

Shorter Walks – October 2023 to January 2024



Here is a record of the iU3A Shorter Walks group walks for the year. Another full and varied programme of walks delivered.

For more recent visits and future plans, go to our [web page](#)

October 2023

October, Trent Park: Fifteen walkers enjoyed a largely woodland walk from New Barnet to Cockfosters on a fine day hovering between summer and autumn. We followed the Pymmes Brook trail briefly until it entered Hadley Wood where we diverted to admire Jack's Lake, before heading up through the wood. Once in Trent Country Park we discovered that the cafe had closed, but fortunately the smaller one run by Animal Rescue hadn't, so after a coffee break and a slightly rejigged route we were able to continue around the Water Garden, past the mansion house (will the conversion work ever finish?) and through magnificent woods of beech, oak and chestnut to the ancient Camlet Moat and 18th century obelisk. We completed our loop back to the gate, where some headed to the tube and a few enjoyed lunch in the nearby Cock Inn garden.



October, Canary Wharf to Greenwich:

Autumn rain fell and lightning lurked behind the clouds on the day of our walk. Instead of the gentle lakeside terrain around leafy Twyford originally intended, we headed for the water, but now in the surrounds of the old Thames docklands among the wonders of modern architecture in the skyline and reflections on the placid waters of Canary Wharf and the old Millwall Docks. We passed through Mudchute Park and admired the

spaces provided for sport and activity for the people who live there. Before we travelled under the Thames via the tunnel created to take workers to the docks in earlier decades, we paused to look across the river to Greenwich on the south side of the City. Beautiful buildings which occupy more land and less sky, built with artistry and skill by our ancestors still giving us cause to admire and enjoy the city in which we live. We emerged from the tunnel in Greenwich and walked across Greenwich Park, in its late summer bloom. After lunch and good company we paused to enjoy the view from the Observatory with visitors from far and wide. A very good way to spend one of the shorter days of the year and only a short shower to urge us to an early coffee break

November

November, Bushy Park: Despite ominous weather forecasts, eleven intrepid walkers set out from Hampton Court station for a grand tour of Bushy Park, London's least well known royal park. Initially making for Heron Pond, which lived up to its name and also harboured geese, egrets and cormorants, we were suddenly confronted with 'lovely weather for ducks' and made a quick dash to the Pheasantry cafe, for a very pleasant interlude (picture). With the rain virtually over, we continued through the beautifully landscaped woodland gardens to the west and then north, until we arrived at the recently restored Water Gardens. Finally there were glimpses of sun as we passed the park's herd of deer, presided over by a stag with magnificent antlers, then past Bushy House, home of the National Physical Laboratory, leaving the park for the short walk to Teddington station.



November, Wandle trail: Eleven walkers convened at Morden, the southern terminus of the Northern Line and the adventure began. We followed the Wandle River as it flowed through Morden Hall Park, Ravensbury Park and onward through the rather beautifully titled Watercress Park. We had hopes, of course, that the rain that fell would ease to a drizzle: never tell God your plans, she will simply laugh! Our thanks for the good spirit that bound us together and although our walk was truncated (we were all too wet to investigate Beddington Park which had originally been on the agenda) it is there for us to revisit when we can enjoy all the benefits which it allows. Water, fresh air, trees and on our next visit the well-reviewed Pavilion Cafe in the previously mentioned Beddington Park. Just imagine a group of drowned rats which replaces photographic evidence on this occasion.



November: Nunhead to Forest Hill: Fifteen of us set off on a fine, often sunny, day to Nunhead Cemetery, the second largest of the Magnificent Seven Victorian cemeteries. We passed the memorial to the Scottish Political Dissenters, transported to Australia in the late 18th century for campaigning for parliamentary reform, paused at the ruined chapel, and strolled down paths past a memorial to the eight 2nd Walworth scouts who perished in a drowning accident in 1912. From there, we went on to the delightful Peckham Rye Park, to admire the lovely autumn colours of the Japanese and Sexby Gardens, and enjoy a coffee break in the Round cafe, before following the route of the old train line to the Crystal Palace through Brenchley Gardens, then on to Camberwell Old Cemetery (pictured), with more fine trees and a monument to Armenians assassinated in London in

1903, and another for residents of Camberwell killed in a Zeppelin raid in the First World War. Finally we reached the gardens of the Horniman Museum, with its magnificent views over London, and lunch and a museum visit for some before returning home from Forest Hill on the overground.

December

December: Farringdon to Whitechapel: On a damp December morning as we strolled through the city the names of the streets reminded us of the area's history. They followed the path of past inhabitants along Cowcross Street into Smithfield Market, although our fate was not, happily, the same as theirs! We walked past Cloth Fair and stopped to wonder at the history and beauty of St Bartholomew The Great, which still houses the remains of its custodian in the early 13th century. We paid our respect to the heroes remembered on plaques in Postman's Park and continued on to cross the Thames over the Millennium Bridge. After coffee at Southwark Cathedral (no clerics were harmed in the process of this activity) we recrossed the river via Tower Bridge. Through St Katharine's Dock, past Hermitage Basin, along Spirit Quay and Tobacco Dock we strolled. St George in the East, once majestic but still imposing, was briefly visited (closed to the public) reminding us of the genius of Hawksmoor and his legacy to the city. The Cable Street Mural recalled past efforts to safeguard liberty. Watney Market along with Whitechapel showed us that everyday needs are still supplied, as they have been for centuries, by wares sold on stalls welcoming custom on public thoroughfares. A mix of well and not so well known landmarks and activities. Jolly team, good company and time well spent is the hope.



December: Hackney Wick to Islington: Twenty three walkers joined the Christmas walk-and-lunch this year. Starting at Hackney Wick we briefly followed the River Lee in its more gritty, urban aspect, but with great views of the Olympic stadium, before turning onto the Regent's Canal. The graffiti and hipster eateries gave way to a mix of historic buildings and canal houseboats as we continued to Victoria Park, the 'People's Park' with its historic political connections, in sporadic light drizzle. We enjoyed a coffee break at the Pavilion cafe

overlooking the lake then walked on and across a bridge to discover the Chinese pagoda, erected originally by the Victorians then rebuilt in time for the 2012 Olympics, after it had sadly fallen into disrepair. Threats of serious rain never really materialised and we did glimpse a watery sun once or twice, as we continued through the park and then back to the canal, dodging bikes and runners until we met the Islington Tunnel, from where we headed off through elegant Georgian terraces to La Divina Italian restaurant on Upper Street for a festive lunch.

December: East Finchley to Woodberry Wetlands: Nineteen walkers set off on our last walk of 2023 under threatening skies from East Finchley station. After a brief walk through Cherry Tree Wood (we must come back at blossom time!) we were soon climbing up to a rather soggy Highgate Wood, not helped by light drizzle. The Pavilion cafe dealt with our many coffee orders promptly so we had time to sit and chat instead of simply queueing. We continued our woodland walk into Queens Wood and negotiated muddy steps without mishap, enjoying the ancient trees of this lovely wood. After a couple of rather challenging uphill we entered the Parkland Walk and followed it to the end, dodging puddles, then across Finsbury Park in sunshine — finally — along the New River to end our walk at the Woodberry Wetlands where the heavens opened, but the Coal House Cafe was open



for lunch.

January 2024



2024 January: Wapping to Hackney Wick:

Under lowering skies and the odd snow flurry, 16 of us took a very urban walk through the remnants of the London docks at Shadwell and Limehouse, once derelict but now redeveloped as residential quarters. We then continued the exploration of the Regent's Canal started just before Christmas, then followed the recently developed Mile End Park north to Victoria Park, where the Pavilion cafe provided a welcome respite. We continued across the wide expanses of the park to Hackney Wick from where

the welcoming warmth of the Overground took us home.

February

March

April

May

June

July

August

September