Here go half left across a narrow strip of Forest to join road on left at a railway bridge. Cross the bridge and turn right into open Forest with houses on left of road. Cross diagonally over open space to pick up path leading across a line of trees, passing the remains of a moat on the right. The path continues leftish with very good views on your right of the Crown Courts (formerly the Royal Wanstead School) and eventually bears right on a track joining from the left out to a road. Cross and continue along a track behind posts. Ignore a left fork into houses and keep rightish between posts. There is a fence on left (behind a hedge) and at its end turn left with ditch on left and follow path over earth bridge and out through trees to the main road to the right of the Rising Sun Public House.

Cross road (with care) and go into the Forest opposite on the lefthand side of a large pond. At end of pond turn right with pond on right passing a fence and allotments on your left. At end of fence bear left and right uphill over an open space (ie straight on) and along track with grassed-over reservoir on right and wide if somewhat industrial views to left and behind (3.75 miles).

Cross a bridge over a road and go on, rightish, bearing half right between posts over a second bridge crossing the North Circular Road. Keep ahead towards a white house which becomes visible as you proceed. (Amongst the trees on the left there is a memorial stone marking the spot where the evangelist Gipsy Smith was born but this needs looking for these days in view of the growth in the underwood at this point). Short of the white house bear left between posts later bearing even further left (still between posts) or walk in the Forest beside this horse ride. On approaching houses ahead turn right past a disused cattle pound and go ahead with houses on left to a road (Oak Hill). Cross with care to go ahead between "The Woodford Moat House" on your right and a block of flats on your left. Ignore a right fork and go through posts on left and keep ahead leftish downhill through a narrow strip of Forest with ditch and houses to left and a fence away to the right.

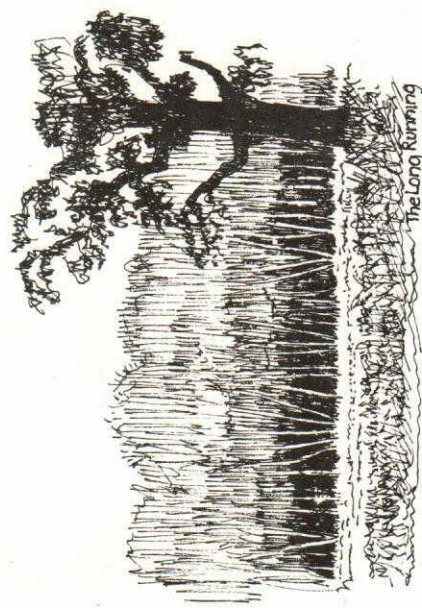
On reaching a road cross into Highams Park (keeping on righthand side of lake). At entrance there is a boat house on lefthand side of lake. Keep along righthand side of lake, and at its end continue into a narrow strip of Forest with a stream away to your left. Gradually bear right uphill on path into open grassland (being careful not to go too far to the right). Then on through this grassy strip with houses on right to a road (Chingford Lane) at junction with road on your right (5.75 miles).

Cross with care and go over earth bridge to take path ahead over golf

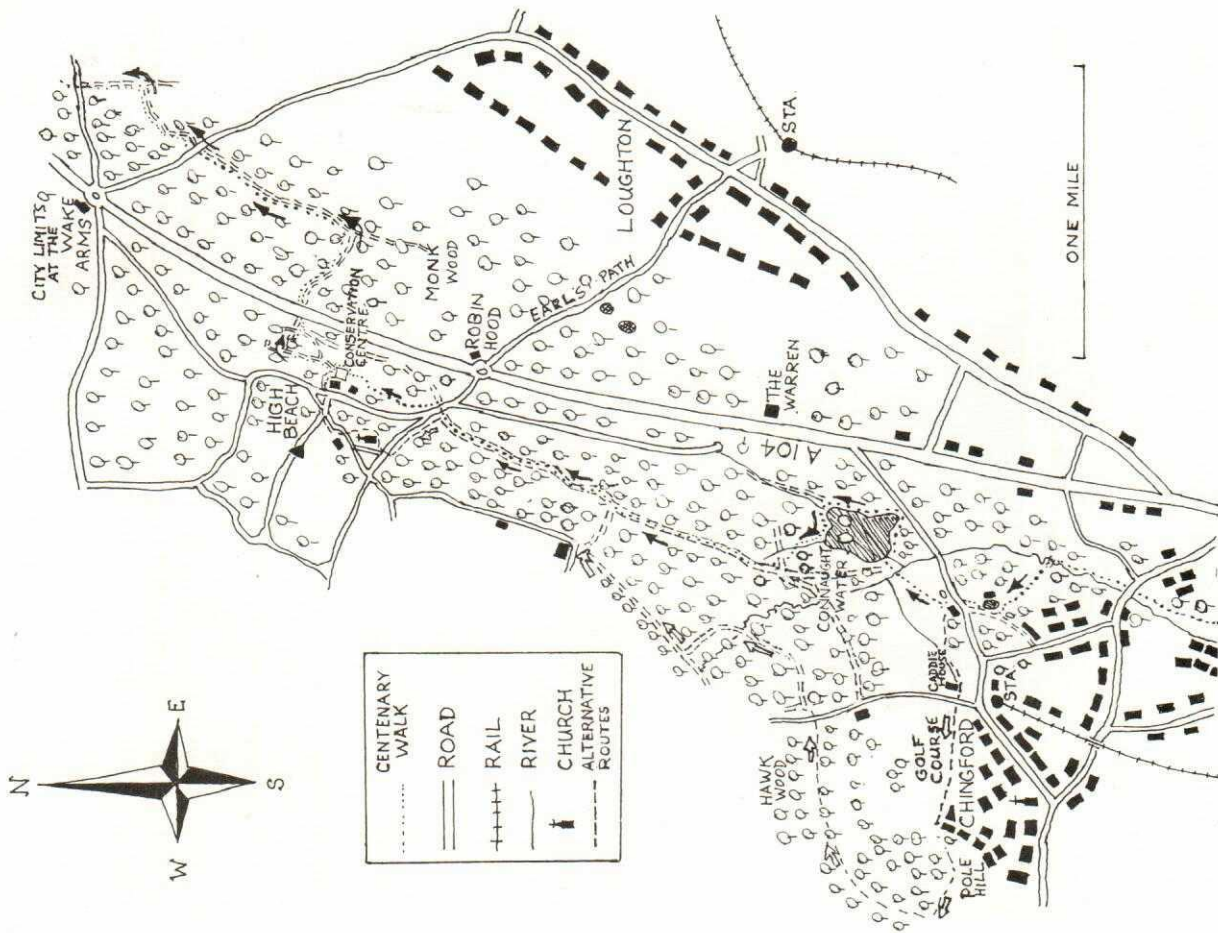
course. Go over a crossing path, through a belt of trees, over a plank bridge and ahead (leftish) beside path on lefthand side of golf course. Beyond golf course keep ahead on path which later has houses on your right to cross a road, and continue with a small stream on your left (The Ching Brook). After 200 yards turn left on a gravel track, cross a bridge and proceed uphill between posts away from the brook. Walk in forest on left of track which can be muddy. At top of hill the track bears left and almost immediately right past the Warren Pond on your right and beyond it leads to the main road opposite Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge which is to the right of the Royal Forest Hotel. The road to the left leads to Chingford train and bus stations.

Continue past Butler's Retreat which is the weatherboard building to the right of the Hunting Lodge and immediately beyond it turn left (7.5 miles). Refreshments are obtainable at the Retreat.

From here there are alternative routes. The main route which is shorter goes by way of Connaught Water whereas the alternative over Pole Hill gives outstanding views over London and Chingford but adds 2.5 miles to the walk. (For the alternative route see page 14).



MAIN ROUTE: From the fountain behind Butler's Retreat turn right with a pond on the right and keep on past the righthand edge of a small clump of trees then follow clear path ahead downhill (with road away to your right) to gap in trees and on to Connaught Water. The path crosses a series of regular furrows, a reminder of the time when Chingford Plain was under cultivation. On reaching the lake turn right and follow round lake passing a car park on your right. Continue with the lake on your left



and at far corner ignore a track leading ahead into woodland and turn left over a wooden bridge. Shortly (at next corner of lake) do NOT cross ditch but go ahead with ditch/stream on your left. (This is a good part of the Forest in which to hear Nightingales). After 75 yards cross the stream and continue on narrow path through the thicket until reaching

a cross roads of gravel tracks. Cross the track junction diagonally and turn rightish uphill walking in wood beside the gravel ride.

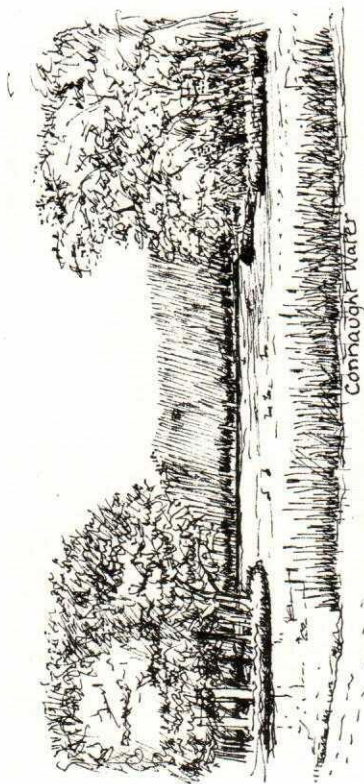
In half a mile in an open area another track joins from the left. (This is where the alternative route over Pole Hill rejoins the main route). Keep ahead with main path until another large open space (Fairmead) is reached and follow track almost to the corner of a piece of woodland where cross a bridge and bear left uphill into the forest. Follow beside the horseride round left and righthand bends and eventually out to a road. From here there are alternative routes of which that by way of High Beach Church is perhaps more pleasant. (For the alternative route see page 15).

MAIN ROUTE: Cross road and immediately turn left and proceed uphill keeping the road on your left for 200 yards or so then veer away (rightish) when a small building comes into view and cross shallow ditch with Rhododendrons clinging to its banks where Paul's Nurseries once stood. Go ahead over a pleasant green and on until the fence of the Conservation Centre is reached. The opportunity should be taken to visit High Beach, where in addition to the Centre, there is a tea kiosk, toilets, and a public house. To reach these amenities keep the fence on your left and at its end turn left to the entrance to the Centre. (Here the alternative route via High Beach Church rejoins the main route).

Leave High Beach with the fence and entrance to the Conservation Centre on your right and just after entering Forest turn left on the disabled people's path. Follow this path (which has been provided with the help of the Epping Forest Centenary Trust to enable people using wheelchairs to enjoy the peace and beauty of the Forest) to a crossing horseride noting the great Beech pollards en route. Turn right and walk in the Forest beside the ride ignoring paths and tracks leading off to the right. The ride bears left and eventually right to the A104 which was the old A11 road. Cross with care to a horse ride almost opposite and follow beside it to an open area called Sandpit Plain at a junction of tracks. Here you turn left on the Green Ride which was cut at the time of the opening of the Forest in 1878 to enable Queen Victoria to ride through and enjoy the "People's Forest" when she performed the opening ceremony in 1882. (Unfortunately due to adverse weather the Queen did not actually go on the ride through the Forest but it has been maintained by the Conservators as an open way through the woodlands to this day).

Follow beside the Green Ride uphill to a road (Goldings Hill). Cross with care to follow the ride around a car park and on downhill into a dip. The path then climbs steeply up through the Furze Ground where the

Conservators have cleared some of the trees and pollarded others thereby trying to recreate the Gorse and Heather hillside from which the area takes its name. Where a track joins from the right turn left and follow beside the ride to the main road at Jack's Hill, Theydon Bois. (13.5 miles).

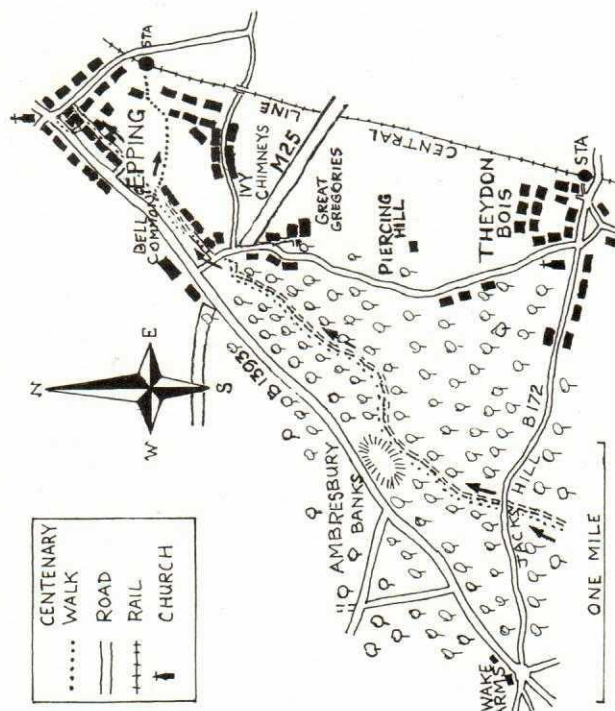


Cross with care and continue beside the ride ignoring track to the right. After three quarters of a mile you will pass Ambresbury Banks on your left. This is an Iron Age camp which various excavations have shown to have been established about 500 BC. After inspecting Ambresbury Banks return to the Green Ride and continue ahead passing a junction with another riding track on the right. At top of hill go over crossing track and through belt of trees onto the lid on top of the M25. (The fact that the M25 is in a tunnel here for the full width of the Forest was a result of hard work on the part of the Forest Conservators helped by local Societies at the time of the 1975 Public Inquiry and has ensured the continuity of the Forest between Manor Park and Epping). Cross the open space keeping to the right of the cricket ground and bear right onto a road. Turn left and when the road turns left (with post office and shop to your left) continue ahead on the narrow road in front of "The Forest Gate" on your right. Continue with open Forest on your left and follow the road which later becomes a green track. Here, after a symbolic pause on the Centenary Walk Seat, you can either continue ahead into Epping for buses and shops or go to the Station.

To reach the Station follow the houses on right and beside No. 5 turn right to a footpath sign in a dip. Go straight on downhill with a hedge on your right, ignoring a gap on your right and bearing left with main track between trees. At end of field turn left and after 5 yards right through a broken wicket gate. After a further 5 yards follow main path left between bushes with iron fence on right to a road where turn left and

then right to a "T" junction. Turn left and after a short half mile opposite no 77 turn right on path between concrete fence and Rubbolite Industries building on the left and wire fence and (at present) an open space on right and follow down steps to station approach.

Otherwise to reach Epping Town continue ahead at end of houses over an open space to a road ahead (Hennall Street). Follow the road ahead to a "No entry" sign where turn left to main road and thence right into Epping by St. John's Church and clock tower.



ALTERNATIVE ROUTES

WANSTEAD PARK ROUTE:

From Manor Park Station walk towards the Forest, cross Forest View Road and turn right walking on open Forest land on the left of the road. Cross road in front of City of London Cemetery and enter narrow path on righthand side of Cemetery running between Cemetery railings and the railway. At the end of the Cemetery turn left along a track between the Cemetery and the Aldersbrook (a tributary of the River Roding). The walk can be joined here by way of the path from Romford Road. The Cemetery being well stocked with trees is not intrusive and the Aldersbrook is delightfully rural being home to the Kingfisher. This rural aspect is even more pronounced when the River Roding joins from the

right and we have a bonus in that exchange land is being negotiated for the land taken for the building of the Barking Relief Road (A406) and the M11 Link Road which will provide a direct link from the Cemetery path to Wanstead Park by way of land bordering the River Roding. This new route joins the path at the end of allotments on your right where you bear rightish over open ground to continue ahead beside the Aldersbrook. At present you go through gates which are normally open (See X below) and continue ahead beside the Aldersbrook and later the River Roding to bridge on your right which is crossed. Go ahead about 50 yards to a crossing track. (If you turn right there are toilets ahead and the walk can be joined from Ilford or Redbridge via the Exeter Gardens entrance in Wanstead Park). Turn left over bridge and on for about 50 yards to turn right on a track keeping the river to your right. (X. In the unlikely event of these gates being closed continue ahead on path beside the Cemetery to pass through gap in concrete wall on right (just before end of Cemetery railings and follow path over to the river where turn left beside it).

The path keeps beside the river and passes a post inscribed IP 1900 WKA HW. It turns away from the river with a lake on your left and following round the lake eventually returns to the river by a pumping station. Here turn left with a golf course on your right and lake on your left for about half a mile. Just short of the Grotto, which is ahead on the left, go ahead on a track leading up a slope into an open space. Here turn right towards a white building (The Temple which was a garden house in the grounds of Wanstead House and built as a retreat or quiet place of entertainment). At the end of the Temple there are toilets. Pass the Temple and continue ahead to gate in fence leading out of the park and continue between lake on left and golf course on right out to Blake Hall Road. Go over pedestrian crossing and turn right past Blake Hall Crescent and beyond the last house turn left on path leading rightish (NOT the path beside the fence NOR sharp right beside the road). The path leads leftish then bears away from a tower block across an avenue of trees. Bear left with the path to the corner of a red brick wall where rejoin the main route (see page 6).

POLE HILL ROUTE:

From the fountain behind Butler's Retreat turn left with the Hunting Lodge and the Royal Forest Hotel on your left and proceed downhill with the main road away to your left. Keep on past lefthand side of Golf Caddie House to Bury Road. Cross and bear right on track on lefthand side of golf course with unmade road and houses on left. When track turns right (at end of golf course) proceed ahead into trees and bear half left steeply up hill through depressions in ground to go through gap onto

open space at top of Pole Hill. Go ahead with bushes on right and outstanding views to left over London and surrounding Essex countryside. After 300 yards you come to the obelisk marking the Greenwich Meridian. Here there are all-round views including impressive views of the reservoirs to the West. Beyond the obelisk bear to the right (downhill) for 200 yards then take track on right which leads ahead through the Forest between posts for 1.5 miles to the road above "Jubilee Retreat". Cross road and go ahead for about 5 yards to turn left for a further 5 yards. Here turn right beside a gravel track which after 200 yards turns left. Continue to follow the track which after crossing a bridge bears left and in another 300 yards meets a further track. Here turn right through the Forest for about 500 yards to where an open space is met and turn right on a gravel track across the open space. After 300 yards pass a right fork in the track and at junction of tracks turn left. Here you rejoin the main route (see page 11).

HIGH BEACH CHURCH ROUTE:

Before crossing road turn left in edge of Forest for about quarter of a mile to the Church. At the end of the churchyard wall turn into the churchyard and walk over to the church. If it is open it is worth seeing the altar frontal in the side chapel showing the various parish marks. At the Church entrance turn right beside the Church. At the corner bear right down steps and bear left to cross churchyard railings by a Holly bush and go down steps on far side of wall. Turn left past the end of the railings and go straight on for 100 yards, keeping the road away to your left to join a path at the top of a bank. Turn right along the ridge and at the end of an open space turn left through the Forest to a road on your left. Turn right in edge of the Forest with the road on your left then along the road passing two houses on your right to High Beech. At road junction turn right and on reaching the "King's Oak Public House" turn left past toilets on your right and take first turning on the right to the Conservation Centre. Here you rejoin the main route (see page 11).

FOLLOW THE COUNTRY CODE

A reminder to those who walk the country paths so that others who follow may also enjoy them.

- Guard against all risks of fire
- Fasten all gates
- Keep dogs under proper control
- Keep to the paths across farmland
- Avoid damaging fences, hedges and walls
- Leave no litter – take it home
- Safeguard water supplies
- Protect wild life, wild plants and trees
- Go carefully on country roads
- Respect the life of the countryside

USEFUL ASSOCIATIONS TO JOIN

Epping Forest Centenary Trust,
The Manager,
The Warren Lodge,
Loughton IG10 4RN

Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers,
Contact Solomon Hamid,
47 Letchmere Avenue,
Chigwell IG7 5HA

British Naturalists Association,
Membership Secretary, Mrs. Y. Griffiths,
23 Oak Hill Close,
Woodford Green,
Essex.

Essex Wildlife Trust,
Contact Mrs. Judy Adams,
52 Kings Avenue
Woodford Green,
Essex IG8 0JF

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds,
Contact Peter Rumsey,
"Rylston",
Sewardstone Road,
London E4 7RF

Wren Group (Wanstead),
Contact Richard Oakman,
44 Grosvenor Road,
London E11

Friends of Epping Forest
Contact Mrs. J. Miller,
8 Bancroft Avenue,
Buckhurst Hill,
Essex IG9 5JW

West Essex Group, Ramblers Association,
Membership Secretary, Mrs. P. Govey,
35 Preston Road,
London E11 1NL

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The Corporation of London: a unique authority for a unique City.