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EAST FINCHLEY TUBE STA
(Northern, Barnet Branch)

East Finchley Station

143
234
102
163

- 13 EF to London Bridge
- 15 EF, Hampstead & Highgate circular
- 16 Ally Pally Circular walk
- 21 Finchley green spaces walk
- 97 Muswell Hill walk

Cherry Tree Wood

Bridge Gate

Parkland Walk

- 1** Park refreshment kiosks and cafes
- 2** Take the up-only escalator to reach Gypsy Gate and return via nearby path from Queens Wood Road
- 3** Queen's Wood contains some hills and path surfaces are irregular
- 4** This part of the walk is not well shaded
- 5** Ignore a path that slopes off up to the right; after a major path crosses, take a lesser path up to the right shortly before the main path crosses a gully and bows to the left.

Route 1: 6.3 km

Route 2: 5.2 km

Railway

trees

open space

Steep climb

East Finchley Station 143 Bus stop

10 Connection with another walk

0.5 kilometre



Highgate Wood

Queen's Wood

HIGHGATE TUBE STA
(Northern, Barnet Branch)

Shady Wood Walk Highgate

walk notes

Three Woods

The three wooded areas of this walk are remnants of the ancient Forest of Middlesex; each has its own history and character. Muswell Hill Road follows the watershed between Highgate Wood/Cherry Tree Wood and Queen's Wood.

Highgate Wood is the largest of the three at 28 hectares and has evidence of human activity dating back to prehistoric times. It drains westwards into the Mutton Brook.

During the Medieval period, the wood was part of the Bishop of London's hunting park. Between the 16th and 18th centuries the church leased the wood to tenants, who managed it as 'coppice with standard'. Young Hornbeam was regularly cut and used for fuel, and oak standards were left to grow to maturity, before being felled for construction.

In the 1880s, the surrounding area was rapidly built-up and local residents feared that the church would sell off the wood for development.

A high-profile campaign to save the wood was led by Henry Reader Williams and in 1886 the wood was gifted to the City of London and declared "open for the use and recreation of the public forever" 362 moth, 353 fungi, 70 bird and seven bat species have been recorded. At least 28 species of bird regularly breed here,

including great spotted woodpecker, nuthatch and treecreeper. There are more than 50 species of trees and shrubs.

Queen's Wood

This 21 hectare wood was once called Churchyard Bottom Wood and is said to be the site of a plague pit. It is the hilliest of the three, facing east and largely occupied by the valley of a tributary of the Moselle Brook. This oak-hornbeam woodland features occasional beech in a canopy above cherry, field maple, hazel, holly, hornbeam, midland hawthorn, mountain ash and both species of lowland birch. The scarce Wild Service Tree (which is evidence of the Woods's ancient origin) is scattered throughout. The ground flora is particularly rich given its proximity to central London. It includes a large population of wood anemone, goldilocks buttercup and wood sorrel, yellow pimpernel and square-stemmed St John's wort. A survey conducted in 1984 noted 39 distinct herbaceous species and 15 different grasses, in addition to some 23 species of tree and shrub.

Cherry Tree Wood

This wood, in Finchley, was part of the Bishop of London's hunting park (Hornsey Great Park) straddling the Bishop's manors of Finchley and Hornsey. Later, poor drainage led to part of it being known as

the Quag. Watercress beds were located there. Being next to the Dirthouse, where hay and coal into London and horse manure and soot out were handled, it was known as Dirthouse Wood. Bits of it were hived off for housing and the railway, until in 1914 Finchley UDC bought it including the part of it in Hornsey/Haringey from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to form a 5.3-hectare park for local residents, which opened to the public a year later. Waters from Highgate Wood, and the land adjacent, drain into the park to form the Mutton Brook, flowing into the Thames at Brentford.

The park has open rough grassland with woodland on its northern perimeter containing some ancient hornbeams and oaks. The sparse undergrowth has a number of species associated with ancient woodland, such as wild garlic and wood-sedge. After a long period of neglect, long term restoration work began in 1985 with coppicing re-introduced over several decades together with replacements for established oaks, and clearing sections of undergrowth to nurture new saplings. The area to the south is also pleasantly wooded, and much less invaded by the public.

There are tennis courts and a large play area for young children.