

# ***A Walk in the Park***

This leaflet describes a walk around Christchurch Park highlighting just a few of the Park's many 'treasures'.



Christchurch Park was the first public park in Ipswich, opening in 1895. Today it is a designated County Wildlife site and is on the English Heritage register of historic parks and gardens of special historic interest. It is a Grade II listed park and there are 14 other Grade II listed structures within its boundaries. Extending over 33 hectares (about 82 acres) of picturesque grounds close to the heart of the town, the Park has been awarded the much-prized Green Flag award on a number of occasions.

After the completion of a £4.2 million restoration project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Ipswich Borough Council, the Park was officially re-opened in May 2008. Among the achievements of the Restoration Project were the Visitor Centre, extensive new planting, new paths, major dredging and restoration of the Round Pond.

Facilities in the Park include: the Reg Driver Visitor Centre; a specially designed children's play area; tennis courts; bowling greens; boules pitch; a croquet lawn; public toilets; refreshments; shelters. The Park hosts many events and activities all year round, including the annual Ipswich Music Day in July and Remembrance Service in November.

More information on all aspects of the Park is available in the Reg Driver Visitor Centre – where you can see a DVD about the Restoration Project, display boards on the history and wildlife of the Park, history of the Cobbold Family, displays of items found in the mud when the Round Pond was dredged, leaflets on the Park's history, memorials and landscapes – and much more! There is no charge for admission to the Visitor Centre.

### The Walk (about 2 miles)

*The walk is on well-surfaced paths. Although there are no steps, there are some moderately steep inclines.*

*There is a map of the route on the last page of this leaflet.*

With your back to the entrance to the Visitor Centre you will see the Ipswich **Martyrs' Memorial** close by and slightly to your right. Take the right-hand path, up the hill, between the Memorial and the Friends' Noticeboard. On your left as you walk up the hill you will see railings around the entrance to the **Ice House**. As the hill flattens out you will come to the Refreshment Kiosk on your right; just beyond this are some toilets and a shelter. The bowling green is on your right, between the toilets and Westerfield Road. Continue along this path. You will reach the Westerfield Road gate on your right, with the restored **Cabman's Shelter** nearby.

Turn left and walk straight across the Northern, and highest, part of the Park. About a third of the way across, a path from the Park Road gate (to your right) intersects your path. Continue straight on, along Mayors' Avenue, where trees have plaques with the names of some Ipswich Mayors. When you reach the gate into the Bridle Way, walk across and enter the Upper Arboretum through the gate on the other side. Continue straight ahead until you can see the small gate into Henley Road. Turn left just before you reach this gate.

Walk down the curving path, taking time to admire the wonderful specimen trees and enjoy the birdsong. On your right you will see some of the commemorative benches that can be found throughout the Park, together with some older benches which are gradually being replaced. Walk until you come to the main gate to Henley Road, the gatehouse and **Brett Water Fountain**. To your left, as you face the Fountain, you will see the carpet bedding border which is planted with a special theme each year. Take the right-hand fork ahead, to pass the Blue Badge car park then toilets on the right. Ahead, to your left on the grass, you will see the **Arts and Crafts Shelter**, better known locally as 'the bandstand'. This is the site of an annual series of Sunday afternoon brass concerts organised by the Friends of Christchurch Park in July and August each year.

The path continues round to the left; walk straight on (ignore the left fork to the bandstand) downhill, and ahead you will see one of the two tunnels under Bridle Way – the public path that divides the Upper from the Lower Arboretum. Turn left, and continue straight on, past the path on the right which leads to the tunnel. The bandstand is now on your left. Take the next right-hand fork and follow a narrower winding path. You will pass some steps on the right, shortly after these where you join the path from the **Brett Fountain**, turn right and continue down until you reach the second tunnel on your right. Walk through the tunnel, and on the other side you will see some tennis courts.

Turn right and walk on with these courts on your left, take the first turning left, walking downhill; the path curves right and continues past the remaining tennis courts and then on to the croquet lawn, also on your right. Before you reach the end of the croquet lawn, take the left-hand path down towards a small wooden bridge on the right. Continue over the bridge (beware of the trolls who may be hiding underneath!) with the **Wilderness Pond** on your left.

Follow the curving path around the edge of the **Wilderness Pond**, noting the small islands for the benefit of the wildfowl. Depending on the time of year, you may find the Pond noisy with various kinds of water birds feeding and raising their families. When you reach a fork (note the **Ark** building up to your right, with the teenage area beyond), continue left, keeping close to the Pond, which in the Middle Ages was the source of the town's water supply. On your right you may notice a small green-looking pond – the **Horseshoe Pond** – which was established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

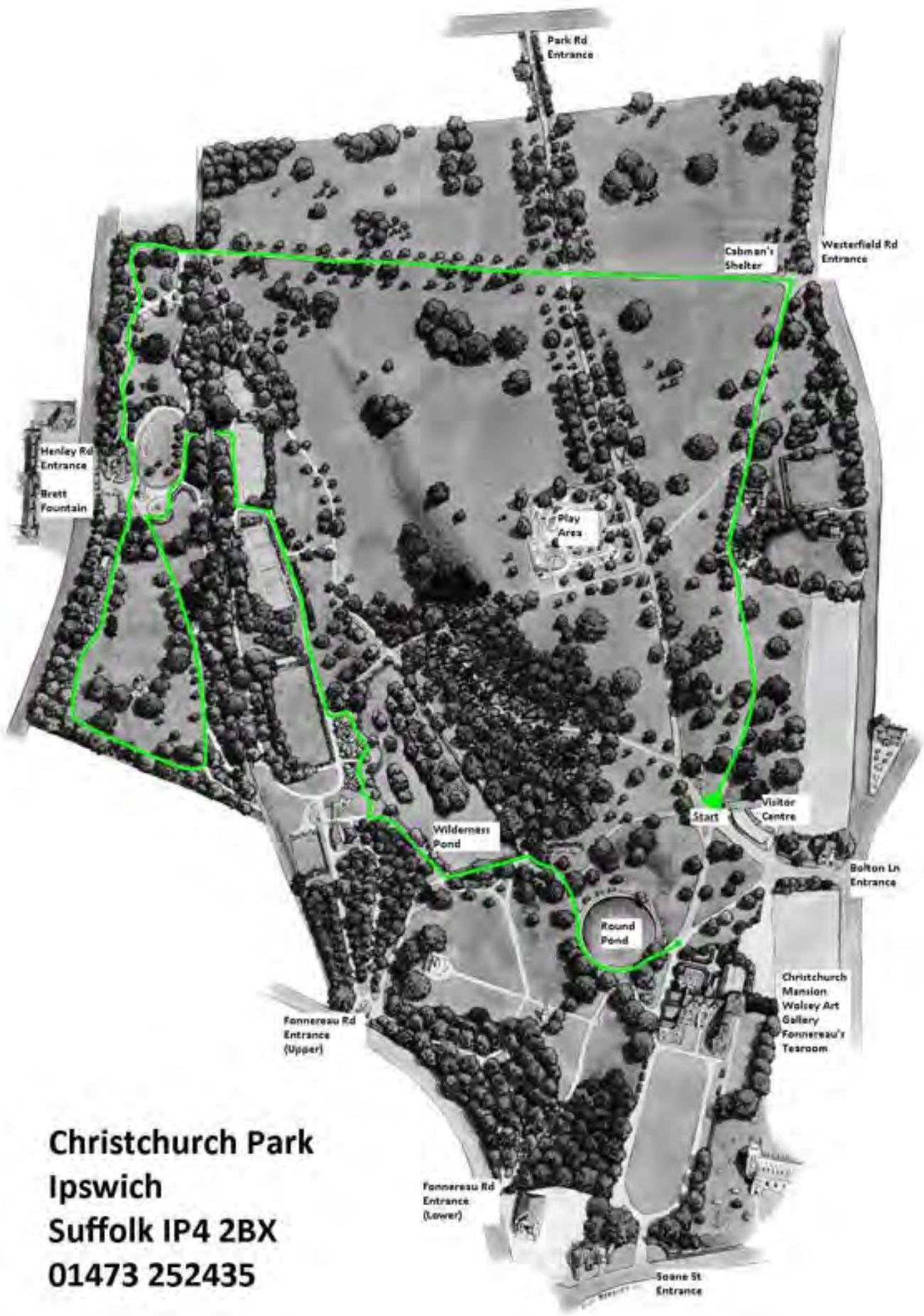
At the next division of paths you will see the **Ipswich War Memorial**, a large white Cenotaph which is the site of the town's Remembrance Service in November each year. Continue left, and soon on the right you will see a small pond at a lower level, and you will probably hear the water falling from the Wilderness Pond down into this smaller one in the **Peace Garden** on the other side of the fence. This water drop here is one example of how the parkland falls steeply from Park Road in the north, tapering at the southern end where it meets Soane Street – the total fall being about 38 metres.

Continue straight on, noting the entrance to the **Wildlife Reserve** on your left. You are now in sight of the **Mansion** and the **Round Pond** (originally known as the Mirror Pond), with St Margaret's Church ahead in the distance. The **Reg Driver Visitor Centre** is over to your left, and you may wish to choose your own route, left or right, around the Pond, to return to the Centre, or leave the Park by one of the other nearby gates.

We hope you have enjoyed this Walk in the Park,  
which aims to give you a taste of just some of  
the wonderful things to see and hear.

If you are interested in knowing more of any aspect of the Park –  
its history, monuments, trees, birds, wildlife, sports facilities, etc.,  
or if you would like to help in the Park,  
or to donate a tree or bench, or to join the Friends of Christchurch Park,  
please ask in the Reg Driver Visitor Centre.

**Reg Driver Visitor Centre, Christchurch Park, Ipswich IP4 2BX Tel: 01473 252435**



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