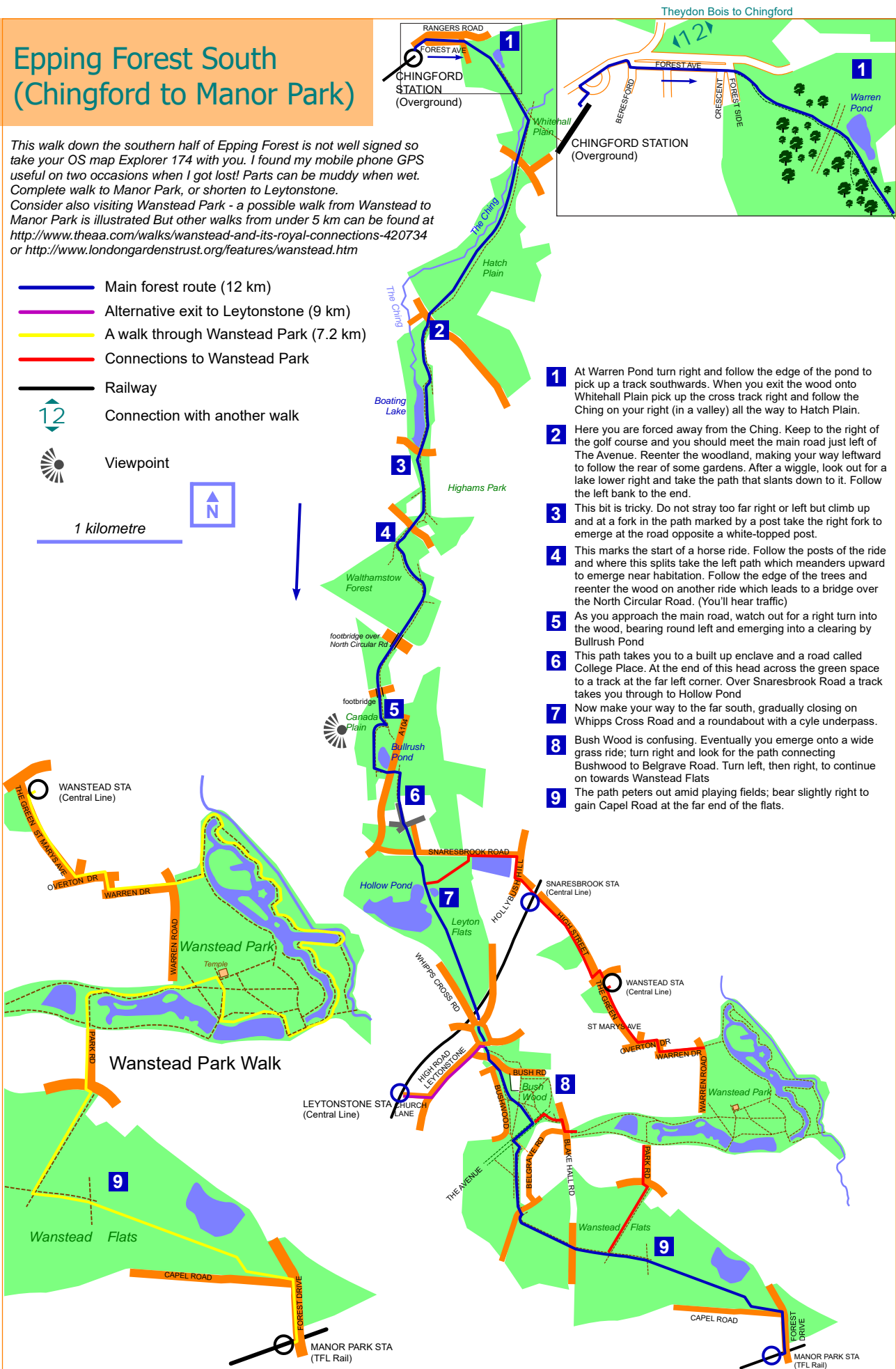


Epping Forest South (Chingford to Manor Park)

This walk down the southern half of Epping Forest is not well signed so take your OS map Explorer 174 with you. I found my mobile phone GPS useful on two occasions when I got lost! Parts can be muddy when wet. Complete walk to Manor Park, or shorten to Leytonstone. Consider also visiting Wanstead Park - a possible walk from Wanstead to Manor Park is illustrated But other walks from under 5 km can be found at <http://www.theaa.com/walks/wanstead-and-its-royal-connections-420734> or <http://www.londongardenstrust.org/features/wanstead.htm>

- Main forest route (12 km)
- Alternative exit to Leytonstone (9 km)
- A walk through Wanstead Park (7.2 km)
- Connections to Wanstead Park
- Railway
- Connection with another walk
- Viewpoint

1 kilometre



- 1** At Warren Pond turn right and follow the edge of the pond to pick up a track southwards. When you exit the wood onto Whitehall Plain pick up the cross track right and follow the Ching on your right (in a valley) all the way to Hatch Plain.
- 2** Here you are forced away from the Ching. Keep to the right of the golf course and you should meet the main road just left of The Avenue. Reenter the woodland, making your way leftward to follow the rear of some gardens. After a wiggle, look out for a lake lower right and take the path that slants down to it. Follow the left bank to the end.
- 3** This bit is tricky. Do not stray too far right or left but climb up and at a fork in the path marked by a post take the right fork to emerge at the road opposite a white-topped post.
- 4** This marks the start of a horse ride. Follow the posts of the ride and where this splits take the left path which meanders upward to emerge near habitation. Follow the edge of the trees and reenter the wood on another ride which leads to a bridge over the North Circular Road. (You'll hear traffic)
- 5** As you approach the main road, watch out for a right turn into the wood, bearing round left and emerging into a clearing by Bullrush Pond
- 6** This path takes you to a built up enclave and a road called College Place. At the end of this head across the green space to a track at the far left corner. Over Snarebrook Road a track takes you through to Hollow Pond
- 7** Now make your way to the far south, gradually closing on Whips Cross Road and a roundabout with a cycle underpass.
- 8** Bush Wood is confusing. Eventually you emerge onto a wide grass ride; turn right and look for the path connecting Bushwood to Belgrave Road. Turn left, then right, to continue on towards Wanstead Flats
- 9** The path peters out amid playing fields; bear slightly right to gain Capel Road at the far end of the flats.

walk notes

Epping Forest (south)

There are not many alternativewalks possible in this part of the forest and you are never far from the sound of traffic. forest but I have recorded simply two in this main part of the forest. Stretches which can be muddy.

Walking the length of the forest

It is possible to walk the length of the forest, a distance of about 23 km. Start at Epping with map 12 arriving at Chingford On this map.

The Forest

The forest of ancient woodland covers about 2,400 hectares and stretches from Epping in the north to Wanstead Flats in the south. There are over 80 lakes and ponds. A royal forest since the time of Henry II, it was saved from enclosure in 1878 and is now managed by the City of London. There are three isolated areas: An area to the north of Epping, Lord's Bushes at Buckhurst Hill and Wanstead Park.

The Forest has never been enclosed and cultivated, but managed by man throughout its written history. It has not, since then, been an entirely natural landscape. From Norman times, Epping Forest was a wood pasture; (in the early centuries, a royal forest, where other activity was subordinated to the preservation of game for the royal enjoyment). The area was essentially maintained for the twin purposes of providing timber and grazing, a mixture of grassland and treed areas. It was in the defence of these rights to graze animals and supply fuel that Thomas Willingale, with the support given him by many others, managed to get a stay of execution for Epping Forest when commons all over the country were being enclosed for private profit.

The Forest was formerly very much more open grass than now. As a result of the great decline of grazing over the last 100 years, and of the cessation of pollarding the forest canopy has become much more dense, cutting off the light below the trees that enabled the growth of many

species, particularly of wild flowers, that the Victorians saw as common, but which are now rare or extinct.

For more information on the forest and walks visit

<http://www.theydon.org.uk/lhs/lhs%20pages/Walks.htm>

Flora and Fauna

Fauna include all three species of Woodpecker, Skylarks, Tree Creepers and Nuthatches, Swans, Great Crested Grebes, Herons, Gadwall, Goosander and Wigeon Grey Squirrels, Rabbits, Muntjac Deer and Fallow Deer, Adders, grass snakes, newts, toads and frogs. Butterflies include red admiral, peacock, orange tip, clouded yellow, dingy skipper and purple hairstreak.

Its flora is diverse, with over 650 plant species recorded. Visit

http://www.plantlife.org.uk/wild_plants/important_plant_areas/epping_forest

Highams Park Lake

Framed by woodland, Highams Park also boasts a wonderful flower meadow and boating lake designed by 18th century landscape designer Humphry Repton, made by diverting the Ching. The lake is one of the largest stretches of open water in Epping Forest and you can still fish in the lake today but some restrictions apply.

Hollow Pond

Hollow pond is a popular spot for picnickers in the summer.

The ponds were formed after gravel was extracted out of the forest land to use for road building, but this ceased in 1878 and what was left was a series of water-filled pits on marshy land.

In 1905 an army of unemployed labourers were recruited by Leyton District Council and Epping Forest Committee to expand the lake and the lake and islands eventually covered 13 acres.

Whipps Cross Bathing Pool followed by Whipps Cross Roundabout.

Fed by natural springs, the pool became a popular swimming facility but suffered notoriously from build-ups of mud and silt and in 1932, at the cost of £7,000 it was redeveloped into a state-of-the-art lido

considered to be the biggest in Britain at the time, containing over 1,300,000 gallons of water, only to be filled in and reinstated as Epping Forest land in 1983.

Wanstead Park

It is difficult, when walking in this park to conceive of its origins as a premier country house and park close to London. A story of famous names, wealth creation and squandering.

The estate was acquired around 1549 by Richard, Lord Rich, who turned the hunting park into a fine country seat. It was he who built the first Wanstead House, reportedly the largest in Essex at the time. In 1578 Wanstead was bought by Elizabeth's great minister Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. After Dudley's death, subsequent owners included Charles Blount, Earl of Devonshire; George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham; and Sir Henry Mildmay. Eventually Wanstead Park was acquired by Sir Josiah Child, Governor of the East India Company. He seems to have done little to the house, but spent prodigious sums on the gardens.

Richard Child commissioned the replacement of Wanstead House with a monumental new building in the Palladian style. Designed by Colen Campbell, and later much admired and copied, it was begun around 1715 and completed by 1722. William Kent was responsible for decoration of the state rooms. Richard Child also re-cast the gardens in two major phases of work, the second of which involved the creation of an extensive lake system, much of which survives today. Child and his successors employed the most eminent designers of their time to create what became one of England's most celebrated and influential landscaped gardens.

The extravagance of the last resident owners led to the demolition of Wanstead



House in the 1820s. After decades of uncertainty, despoliation and neglect, a large part of the park was ultimately purchased by the Corporation of the City of London in 1882 and dedicated to the public. Other parts were transformed into a golf course or sold for development. The above is extracted mainly from the highly informative web site of The Friends of Wanstead Parklands

Wanstead Flats

After visiting the amazing lakes and the Temple, the walk continues west and south across Wanstead Flats, which are, well, flat. Scattered over the area are some thickets of gorse and broom, as well as a number of small woods and copses. Most of which were planted towards the end of the 19th century as a response to efforts by the Epping Forest Committee to break up what was perceived as a monotonous area of grassland. Together with the many trees lining the roadsides and some avenues, they do add greatly to the diversity of tree species to be found. Alexandra Lake which the walk passes on the left was dug around 1906 as a flood control scheme