

Hackney's Parks & Open Spaces – Stephen Muster's walk for LDWA London Group
October 2015

- **Wick Community Woodland** – established in 1996 after a campaign to prevent property developers moving in & planted by 2000.
- **South Marsh**
- **Hackney Marshes** – one of the largest areas of common land in London. In 6th century it formed the boundary between the Saxon kingdoms of Essex and Middlesex. It was flooded in late 9th century by King Alfred to strand a Viking fleet. Associated with Knights Templars & Knights Hospitallers & then the Crown post-reformation.
- **North Marsh**
- **Daubeney Fields**
- **Clapton Square** - laid out in 1816 by wealthy citizens such as brokers from the city in the style of West End Georgian squares and terraces.
 - *Lenin* used to visit, around 1905, a house on the west side.
 - *Joseph Priestley* one of England's greatest scientists lived at a house in the 1790s (demolished in 1880) on the corner of the Passage and Lower Clapton Road. He was hounded out of his house and laboratory in Birmingham by a mob that opposed his support for the French Revolution and invited to come to Hackney to take up the post of Unitarian Minister at the Old Gravel Pit Chapel where he had many friends amongst the Hackney Dissenters.
 - In a cottage behind Priestley's house, in the closing years of the 18th century, lived a Huguenot widow called Louisa Perina *Courtauld*, a designer of gold plate who married Samuel Courtauld (goldsmith). Their son, Samuel Courtauld, founded the Courtauld dynasty of silk and artificial fibre manufacturers
- **Hackney Downs**
- **Clapton Pond** – has existed since the 1600s between the villages of Lower and Upper Clapton. The name 'Clapton' or 'farm on the hill' is derived from the Old English words 'clop', meaning a lump or hill, and 'ton', meaning a farm. The land was owned by the Bishops of London, and occupied by tenant farmers who grew hay and food for the City of London.
- **Millfields Park (South)**
- **Millfields Park (North)**
- **Springfield Park TEA (6.6)** – formed in 1905 from the grounds of three private houses
- **Clapton Common**

- **Stoke Newington Common** – originally known as Cockhanger Green, the now buried and lost Hackney Brook once ran across the north of the common, but has long been replaced by the busy Northwold Road.
 - A 400,000-year old palaeolithic flint axe factory was found in 1878 on the south side of the common and in market gardens on the north side of the common.
 - The north side of the common was overlooked by Gibson Gardens; an early example of quality tenement dwellings for working class people built in 1880 and still unchanged today, some parts are highly desirable for owner-occupiers. Gibson Gardens is now masked from the common by the innovative Raines Court built by the Peabody Trust on Northwold Road on the site of the old dairy.
 - *Marc Bolan* lived at 25 Stoke Newington Common, on the south side, from birth until the age of 15.
- **Abney Park** – originally laid out in the early 18th century by Lady Mary Abney wife of Sir Thomas Abney, who served as Lord Mayor of London in 1700–01. In 1840 it became a non-denominational garden cemetery, a semi-public park arboretum, and an educational institute, which was widely celebrated as an example of its time. A total of 196,843 burials had taken place there as of the year 2000. Important for non-conformists, anti-slavery, the arts.
 - William and Catherine Booth
 - Aaron Buzacott, the second Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society
 - the African, Thomas Caulker, the son of the King of Bompey (now Sierra Leone), who signed an anti-slavery agreement that became part of an Act of Parliament in the 1850s
 - Leota, a native of the Samoa Islands whose life in London was due to the work of the London Missionary Society
 - the Welsh MP Henry Richard, a mid-19th-century secretary of the Peace Society, instrumental in encouraging the first university in Wales at Aberystwyth
 - Pioneering fire fighter James Braidwood, credited with forming the first municipal fire brigade
 - the Chartist leader and publisher James "Bronterre" O'Brien
 - A Victoria Cross recipient from the Indian Mutiny, Private John Freeman.
 - World record holder in motor-paced cycling Tommy Hall, who broke the world motor-paced hour record in 1903, completing 54.34 miles.
- **Clissold Park LUNCH (10.25)** – Clissold House (formerly Paradise House) was built, in the latter half of the 18th century, for Jonathan Hoare, a City merchant, Quaker, philanthropist and anti-slavery campaigner, brother of one of the founders of the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. The park was created to be his idyll, and the stretch of water which wends its way around the house was once part of the New River, opened in 1613.

- **Butterfield Green** – takes its name from William Butterfield, the architect of St Matthias Church on Newington Green.
- **De Beauvoir Sq** – In 1821, stimulated by the opening of the Regent's Canal the previous year, developer and brick maker William Rhodes, a grandfather of Cecil Rhodes, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_Beauvoir_Town_-_cite_note-1 secured a lease for 150 acres of land from Peter de Beauvoir. Rhodes planned to build residences for the upper classes. However, work stopped in 1823 when Rhodes was found to have obtained his lease unfairly and after a court case spanning over 20 years the land reverted to the de Beauvoir family in 1834. The delay in building meant that Rhodes' clientele had since moved on to the new suburbs of the West End. The scheme was scaled down and only the south-eastern square was built, as De Beauvoir Square, and occupied in the 1840s by the newly emerging middle classes,
- **Shoreditch Park** – There was terraced housing on the site until it suffered bomb damage during World War II. The pre-fab housing that replaced it was removed between 1964 and 1973. In 2005 and 2006, an extensive excavation was carried out by archaeologists from the Museum of London to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II. It was pioneering in involving members of the local community in the project.
- **Geffrye Museum** – Founded in 1914 the Geffrye Museum is a museum specialising in the history of the English domestic interior. Named after Sir Robert Geffrye, a former Master of the Ironmongers' Company, the main body of the museum is housed in the Grade I-listed almshouses of the Ironmongers' Company, built in 1714 thanks to a bequest by Geffrye.
- **Haqqerston Park** – The park was originally created in the 1950s and extended in the 1980s. It was carved out of an area of derelict housing, a tile manufacturer, and the old Shoreditch gasworks, which had been hit by a V-2 rocket in 1944 and badly damaged.
 - On 29 July 1992, Michael Jackson landed at Haqqerston Park in a helicopter with Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse when he visited the children at the nearby then children's hospital Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Children.
- **Broadway Market & London Fields (TEA)** – first recorded in 1540 when it was common ground used by drovers to pasture their livestock before taking them to market in London.
- **St Thomas Sq** – a Georgian Square laid out by 1800
- **Well Street Common** – laid out in 1884, Well Street Common was previously part of South Hackney Common, owned by the Lord of the Manor of Hackney and used for agriculture. As the area was becoming built over, 180 acres of Hackney's common land was saved from development following a local petition and campaign in the 1860s, which led to its preservation for public use.

- **Victoria Park** (wholly in Tower Hamlets) (*Toilets*) – opened in 1845
 - drinking fountain in Victoria Park erected by Baroness Angela Burdett-Coutts in 1862
 - Victoria Park's reputation as the 'People's Park' grew https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_Park,_London - cite note-7 as it became a centre for political meetings and rallies: the scene at the numerous Speaker's Corners was a lively one. The biggest crowds were usually drawn to 'star' socialist speakers such as William Morris and Annie Besant. J. H. Rosney, correspondent for *Harper's Magazine* (February 1888) evokes a scene:
 - § “On the big central lawn are scattered numerous groups, some of which are very closely packed. Almost all the religious sects of England and all the political and social parties are preaching their ideas and disputing [...] On this lawn the listener, as his fancy prompts him, may assist on Malthusianism, atheism, agnosticism, secularism, Calvinism, socialism, anarchism, Salvationism, Darwinism, and even, in exceptional cases, Swedenborgianism and Mormonism. I once heard there a prophet, a man who professed to be inspired by the Holy Ghost; but this prophet ended by being locked up in an asylum, where he will have to convert the doctor before he can recover his liberty.
 - pedestrian alcoves, surviving fragments of the old London Bridge, demolished in 1831