

Woolwich or Thames Barrier to Falconwood



walk notes

Thames Barrier to Falconwood

This mixed walk, following Capital Ring for a large part of the way includes a Thameside walk, a visit to the barrier, several parks, a country house, a folly-castle and an area of ancient deciduous forest.

The Green Chain

The Green Chain is a network of over 300 open spaces in South East London that stretches from Erith Riverside in Kent to the more urban green spaces of Peckham in inner London; within it there are a wide variety of open spaces - from ancient woodlands and wild nature reserves to playing fields and golf courses. Much of the Green Chain is on the urban fringe - so called because the open spaces are located on the edge of town. The Green Chain Walk is the name of the sign-posted network of footpaths that link these open spaces together. The walk is 50 miles long and split into 11 sections. The Green Chain Policy Document was adopted in 1977. Parts of the Green Chain Walk are incorporated into Capital ring and these walks.

Maryon Wilson Park

Maryon Park, Maryon Wilson Park and Gilbert's Pit form a Local Nature Reserve. Charlton sandpits, which were originally part of an area known as Hanging Wood, were presented to the London County Council in 1891 by the Maryon-Wilson family, and one of the pits became Maryon Park. Another pit became Charlton Athletic's football ground.

Charlton House

Built during the reign of James I, Charlton House is the finest and best preserved Jacobean Mansion in London. The house was built in 1612 by the crown to house Sir Adam Newton and his Prince Henry to whom he was tutor. The Maryon-Wilson family were in residence from the 1700s until Sir Spencer Maryon-Wilson sold the estate to the Council in 1925.

The house incorporated the ideas of the Renaissance; symmetry and balanced proportions were important to Renaissance architecture and ideas, and

the House was built on a double E-Shaped plan. The chimney stacks, towers, parapets and balustrades stand out against the skyline and the house was built with a great deal of ornament both inside and outside in the fashion of the time. The oak fireplace in the Jenkins Room bears the date 1612.

Charlton House is built of the red brick characteristic of the period, relieved with white stone quoins and dressings.

Externally, the chief feature is the richly decorated porch which stands in a bay projecting from the middle of the west front. Internally the house is remarkable for the plaster-work of the ceilings, the numerous interesting chimney-pieces, and the staircase. Three walled gardens lead from the rear terrace and offer a peaceful retreat and a place for quiet contemplation.

Severndroog

The gothic style castle of Severndroog Castle was built in 1784 to commemorate Commodore Sir William James who, in April 1755, attacked and destroyed the island fortress of Suvarnadurg (hence Severndroog) on the western coast of India, by his widow, Lady James of Eltham. The castle is 63 feet (19 m) high and triangular in section, with a hexagonal turret at each corner. From its elevated position, it offers views across London, with features in seven different counties visible on a clear day.

Severndroog castle with its fine view at the top is open for visitors Thurs/Fri/Sats at certain times of the year.

Oxleas Wood

I can remember visiting Oxleas Wood and Meadow in 1933 when they were threatened by a motorway scheme.

Originally part of the Royal manor of Eltham they are now owned and maintained by the London Borough of Greenwich for recreation and constitute a Site of Special Scientific Interest called Oxleas Woodlands, covering 72 hectares with oak, silver birch, hornbeam, coppice hazel, and a great number of fine samples of the Wild Service Tree.