

MAP SERIES OF WALKS CONNECTING HACKNEY'S PARKS & OPEN SPACES

Walthamstow Marshes is one of the last remaining areas of River Lea Flood Plain. A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its wildlife, particularly its plants and birds. A major survey (1970s & '80s) of Walthamstow Marshes can be downloaded at www.leavalleyfederation.org under Historic documents.

Springfield Park, once the grounds of houses, became a park in 1905. The Mansion – one of the original houses – is now a café (and toilets). Some fine specimen trees from the original planting remain, including cedar, beech and mulberry. Roman coffins and tenth-Century oak logboat (now in Hackney Museum) found in Park. There is a great view east over the flood plain of the **River Lea, Walthamstow Marshes & Reservoirs**. The Park is designated as a Local Nature Reserve because of its springs, trees and acid grassland, which is unique in Hackney. A free leaflet about the trees is available in the Mansion.

Growing Communities run a Farmers Market at Stoke Newington and an organic vegetable box scheme. They manage sites at Springfield Park and Allens Gardens. They have monthly open days in the summer. More at www.growingcommunities.org.uk

Clapton Common. Edged with mature trees. The pond is planted with reeds.

East & West Bank. Railway embankments provide green corridors for plants and birds. Managed for wildlife by local people who meet monthly to cut back dominant species and attract wildlife by planting trees and shrubs.

Allens Gardens. Quiet, secret park between housing and railway – play-space, seating and wild areas.

Some sections of this walk are also part of

Walk 13 of Capital Ring.

This leaflet was prepared by Anne Woollett, Mike Trier & Gill Jackson for Hackney Parks Forum.

For copies of the leaflet see

www.hackneyenvironment.org.uk

Based on Collins mapping - www.collinsmaps.com. Printed by Redlin Print on ERA Recycled Silk (50% recycled/50% FSC paper).

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Looking west across the Lea Navigation Canal from Middlesex Filter Beds towards South Millfields

WALK 1: RIVER LEA TO STOKE NEWINGTON

START: Marshgate Bridge, Homerton Road, E9
FINISH: Manor Road, Stoke Newington, N16
DISTANCE: 7 kilometres (4½ miles) approx.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT (www.tfl.gov.uk – route maps)
Buses

Start: 308 & W15; 236 & 276 (Lee Conservancy Rd).
Finish: 106; also (on Stamford Hill) 67, 73, 76, 149,
243, 349 & 476.

Return: 106 to Lower Clapton Road then as Start.

Trains

BR stations: Clapton; Hackney Central; Homerton;
Stamford Hill; Stoke Newington.

Hackney Marshes came into public ownership at the end of the C19 when many of the mature trees – plane, ash, and rare black poplars – were planted. After World War II, rubble from bomb-damaged buildings in the City was dumped on the Marshes, raising their level and improving their drainage. Well known for Park football, they are also used for cricket, canoeing, rowing, kite-flying, running, cycling, walking and hanging-out.

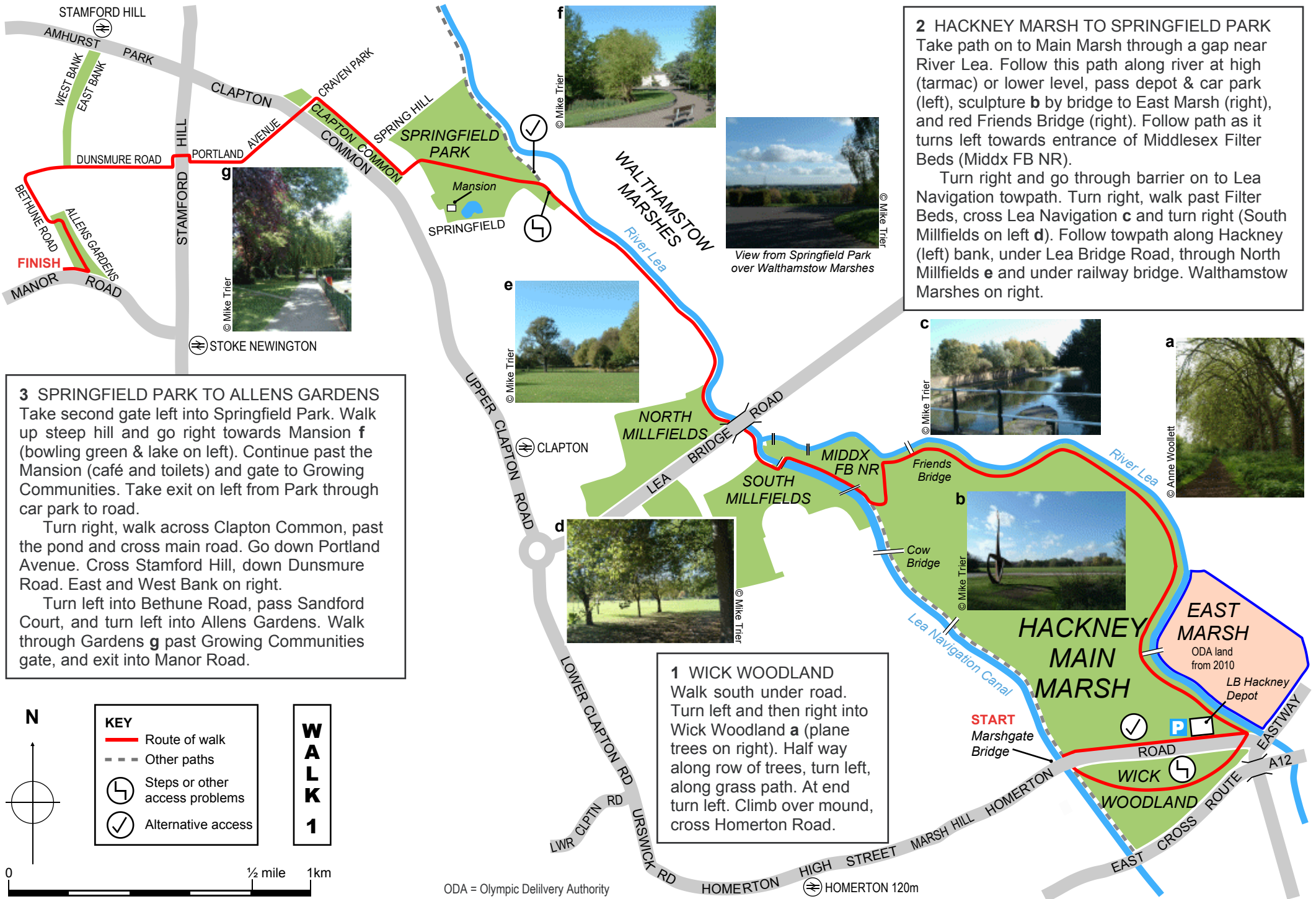
The edges of the Marshes are managed for wildlife, with longer grass, trees and shrubs planted since the 1980s. In 1995/6 **Wick Woodland** was planted with native trees, including black poplars. It is now home to a variety of birds and plants and is managed with the help of the local community. There is a Tree Nursery and Forest Garden close to the depot.

The **River Lea** was tidal here until 2009, and is semi-natural: fish spawn, and birds migrate along the river. Resident and nesting birds include kingfisher, while others (tufted duck, teal and gadwall) spend the winter here. River Lea has acted as a boundary from Saxon times. In 895, Viking ships sailed up the Lea. Currently the boundary between Hackney and Waltham Forest.

Lea Navigation Canal (Hackney Cut) runs along the west edge of the Marshes. It was opened in 1768 to allow boats to travel more quickly between Lea Bridge Road and Bow Locks.

Middlesex Filter Beds (and Essex Filter Beds, now Waterworks Nature Reserve) provided clean water for East London. They went out of use in the 1970s and have become nature reserves: open every day, with varying opening times depending on the time of year.

South and North Millfields were also planted with trees, such as plane and elm, in the late C19. Many elms succumbed to Dutch Elm disease – the latest in 2009. But, with about thirty remaining, Millfields has Hackney's greatest collection: the largest tree is over 300cm (10ft) in circumference. Near the river crossing are some historic buildings (now a conservation area), including a school built in the 1840s for children living on barges. Two public houses remain – Ship Aground and Princess of Wales.



2 HACKNEY MARSH TO SPRINGFIELD PARK
 Take path on to Main Marsh through a gap near River Lea. Follow this path along river at high (tarmac) or lower level, pass depot & car park (left), sculpture **b** by bridge to East Marsh (right), and red Friends Bridge (right). Follow path as it turns left towards entrance of Middlesex Filter Beds (Middx FB NR).
 Turn right and go through barrier on to Lea Navigation towpath. Turn right, walk past Filter Beds, cross Lea Navigation **c** and turn right (South Millfields on left **d**). Follow towpath along Hackney (left) bank, under Lea Bridge Road, through North Millfields **e** and under railway bridge. Walthamstow Marshes on right.

3 SPRINGFIELD PARK TO ALLENS GARDENS
 Take second gate left into Springfield Park. Walk up steep hill and go right towards Mansion **f** (bowling green & lake on left). Continue past the Mansion (café and toilets) and gate to Growing Communities. Take exit on left from Park through car park to road.
 Turn right, walk across Clapton Common, past the pond and cross main road. Go down Portland Avenue. Cross Stamford Hill, down Dunsmure Road. East and West Bank on right.
 Turn left into Bethune Road, pass Sandford Court, and turn left into Allens Gardens. Walk through Gardens **g** past Growing Communities gate, and exit into Manor Road.

1 WICK WOODLAND
 Walk south under road. Turn left and then right into Wick Woodland **a** (plane trees on right). Half way along row of trees, turn left, along grass path. At end turn left. Climb over mound, cross Homerton Road.

WALK 1

KEY

- Route of walk
- Other paths
- Steps or other access problems
- Alternative access

0 1/2 mile 1km

ODA = Olympic Delivery Authority