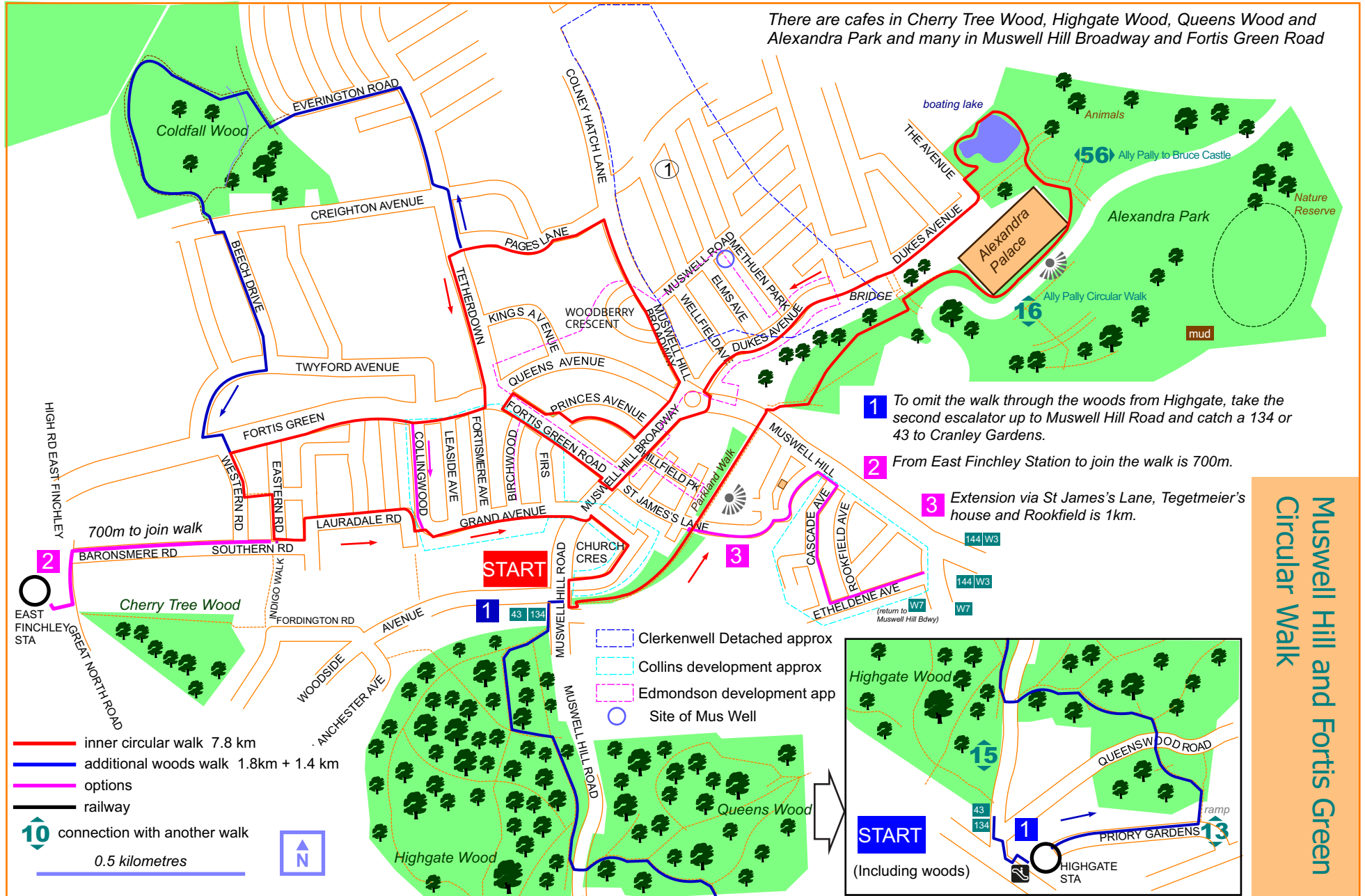


There are cafes in Cherry Tree Wood, Highgate Wood, Queens Wood and Alexandra Park and many in Muswell Hill Broadway and Fortis Green Road

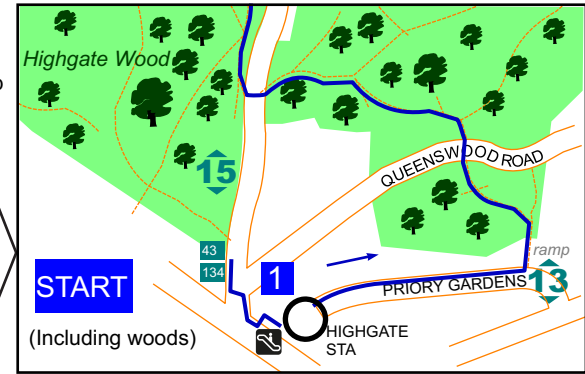


- 1** To omit the walk through the woods from Highgate, take the second escalator up to Muswell Hill Road and catch a 134 or 43 to Cranley Gardens.
- 2** From East Finchley Station to join the walk is 700m.
- 3** Extension via St James's Lane, Tegetmeier's house and Rookfield is 1km.

Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Circular Walk

— inner circular walk 7.8 km
— additional woods walk 1.8km + 1.4 km
— options
— railway
10 connection with another walk
— 0.5 kilometres

- Clerkenwell Detached approx
- Collins development approx
- Edmondson development app
- Site of Mus Well



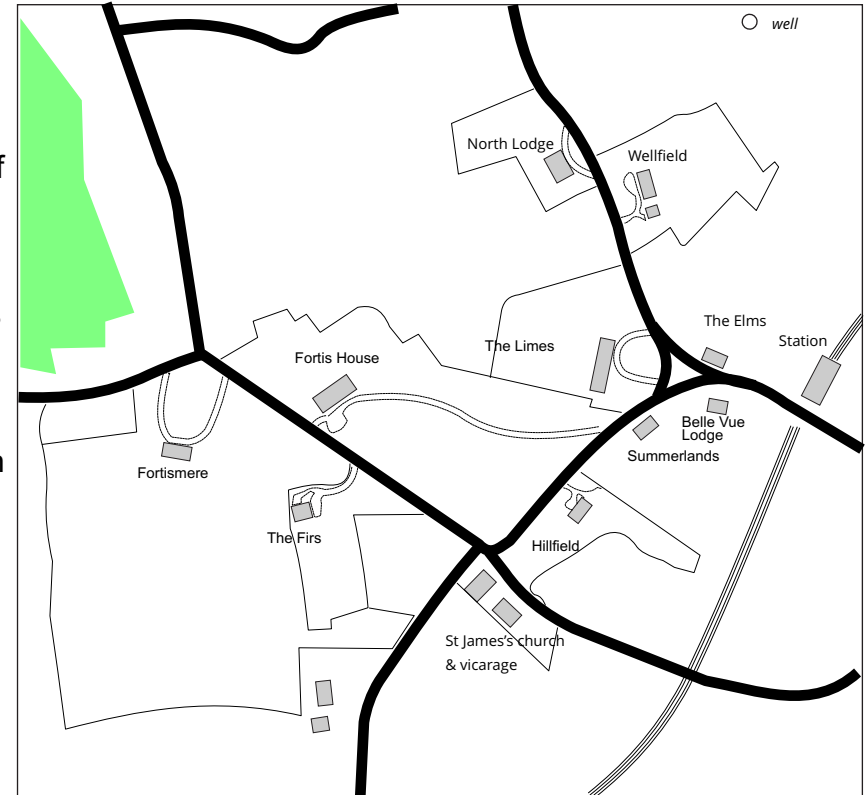
EF, Hampstead & Highgate Circular Walks 15

13 EF to London Bridge or Moorgate via Islington, Clerkenwell & City

Muswell Hill Circular Walk

Situated on the northern heights, the suburb we know as Muswell Hill emerged slowly from the Middlesex Forest as part of the Manor of Hornsey, part of the Bishop of London's Stepney estate. In the mid-twelfth century the Bishop granted some 65 acres to an order of nuns recently established in Clerkenwell. Situated on the east side of Colney Hatch Lane, this land contained a natural spring [adjacent to today's 40 Muswell Road]. Rumour has it that Malcolm IV of Scotland was cured of a disease by taking its waters and the Moss Well, became a place of pilgrimage. On dissolution by Henry VIII the administration of the land stayed with Clerkenwell parish and was known as "Clerkenwell Detached". When the land returned to Hornsey it was culverted and built over. The area of boulder clay wasn't very accessible or useful agriculturally and remained largely unpopulated except for a sprinkling of small settlements, including on St James's Lane and along the throughfare north, up Muswell Hill and down Colney Hatch Lane. Because of mud, the route was displaced to Highgate and East Finchley in the 1300s. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the area became home to rich residential estates, attracted by the fresh air, rural tranquility and fine views. However, better transport brought London

nearer and eventually the inevitable development started. After a sporadic appearance of smaller Victorian dwellings, much of the land was bought up by two developers. In a short space of time, J Edmondson and WJ Collins created between them a homogenous and unique suburb of commodious elegant red brick Edwardian buildings with white paintwork, pargeting and elaborate woodwork. W.J. Collins started with Church Crescent which he built over former Upton Farm left over from the development of the railway. He then acquired and developed Fortismere and Firs estates, to create Grand Avenue and streets north, and finally acquired the 23 acre Rookfield estate further down the hill, developed with features of the Arts & Craft movement. Meanwhile in 1896, the vacant Limes and the adjacent Fortis House estate were purchased by Edmondson, giving him 30 acres of flat land in the heart of the village. He created a perimeter of stylish shopping streets with eight parades of about 20 shops each and laid out Queens and



Princes Avenues. He also bought the Elms and Wellfield to create Dukes Avenue and streets north, Hillfield House to create Hillfield Park and North Lodge for Woodberry Crescent. Edmondson provided land for 3 non-conformist churches (all these and the parish church were constructed between 1898 and 1910), for a community hall (The Athenaeum, demolished, where Sainsbury is now), a firestation and a bowling green. Subsequent development has been in the

Victorian areas or remaining spaces.

Alexandra Palace

The idea of a northern palace 'for the people' was first proposed by Owen Jones, who had been involved in the interior design of Crystal Palace of 1851 and its subsequent relocation to Penge Park. It was he who chose Tottenham Wood Farm (in the hands of the Rhodes family) as its location and proposed a similar building. Sadly the Great Northern Palace Company was unable to raise finance. Another company - the Alexandra Park Company - bought the land and made use of building materials remaining from the 1862 International Exhibition of South Kensington, greatly influencing the design. First opened as "The People's Palace" in 1873, Alexandra Palace provided the Victorians with a great environment and recreation centre. Just sixteen days after opening, the Palace, which had already attracted over 120,000 visitors, was destroyed by a fire in the dome.

In May 1875, less than 2 years later, a new, uglier Palace opened, covering 7 acres and centred on a Great Hall, with its mighty Willis Organ driven by two steam engines and vast bellows.

After further financial difficulties, an Act of Parliament in 1900 created the Alexandra Palace and Park Trust. The Act required the Trustees to maintain the Palace and Park and make them "available for the free

use and recreation of the public forever".

In 1935, the BBC leased the eastern part of the building from which the first public television transmissions were made in 1936. Alexandra Palace was the main transmitting centre for the BBC until 1956, when it was used exclusively for news broadcasts.

Just six months after the transfer of trusteeship to Haringey Council, on 10th July 1980, the Palace caught fire for the second time. An area comprising the Great Hall, Banqueting Suite, and former roller rink together with the theatre dressing rooms was completely destroyed. Only Palm Court and the area occupied by the BBC escaped damage.

Development and restoration work began soon after and the Palace was re-opened on 17th March 1988. It continues as a Charitable Trust administered by the London Borough of Haringey and parts continue to be restored and reopened.

Railway to the Palace

The branch line from Highgate to Alexandra Palace was constructed to coincide with its opening on 24 May 1873. It was extremely popular – nearly 60,000 passengers visited on the bank holiday but on 9 June calamity, the palace burned down! To help combat the flames, the GNR sent two of their own fire engines by rail and these arrived before the local ones. Some traffic was generated by people coming to see the ruins but then

the line closed until the palace was rebuilt. On reopening there were 90,000 passengers on the bank holiday but following a derailment at Copenhagen tunnel, north of Kings Cross, trains backed all the way up the line and many passengers walked home. The fortunes of the branch line closely followed those of the palace, despite the growth of Muswell Hill commuters, and a new station at Cranley Gardens (1902). On 3rd July 1954 the last passenger train, with eight gas-lit coaches full of railway enthusiasts and local residents set off from Finsbury Park.

Three Woods

The three optional wooded areas of this walk are remnants of the ancient Forest of Middlesex; each has its own history and character, and each drains in a different direction.

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.

Coldfall Wood

The name Cold Fall implies former management for making charcoal. This 14 hectare wood is north facing, draining into the Bounds Green Brook and was until the 1930s much bigger, having stretched south as far as Fortis Green. Little light penetrates to the woodland floor. Large areas are devoid of shrub, field and ground vegetation and the wood presents a dark and gloomy appearance in the summer months. In the few natural glade areas caused by the collapse of an occasional canopy tree, and by the recent clearance around the brook on the northern side, the flora is of considerable interest.

The tree cover is dominated by oak standards, with an understorey of multi-stemmed, overgrown hornbeam coppice. Beech, hazel, mountain ash and wild service are all rare, though there are some fine specimens of the last.

Its western and northern boundaries are demarcated by the remains of an ancient woodbank with a ditch on the outer side, separating it from the common.

Pill sedge hangs on in its only known Haringey site and tiny populations of cow-wheat, slender St. John's-wort, wood anemone, and heath speedwell manage to survive though they seldom flower.

Fortis Green

What became Fortis Green Road was just a track across Hornsey Common until the early 1800s. In 1815 the Hornsey Enclosure act resulted in the land to the south of Coldfall Wood being portioned out as compensation to copyholders, who built villas of Georgian design along Fortis Green, many of which still exist today. In 1853, anticipating the coming of the railway, two men bought land on the south side of Fortis Green on the edge of East Finchley and laid it out with roads (Southern, Western and Eastern) and divided it into 70 plus plots for sale to local builders. Demand, however was slow and the resulting Harwell Park estate took several decades to complete, resulting in buildings of many styles, nevertheless together pleasing in appearance.

The Clissold Arms is on the site of Fortis Green Brewery, which operated from 1843 to 1902. Initially run by the Green family it was eventually taken over by Ind Coope. Almost opposite, the Alexandra, now closed, had served beer for 140 years. The building is based upon a pair of the original 19th Century cottages, extensively remodelled and enlarged in 1926, to create the present building.

A decision was made in the 1930s to build over the southern half of Coldfall Wood to form Twyford Avenue and streets north. Houses built by the Collins firm.