

How to get to the start : If arriving by Central Line train, go out through the ticket hall and turn left up a corridor. Go slightly left past the end of the bus station. Keep on Church Lane, taking the right-hand side of Independent Buildings, to reach the church gates at the corner of the High Road.

Historical introduction : Leytonstone was a hamlet on the road from London to Epping, part of the parish of Leyton. In the 18th century it came to be dominated by its position on the edge of Epping Forest, offering hope as a place of safety from highwaymen but actually providing a base for them and other criminals. The 18th century also saw Leytonstone provided with its own place of worship for the first time. The railway arrived in 1856. Soon the wealthy Buxton family moved to a remoter part of East Anglia. By the start of the 20th century almost all the land in the Leytonstone area was built over, up to the edge of Epping Forest. Many buildings on Church Lane and the High



Road date from this time. The 1930s saw the construction of prestigious facilities such as gas and electricity showrooms, a public library and leading retailers. After the Second World War the railway line was converted to electric power and joined to the Underground Central Line. Leytonstone went into a decline between the 1960s and the 1980s. The High Road becoming a congested trunk road with many heavy goods vehicles. The quality department store Bearmans transferred to the Co-operative retail movement which itself got into difficulties. Leytonstone's fortunes are now being revived.



The Church of St John the Baptist (photo above and labelled on the rear cover sketch map) was built 1832-3 to the design of Edward Blore in Suffolk white bricks in the Early English style. William Cotton paid for its construction. A later expanding population needed a larger church and a south aisle was added to the design of Caroe, somewhat Arts & Crafts. The churchyard railings are a rare survival and were copied for St John's Stratford. The church is listed Grade II including its gates, gatepiers and railings.

Opposite the church, with frontages onto both Church Lane and the High Road, the former Woolworths ↗ store, now Argos, is typical but a good quality building for

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In 1910 the Guardians referred in a letter to the Local Government Board to "the Leytonstone Schools situate in the country". In fact it was on the edge of a Leytonstone that had been almost entirely laid out in streets of terraced housing.

The Bethnal Green Schools, Leytonstone Report of 1912 says :

"A satisfactory feature of the Committee's work during the last year or so, is their greater realisation of the advantages of Emigration. To those who are engaged in the work of the placing out of boys and girls, or who have to deal with them during their school life, it is a source of real pleasure to know that some of the children have been given the opportunity of making a start where there is no possibility of interference by undesirable relatives, and where there is every likelihood of their leading clean and healthy lives, with greater chances of success than could be expected in the old country. The cry that we are sending out our best, surely cannot be raised in the case of Poor Law children, whose history prior to admission is only too well known to the Guardians. . ."

↗

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all that. The public library (labelled on the rear cover sketch map) with its entrance in Church Lane (photo below) was designed in 1934 by James Ambrose Dartnall (who died in 1985 and was of a local family). There were municipal electricity showrooms on the ground floor. The building has a Classical exterior and an Art Deco interior, well preserved (and now listed Grade II).



Optional : if you cross back over to O'Neills and walk to the left along Bush Road you will reach Henry Reynolds Gardens where there is a children's playground on the site of a large pond.

Otherwise, return to St John's Church and the Central Line station by going back down the High Road.

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the railings on the pathway into Tesco's from the High Road) a mulberry tree survives from the 19th century or earlier.



The Bethnal Green Board of Guardians was instituted under an Order of the Poor Law Commissioners in 1836. The Guardians' offices were in Bishop's Road, Victoria Park, Hackney.

The Bethnal Green Schools, Leytonstone, were founded in 1868 on about 9 acres of land of which 6 acres had been built on. The cost of the site was £ 9,500. "The schools were built from the plans of Messrs Harston on the separate house system. Each home is complete in itself



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and self contained. A house mother is in charge of each home, to see that the children are clean and properly dressed, and to give them, as far as possible, the individual attention and care which a mother would give in a good home; she resides in the house and is responsible for its cleanliness, and reports matters of importance to the Matron.

"The Schools generally are under the management of a Matron-Superintendent . . ." who was a trained nurse. Only those children under the age of 8 were being educated within the Leytonstone home, the rest being sent to Public Elementary Schools.



From the church gates turn left up the High Road.

A 1906 postcard view of the junction of Church Lane and High Road shows 'The Stores' which in 1936 had become 'Hales Stores'. A Hales Stores painted sign pointing down to the entrance (photo below right) survives on the wall facing up the High Road. The shops are now Santander Bank, number 660 and Bairstow Eves.

Numbers 674 / 676 used to be the Two Brewers pub, shown in a 1911 postcard view of Leytonstone High Road with a large lamp hanging over the pavement. Waltham Forest Oral History Workshop's 'Behind the Bar, The



Licensed Trade in Waltham Forest' says the Two Brewers pub had opened by 1872 and closed in 1964.

Numbers 676/678 (photo next page) were built as showrooms for gas-fuelled heating and cooking equipment but are now Marc Jason's Shoeworld. The building was designed by George Grey Wornum (1888 – 1957), the architect of the headquarters of the Royal Institute of British Architects at 66 Portland Place, W1. The granite stonework panels on the façade survive as do the black stone rim containing the glazing, the fixing holes for the flood lights that ran along the stone panels above the shop



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windows, and the Crittall windows above ground level. Above the suspended ceiling original Grey Wornum plasterwork appears to have survived, as does the lecture theatre at the rear, together with some original joinery and ironmongery.

On the left-hand side of the High Road, Matalans now fills the block up from St John's Church. Bearmans department store had one of its two sites here.

Between numbers 682 and 684 there is a gateway that once led to the premises of the Essex Dairy Farm Company which had cows grazing in Ongar.

Beyond is Barclays Bank. A bank is shown here on the 1915 Ordnance Survey map.

Cross over the High Road to the 'Tommy Flynn's' pub.

The pub at 692 High Road, used to be called 'The Crown' and there are references to it in the 17th century but perhaps it was not then on this exact site. Deeds from the 1st half of 19th c survive. It had stabling in 1839. The present building dates from 1888 and soon after if not before the pub was owned by the large Barclay Perkins brewery. A 'Jug and Bottle Department' (takeaway) was added in 1909 (down the Aylmer Road side). By 1938 the Crown was owned by Charringtons brewery. In the 1940s the upstairs billiard room was given a separate entrance and converted into premises for the Ministry of Labour and National Service. This was handed



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In 1902 the Chairman said members of the Magistrates' Bench had received complaints regarding the objectionable crowds which collected near the Green Man Inn, Leytonstone. There was no allegation against the house, but the bench would call the attention of the landlord to the fact that many roads met there and that it was the tramway terminus. They appealed to the landlord to co-operate with the police in an effort to diminish the evils which arose at that spot. The congregation of haycarts in the locality might be discouraged. There were many other roadside houses, both licensed and otherwise, where haycarters might stop for refreshments, and they ought to be encouraged not to make this locality a stopping place, thereby adding to the difficulties which occurred there.

Cross the High Road at the traffic lights and turn right to reach the front of Leytonstone House.

We do not know when Leytonstone House (photo opposite) was built but perhaps around 1800. It is listed for preservation Grade II and was once the home of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton (died 1858). It has been occupied since 1 September 2002 by chartered accountants Barnes Roffe.



At the rear of Leytonstone House are the buildings that survive from the Bethnal Green Industrial Schools of 1868 – 1937, locally listed, in stock brick by A & C Harston 1881-9. 6 'homes' of 4 dormitories each with 12 beds, plus a dayroom. Each 'House' or 'Home' contained about 48 children. With Leytonstone House, they were restored in 2002 by contractors Llewelyns. ASRA Housing Association took 25 new homes and Circle 33 Housing Association 21 flats.

There is also a doctor's surgery. The Hall of the Boys School is now within Tesco's supermarket as its pharmacy department. By the High Road behind a wall is the house for master of the Home, and in front of this (visible through

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lawyer, was a committed Jacobite and had been to Rome the previous year to see the Old Pretender. Layer was found guilty, and hung, drawn and quartered at Tyburn on 17th May 1723. He was the only conspirator to be so treated. His head remained for about thirty years on the Temple Bar, one of the gateways to the City of London.

By 1783 the Green Man was the most important licensed house along the main Leytonstone road, and was valued for rates at a considerably greater sum than The Bell, The Red Lion, the Crown or the Plough and Harrow. The Green Man was most like a classic coaching inn with coaches stopping there on the road to Cambridge and Newmarket, important from the 17th century or perhaps earlier.

Derek Barlow in his book 'Dick Turpin and the Gregory Gang' tells us that in April 1737 Richard Bayes was the landlord of the Green Man, Leytonstone. Joseph Major was attacked by highwaymen as he approached the Green Man on Saturday 30 April 1737, about 40 yards away from the inn. The highwayman or men took from Major a mare racehorse, a horse whip, a knife and £7 or ↗

£8 in gold and silver. Going into the Green Man Major was told by the landlord Richard Bayes - or so Bayes wrote 2 years later - "I dare swear it is Turpin has done it, or one of that crew, and I'll endeavour to get intelligence of your horse; this that they have left you is stolen, and I would have you advertise it."

2 days later Bayes found the stolen horse at the Red Lion Inn in Whitechapel. In his account Bayes said a pistol was fired at him by Dick Turpin but the shot missed Bayes and killed Turpin's associate Matthew King. The historian Barlow thinks Bayes shot King but pretended that Turpin did.

The London Evening Post of 6 to 9 August 1737 said : "On Sunday morning about two o'clock the house of Mr Bayes, The 'Green Man' on Epping Forest was attempted to be broken open, but the maid being up and the rogues seeing a light made off. They are supposed to be some of Turpin's gang, who endeavoured to get in and it's thought with intent to murder the said Mr Bayes, Turpin having often declared his intention as such." Barlow is sceptical and generally Turpin was in Yorkshire at this period.

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back to the pub in the 1950s. The City and East London Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale refers in its 1986 Guide to an "Outstanding ceiling of 'Lincrusta' imprinted with entwined strange mythological creatures once picked out with gold leaf, also good robust original bar back etc". It has since disappeared.

Keep on the right-hand, eastern side of the High Road and go down Aylmer Road.



Here on the lefthand side, you can just see the entrances to 694A to 698A High Road Listed Grade II and bearing a blue plaque. These are Georgian houses including Carlton House, once a Conservative Club. Shops were built in their front gardens facing the High Road. Benjamin Cotton, born on 10 February 1794, moved to 694 High Road, ↗

Leytonstone in 1829 from Walnut Tree House in Leyton High Road (**not** the Walnut Tree House that was once in Leytonstone High Road). He died on 1 January 1874, and was buried in the churchyard vault of St Mary's, Leyton. Cotton can be an Anglicisation of the Huguenot name Cotignie.

Go back into the High Road and turn right.

Notice the Dutch style gable with hoist above numbers 698 and 700.

Opposite on the lefthand side the Remar UK charity shop, numbers 845-847 High Road, used to be shoe retailers Russell & Bromley. Note under the ugly fascia the quality design of original shop windows and entrance.

The Walnut Tree pub on the corner of Gainsborough Road (labelled on map) has at the back framed displays of local Leytonstone history including the Cotton family.

708 High Road on the corner of Grove Road was in 1956 W Hinds, jeweller.



Number 720 used to have a pawnbroker's sign and still has a Fish Brothers clock.

Turn right into Browning Road (photo below and marked on map).

Numbers 12-32 (even) including the North Star pub 24 (above); 1-35 (odd) are locally listed for preservation. The North Star was created in 1857-58 from two cottages. The



bar is built into the right side and a serving hatch is knocked through into the former cottage on the left. The North Star name appears in the 1861 census and Frederick Wildsmith is listed as the beer retailer. The land appears to have been leased by the Charrington brewing family who lived nearby at Leyspring House. Frederick had once gone to sea on the North Star, a two-masted sailing vessel. That was his one and only voyage, but he commemorated it in the name he gave to his pub.

Go back to the High Road and turn right.

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742 High Road is locally listed and has a plaque on the side to Sir Morell Mackenzie. CompuCare occupies a single storey front extension; in 1956 L Israel Ltd greengrocers were here.

Opposite, the Moreia Welsh Church was designed in 1958 by T & H Llewelyn Daniel. The congregation started in Walthamstow in 1901.

Undertakers occupy number 883 (photo opposite); the building is dated to the late 17th century from roof joints, and was originally thatched; in 1956 number 883 was occupied by Wildsmith & Albin funeral directors; the Wildsmith family were local carpenters since at least 1812 when they helped make the 'cage' (prison cell) in Leytonstone; the Wildsmith name occurs again as Frederick Wildsmith the first landlord of the North Star pub.

A modernist-looking building with a slightly nautical design used to be occupied by a ship crew union.

The pub on the roundabout, 762 High Road, has been renamed O'Neills, a chain of Irish themed bars but is still called locally the Green Man. The current building dates



from around 1927 to 1930. The original name comes from an ancient pagan mythological character.

By 1660 an earlier Green Man, a little down the High Road, was providing food, an indication that it was patronised by travellers.

On 22nd August 1722. Christopher Layer of Holborn, a friend Stephen Lynch and Layer's servant were on their way to meet Lord North and Lord Grey at Epping. They were arrested after stopping off at the Green Man where they appeared to be plotting to kill King George I. Layer, a

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