



### **Bushy Park and Home Park**

*A choice of three walks are mapped out, although many more are possible.*

*Extensive use is made of non-metalled paths. The woodland gardens are particularly attractive when the Azaleas are out.*

### **Bushy Park**

Bushy Park is like a patchwork quilt of English history. It has remains of medieval farmland, a Tudor deer park, 17th century water gardens and wartime camps. Bushy became a royal park in 1529 when Cardinal Wolsey gave it to King Henry VIII as part of a gift that also included Hampton Court. Until then, the park had been agricultural land. On the edge of the Woodland Gardens, you can still make out the line of a medieval track and ditch. Rows of tangled hawthorns are the remnants of ancient field hedges. There are traces of ridge and furrow ploughing - and the area between Lime Avenue and the Woodland Gardens has the most extensive evidence of a medieval field system in Middlesex.

Deer continued to be hunted at Bushy throughout the 17th century - but the character of the park changed. In 1610, King Charles I created the Longford River. This was an ornamental canal, 19km (12 miles) long, which brought water from the River Colne in Hertfordshire to water features in the park. The canal was dug by

hand but it now appears to be a natural part of the landscape and supports many plants and animals.

When Hampton Court was being redesigned and extended in the reign of William and Mary, Christopher Wren planned that the lime avenue in Bushy Park should become the focus for a new grand entrance to the palace. A road was built through the park to the Lion Gate at Hampton Court and more limes and an avenue of horse chestnut trees was planted.

### **Bushy Park Water Gardens**

The Upper Lodge Water Gardens comprise a Baroque-style collection of pools, cascades, basins and a canal. Built by the 1st Earl of Halifax as a private recreational garden in 1710. Restoration plans got underway in the 1990s, with research undertaken by the FBHP, and the discovery by Sir Roy Strong of an 18th century painting of the gardens.

See

<https://www.royalparks.org.uk/parks/bushy-park/about-bushy-park/landscape-history>.

### **Home Park**

Home Park by contrast is rather formal and austere with lines of trees and a long straight ornamental canal. Only at the east end is there a more natural area.

In medieval times, this area was open grazing land. It seems certain that it was Cardinal Wolsey in the early 16th century

who first enclosed with timber palings land that we now know as Home Park. Henry VIII walled the road from Kingston to Hampton, creating a clear division from emparked areas to the north, which eventually combined to become Bushy Park.

From around 1530 to the 1650s, Home Park was in two sections. The more southerly was the House Park, which contained fallow deer. Towards the north was the Course, providing a mile-long course for the racing of dogs in pursuit of deer. The Park was originally mainly planted with oaks, but these were largely stripped by speculators during the period of the Commonwealth.

In the 1660s, after Charles II was restored to the throne, the great canal, now known as the Long Water, was dug, and its avenue of 550 lime trees first planted. After William III's accession in 1689, the extra diagonal avenues were added, as well as a cross avenue linking their far ends. The 600 metre terrace overlooking the Thames (now part of the formal gardens) was added in 1701: It ended in a bowling green, around which four substantial pavilions were built in 1702, but now only one (The Pavilion) remains.

The Park was opened to the public in 1893, while the golf club opened in 1895. Soon after, model boating began on the Rick Pond.