

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

Millfields. Planted late C19 with trees such as plane and elm when Lammas rights were purchased. Many elms died of Dutch elm disease, but thirty – one of more than 300cm (10ft) in girth – remain. They are Hackney's largest collection of elms. Near river crossing are historic buildings, including a school built in 1840s for children living on barges. Two public houses remain: Ship Aground and Princess of Wales.

Middlesex Filter Beds (and Essex FB, now Waterworks Nature Reserve, on the other bank of the River Lea) provided clean water for East London until 1970s. Now nature reserves; open every day but times vary.

Lea Navigation Canal (Hackney Cut) runs from Lea Bridge Road to Bow Lock. Opened in 1768 to bypass Old River Lea and enable barges to travel more quickly. Many woodyards, wharves and factories along its length. Some factories remain, but increasingly becoming a residential area; and most barges are leisure craft. Some plants (such as dwarf elder and Russian comfrey) probably arrived with cargoes. Giant hogweed is thought to have spread along the canals. River Lea has acted as a boundary from Saxon times. In 895 Viking ships sailed up Lea. Currently it forms the boundary between Hackney and Waltham Forest.

Walthamstow Marshes. One of the last remaining areas of River Lea Flood Plain. A site of Special Scientific Interest for its wildlife, particularly its plants and birds. A plaque on the railway bridge celebrates AV Roe's historic aeroplane flight in 1909.

Springfield Park was created in 1905 from the grounds of three houses. One, the Mansion, is now a café (and toilets). There are still some fine specimen trees, including cedar, beech and mulberry. Designated as a Local Nature Reserve because of its springs, trees and acid grassland which is unique in Hackney. Roman coffins and tenth-century oak logboat (now in Hackney Museum) found near the River Lea. There are great views east over the flood plain of the **River Lea, Walthamstow Marshes & Reservoirs.**

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

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Loddiges family tomb in St John's Churchyard. Their nursery supplied many trees for the large arboretum in Abney Park.

WALK 5: GREEN CHAINS & OPEN SPACES MARE STREET TO LEA VALLEY

START: St John's Churchyard, Narrow Way, E8
FINISH: Springfield Park, Springfield, E5
DISTANCE: 5 kilometres (3 1/8 miles) approx.
Detour round North Millfields adds 0.6km (3/8 mile)
PUBLIC TRANSPORT (www.tfl.gov.uk – route maps)
Buses
Start: 30, 38, 48, 55, 106, 242, 253, 254 & D6 to Hackney Central Station.
Finish: 253 & 254; also 393 from Cazenove Rd.
Return: 253 or 254 to Mare Street.
Trains
BR stations: Clapton; Hackney Central; Hackney Downs; Homerton; Stamford Hill.

St Augustine's Tower. Hackney's oldest building, the tower is all that remains of St Augustine's church, one of three parish churches in Hackney. The church was built in 1292, probably by Knights Templar – an order of military monks who owned land in Hackney (including Temple Mills in Lea Valley); it was demolished when new church, **St John-at-Hackney**, was built in 1790s. As the tower of the new church was not reinforced to take the church bells until 1854, they remained in St Augustine's Tower. In 1929 the tower was purchased by Hackney Council to save it.

The tower with its C16 clock stands behind the first **Town Hall** building, which in 1866 was replaced by a larger building (on site of garden in front of current Town Hall) and finally by its current building in 1936.

St John's Church is surrounded by many grand tombs, (including Loddiges family), mature trees (holm oak, chestnut, maple, swamp cypress, dawn redwood) in walled garden, and a few flowering cherry (most felled in 2006). War Memorial on site of a fine cedar of Lebanon. Close by are Sutton Place (1810 terrace) and Sutton House (c.1525, Hackney's oldest domestic building).

Clapton Square. Area was laid out in 1816. Some of the houses remain (including one visited by Lenin) but others were replaced by mansion blocks in 1900. Other buildings around Square include Hackney Baths (1897) and Police Station (1904). The gardens were private for many years but in 1924 were acquired by London County Council and handed over to Hackney Borough. Some fine trees (from Loddiges Nursery), including service trees, golden rain, weeping and manna ash, chestnut and purple plum.

Hackney Downs. Mature plane trees round perimeter and bordering paths. Some elms along northern edge. Fenced area in middle with good collection of trees, bushes and bird song. New Mossbourne Academy on southern side, on site of earlier school (one time Grocers School) opened 1876 and closed 1995. On north side, Downs Hotel built in 1863 to provide refreshment. Nightingale Estate developed in 1960s: one tower block remains from more recent development.

Clapton Pond. Owned by local landowners, Powell family, and drained in 1893. Refilled after protests and purchased by Hackney Vestry. In 1635 Bishop Wood had almshouses and a chapel built for six widows – the oldest continually inhabited dwellings in Hackney. Two houses remain from St James' Terrace; the rest were demolished to make way for Mildenhall Road and public toilets (sold by Hackney Council in 1990s; now car park).

3 HACKNEY DOWNS TO SOUTH MILLFIELDS
 Leave Downs and fork right along Downs Road. Cross Lower Clapton Road at Clapton Pond – last refuge of the Routemaster bus **e**. Walk round pond to south of Newick Road. Leave Clapton Pond, follow Newick Road to east of pond. Turn left and then right down Thornby Road. Cross road into South Millfields. Walk across Millfields (laid out for cricket in summer) and leave by gate opposite Magnet. Cross Chatsworth Road to other part of South Millfields park. Cross the park with circle of plane trees on right and fork left along pedestrian- and cycle-path past newly planted trees.



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2 HACKNEY DOWNS

At centre of Downs (tree ID map on Rangers' hut), walk round the enclosed garden on left. Leave the enclosed garden, through circle in centre of Downs **c**, and head towards north-east corner of Downs **d** where there are still some elms.



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4 SOUTH MILLFIELDS TO SPRINGFIELD PARK
 Turn left at Lea Navigation Canal, pass 1840s school building and Princess of Wales pub on left **f**, and go under Lea Bridge Road. Turn left on to pedestrian- and cycle-path on North Millfields **g** and circle back to River Lea. Follow towpath on Hackney bank of river to Springfield Park; or cross river at **h** and follow path beside Walthamstow Marshes, cross back by Springfield Marina **i** and turn left. Enter Springfield Park at second entrance, turn right and follow perimeter of Park, past poplar trees along river edge and false acacia trees along Spring Hill. Fork left up steep slope of Park, and pass large holm oak and cedar of Lebanon. Fork left at top of hill, pass walnut and mulberry trees, towards Mansion (café and toilets).

To return to St John's and Hackney Central, leave Park at entrance near café, turn right along Springfield, and left at Upper Clapton Road to bus stop for 253 and 254.



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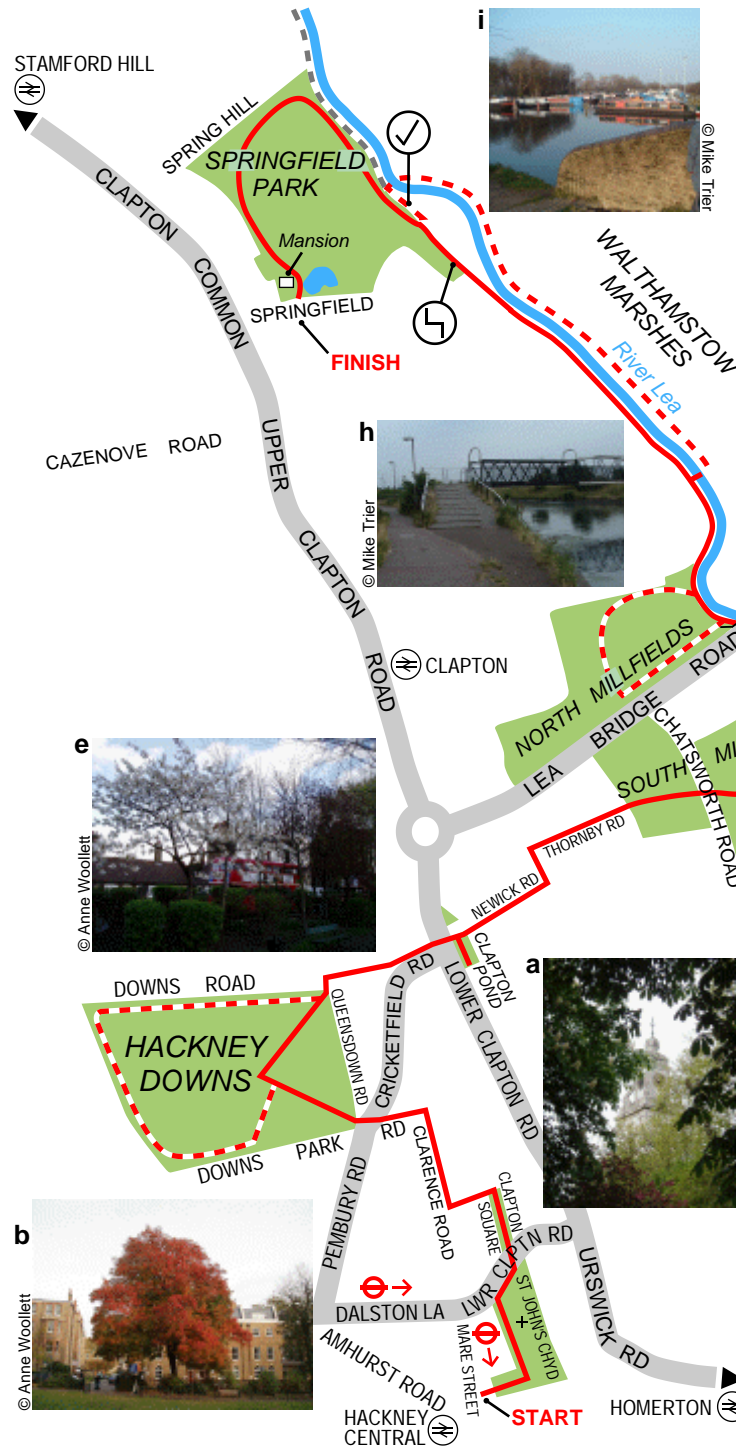


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1 ST JOHN'S CHURCH TO HACKNEY DOWNS
 Follow path from St Augustine's Tower, with bus station on right. Turn left along row of chestnuts and pass St John's Church **a**. Walk through the gardens, cross Lower Clapton Road and enter Clapton Square through entrance on right. Walk through Clapton Square **b** to gate in north-west corner. Turn left and pass houses at north end of the Square. Turn right at Clarence Road, and left at Downs Park Road. Cross Cricketfield Road. Fork right and take path across Hackney Downs.



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KEY

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

W
A
L
K
5

0 ½ mile 1km