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**St. John-at-Hackney churchyard connects** Mare Street with Lower Clapton Road to the north, and Sutton House and Sutton Place (1810 terrace) to the east; it is an important pedestrian thoroughfare. The old churchyard, which was declared full in 1859, was converted into open space in 1893 and the graves were grassed over. The headstones were moved to the perimeter walls and chest tombs were moved to a railed enclosure. The churchyard re-opened as St. John's Gardens in 1894, and its care and maintenance were transferred to the local council.



Japanese flowering cherry tree by tombs in the railed enclosure.

The walled garden was added to the south of the church in 1963 and received a Civic Trust Award. It contains some fine trees, including dawn redwood and swamp cypress. The garden is now being opened up as part of the Heritage Lottery work in the churchyard. The War Memorial, north of the church, stands on what was the site of a fine cedar of Lebanon.

The tomb of the Loddiges family (*overleaf*) is the best known in St. John's Churchyard. Conrad Loddiges' world-famous nursery, opened in 1816 to the south of Morning Lane, held the largest

## ST. JOHN-AT-HACKNEY, ITS TREES & MONUMENTS



View of the church from the south. The path by the perimeter wall links Mare Street to Sutton House and Urswick Road. The headstones against the wall are from the old churchyard, which was declared full in 1859, grassed over, and converted into open space in 1893.

This leaflet was prepared by Anne Woollett and Mike Trier with assistance from Ian Graham and the Friends of Hackney Tower and Churchyard. For more information about St. John's and activities there, see

[www.stjohn-at-hackneychurch.org.uk](http://www.stjohn-at-hackneychurch.org.uk)

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Based on Collins mapping - [www.collinsmaps.com](http://www.collinsmaps.com)

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Above: Maple in autumn colour. Openings have now been created in the walls behind to improve visibility.

collection of trees in Britain. Loddiges were the main supplier to Abney Park arboretum.

Other prominent tombs include those of Admiral Sir Francis Beaufort, RN Hydrographer, who developed the Beaufort Wind-Scale; Harry Sedgwick, a trustee, who oversaw funds for planting avenues of nearly 200 elms and horse chestnuts in the churchyard; and Vice-Admiral John Hunter, Governor of New South Wales.

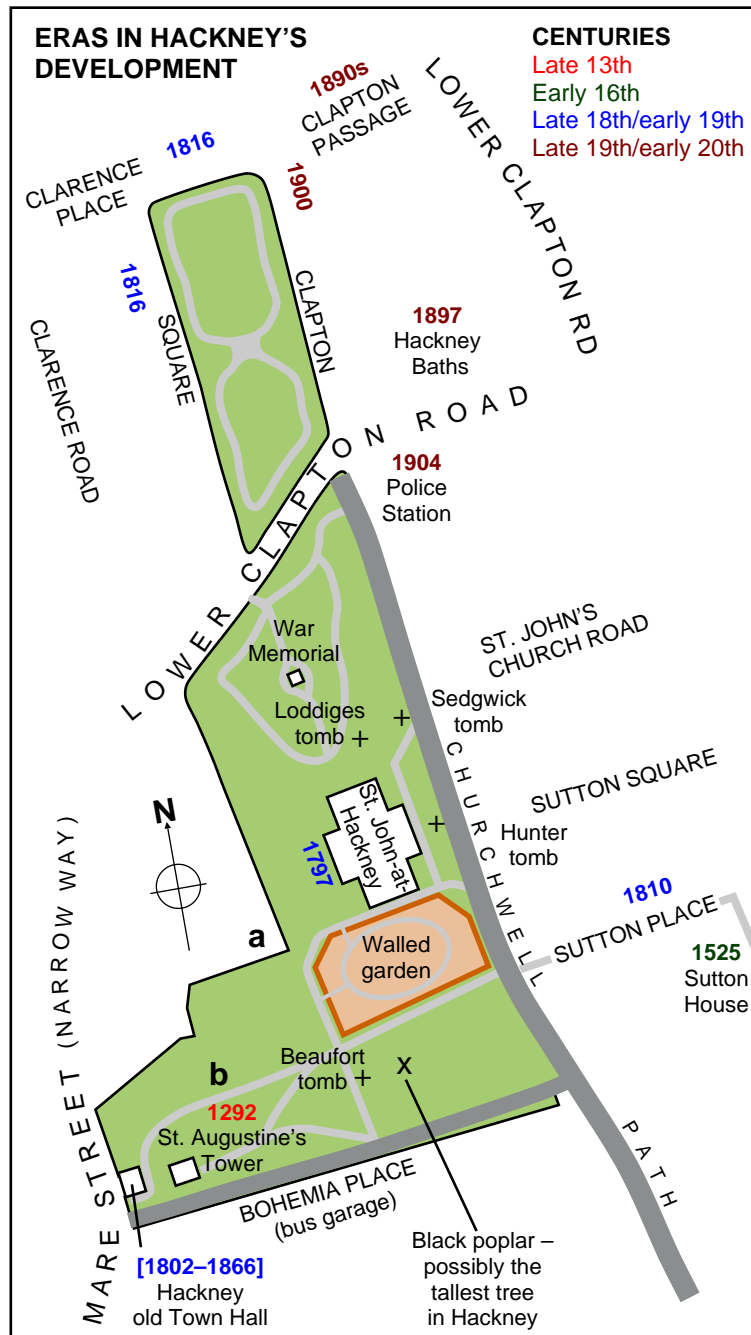


Dawn redwood (centre) in the walled garden was only known from fossils, until it was discovered growing in China in 1941. To its left is a swamp cypress.



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Beech tree in autumn colour in the corner of the vicarage garden, behind the monument and headstones against the wall. A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) has been applied for for this fine tree.

Below: Buttercups add spring colour to the grassland.  
Right: Summer-flowering crocuses grow in the dappled shade beneath a tall lime tree near the Mare Street end of the churchyard.



The present St. John-at-Hackney Church was completed in 1797 and became the centre of Hackney, with houses built in the 1810s and Clapton Square laid out in 1816. In 1825, Hackney was split into three parishes: St. John-at-Hackney, South Hackney and West Hackney.

### Returning the Churchyard to Historic Views

Most of the fine selection of Japanese cherries around the graves were cut down in February 2006 as part of Heritage-Lottery-funded work to return the churchyard to its historic views.

The destruction of trees, merely because they were considered 'unsuitable', was fiercely resisted by local people who managed to save a few of the threatened trees.



Above: The tomb of the Loddiges family. The flowering cherry trees were a fine addition to the memorial of Hackney's most famous plantsman. The tomb now stands in sterile splendour (left).

### FURTHER READING

David Mander, *Strength in the Tower*, an illustrated history of Hackney, 1998. Published by Sutton Publishing.

David Solman, *Loddiges of Hackney: the largest hothouse in the world*, 1995. Published by The Hackney Society.

**See also:** St. John-at-Hackney & Clapton Square; & Abney Park Cemetery NR in this series.