



**WANSTEAD  
JUBILEE WALK**

## WANSTEAD JUBILEE WALK

**Wanstead is one of London's vibrant 'villages'.**

With a Green, small interesting shops, good housing and transport links it is an excellent place to live.

**But did you know you can walk in the footsteps of Wanstead's past as well?**

Wanstead had the honour of a visit by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II during her Golden Jubilee Year. Its rich history is around every corner and you can find out more by following the '**Wanstead Jubilee Walk**'.

The walk is about 2 miles / 3.2km long and takes around 1½ hours

### FIND OUT MORE ABOUT WANSTEAD'S HISTORY AT:

- Redbridge Museum, Central Library, Ilford Tel: 020 8708 2317
- Redbridge Local Studies & Archives, Central Library, Ilford Tel: 020 8708 2417
  - Wanstead Historical Society & Journal  
Tel: 020 8989 1994 (day) 020 8471 1171 (eves)

## WANSTEAD

Wanstead dates back 1000 years, when it was a clearing in the 'Great Forest', of which Epping Forest is the last remnant. For many years there were just a few farms around Wanstead.

Wanstead House, the main manor house, was important to the area. It was once owned by the favourite of Queen Elizabeth I, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester.

Between 1715 and 1729 a large new house was built by Colen Campbell in the Palladian style, which became the predominant style of English country houses for the next 100 years.



Wanstead House, c.1823

Wealthy merchants began to move into Wanstead at this time and you will find some of their houses on this Walk.

However, Wanstead House was demolished in 1824 after the entire contents were sold to pay the debts of the owner William Pole-Tylney-Long-Wellesley, a nephew of the Duke of Wellington. A grotto, stables and a summer house, (called 'The Temple') in Wanstead Park and 2 gate piers in Overton Drive are remnants of what was once the most architecturally important country house in England.

Wanstead largely developed after the railway arrived in 1856 at Snaresbrook. New houses and shops sprang up to complete what we see today.

## 1. The walk starts from Wanstead Underground Station

This station opened in 1947 as part of the new Hainault loop of the Central Line. The original overground railway line which ran through Snaresbrook also became part of the Central Line. Wanstead station was built in the 1930s but was not opened owing to the outbreak of World War II.

During the War it was used by Plesseys to make aircraft parts. 2000 people worked in the tunnels which had their own railway, canteen and rest areas.

To find out more about the history of Plesseys look at the information panel at the bottom of the escalator.

When you emerge from the Station you will be standing near a busy crossroads. You can see two famous Wanstead landmarks, the George Pub and the commemorative drinking fountain on the Green.

**Turn sharp left and with the Green on your right, walk up the tree-lined St Mary's Avenue.**



View from Cambridge Park towards High Street, c.1890s. The large house is 'The Elms', built in 1740 and now the site of Wanstead Underground Station and Eastern Avenue



Plesseys, WW2

## 2. During the 1800s St Mary's Avenue was known as Church Road

At the George Green end stood a picturesque tollgate next to a thatched cottage whose occupier, Mrs Burton opened the gate for coaches. The houses that you see on this road are impressive Edwardian villas built in response to a rising demand for housing as affluence increased towards the end of the 19th century. More people could now afford to own their homes and several new estates were built in Wanstead.

## 3. When you reach St Mary's Church enter the grounds by a small gate

The foundation stone of St Mary's church was laid in 1787 and building work was completed in 1790. The original parish church close by was too small and was demolished. St Mary's is built from brick cased in Portland stone in a classical style by Thomas Hardwick. It is the only Grade I listed building in the Borough of Redbridge.

The Church is open some Sundays for services between 10am - 1pm or Saturdays 10 - 11.30am. If you would like to arrange a visit outside of these hours call the Rectory on 020 8989 9101.

The interior retains several monuments from the original parish church, including a large marble monument to Sir Josiah Child (1630-1699), a former owner of Wanstead House. With its galleries and box pews and a pulpit supported by slender palm tree columns, St Mary's is a fine example of a largely unaltered Georgian church. The stained glass in two small circular windows depicts the royal arms of George III and those of Sir James Long.



St Mary's c.1920



Monument to Sir Josiah Child

#### 4. Trace the site of the original parish church...

...by walking a few steps diagonally left from the church and turn left off the path where you see a straight line of gravestones facing each other. These stones mark the central aisle of the old church. Ahead you can see a number of memorial slabs which mark the chancel, near to the altar.

Walk to the memorial slabs and look left. You can see a sentry box. This is actually a memorial to Joseph Wilton (1722 - 1803), a sculptor and founder member of the Royal Academy. The memorial was used in the 1830s as a 'watch box' to guard against body snatchers!

**Leave St Mary's church through the gate by which you entered. Turn left into Overton Drive and shortly afterwards turn right into Draycot Road.**

The road is linked to the Long Family who owned Wanstead House and whose ancestral seat was Draycot House in Wiltshire. Near the end of Draycot Road you will see the George Green on your right.

#### 5. This Green is a lovely reminder of Wanstead's rural past

**Cross the Green diagonally to the drinking fountain.** As you do, note the handsome Methodist Church (1875) to your left on the other side of the road.

#### 6. The drinking fountain was erected in 1897...

...to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. It has been moved several times as the road has been widened. It used to stand at the junction of the High Street and what is now Cambridge Park.



Memorial to Joseph Wilton  
(shown in 1901)



The Jubilee Fountain, c.1905

**Cross Cambridge Park** to walk up the High Street. There are plenty of cafes in this top part of the High Street so you could take a breather here. **Then walk up the High Street on the left hand side** until you come to Christchurch Green. Walk diagonally across the green to a shaded path. Down this path you will come to:

## 7. Christ Church, built in 1861...

...by Sir George Gilbert Scott to serve the ever growing population of Wanstead living at some distance from St Mary's. Cross the road and go down Church Path until you come to the High Street and then turn right.



Junction of High Street and Cambridge Park, c.1890s

## 8. In Wanstead High Street...

...you will pass the War Memorial, unveiled by Sir James Roll to commemorate local residents who fought in World War I. This is where the dead of World War I, World War II and other conflicts are annually commemorated. **Further along is...**



Junction of High Street and Cambridge Park, c.1910

## 9. Wanstead Church of England school

Established in 1786 by the rector of St Mary's, the Reverend Samuel Glasse, it finally acquired a permanent school building in 1796. It was rebuilt in 1850, except for the Headmistress's house (1840) which now houses a nursery school. Across the road note the various style gables that adorn the parade of shops.



Wanstead Church of England School, c.1850

## 10. Cross the road...

...and on your left is the Wanstead United Reformed Church. It was originally built as an Anglican church where St Pancras railway station is today. Due to be demolished when St Pancras was built, the whole church was then moved and rebuilt on the present site in 1867!

**Continuing along the High Street** you pass Clock House Parade. Built in 1931 and extended in the 1950s, it replaced 18th century brick and timber buildings.



## 11. At the junction with Grove Park...

...is **'The Corner House'**, originally named 'Little Garth' with its unusual concrete frieze. Built in 1890 it was owned by a Dr. Corner in the 1950s. By the entrance is a plaque to James Bradley, curate of St Mary's Church, Wanstead and a famous astronomer. Bradley was the first to demonstrate the earth moved around the sun, using astronomical observations made at Wanstead. His uncle the Rev. James Pound had erected the largest telescope in the world at Wanstead in 1717.

## 12. Continue until you reach...

...a large building at **129 High Street**. This is an early 18th century mansion called The Manor House. The front doorway has an original shell hood with carved consoles. Used as a Conservative Club until recently, it has an imposing bust at the front of Sir Winston Churchill, MP for the area from 1924 to 1964 and war-time Prime Minister of Great Britain.

Other Georgian houses can be seen next to the Manor House at number 125, 141 and 145b. As they are obstructed by the shops built in front of them, it may be better to view them from the other side of the road.

## 13. Walk down to 157 High Street...

...just before the George pub. This was the site of the office where you could book a stagecoach to London. By 1897 it had been replaced by the current buildings and used as shops. It was converted into the 'Wanstead Empire' in 1913 showing silent movies and then from 1930 to 1956 it was known as the 'Kinema'.

High Street, c.1949  
This eighteenth-century house was demolished when Clock House Parade was built in the 1950s



Wanstead Kinema, c.1935

## 14. The walk ends at 'The George' pub

The original 'George and Dragon' pub was built in 1716. It was a halt on the coach route from Epping to London and a busy centre of activity where the coachmen would stop for a drink and water their horses. Coaches could be booked from a building next door. This continued until the building of the railway in 1856.



The old 'George', c.1900



The George pub, 1906

In 1904 the pub was rebuilt. The new George is very different in style but retains one original feature, a commemorative stone on the outer wall which faces the Underground station. This stone celebrates the theft of a cherry pie! The pie was stolen by a man working on scaffolding on the front of the pub in 1752. He was tried and fined half a guinea.

Now that you've finished you might like to enjoy a well deserved drink at one of the many cafes, pubs or restaurants on the High Street!

