To view images to supplement the walk please download from this QR Code or visit www.enfield.gov.uk
This is an easy going, flat walk which takes 45 minutes to one hour to complete; it can be started at any point along the route. The walk mainly follows public footpaths but we do recommend sensible footwear as the paths can get muddy.

The New River Loop and a little bit of Enfield History

Town Park

The land for Enfield Town Park was bought in 1901 by the Enfield Urban District Council for £7,750, and opened to the public on 30th July 1902. Most of the land came from the Chase Side estate. The entrance to the park stood on the site of Enfield Town Library Green; the remains of its foundations and cellars were rediscovered during the WW2 when air raid shelters were being constructed. Chase Side House was built for Mr. James Ferrer Steadman (1826 to 1834); when he died his widow married Mr. William Everett. Mrs. Everett was a popular local figure and actively encouraged the celebration of May Day and other festivals by opening the grounds of their estate to local people. She also invited children from the National School to have an annual treat on her land at her own expense. Later Mrs. Everett, who died in 1865 the estate was purchased by Mr. Philip Twells, an M.P. and banker. The house was demolished after the death of Mrs. Twells in 1901. The wall at this part of the park marks the former estates eastern boundary.

The New River Loop

In August 1933 the Metropolitan Water Board (MWB) wanted to close the Enfield Town New River Loop and run the water in underground pipes from Southbury Road to Bush Hill Park. The Council though insisted it was kept as a local amenity so the MWB offered to the Council as long as they maintained the River banks and bridges. It was finally taken into Council control in 1938 following a conveyance in 1835 of the loop from Wilson Bridge in Southbury Road to the district border at Bush Hill Park.

Carr's Basin/The Enfield Reservoir

In the 1830's Mr Carr the owner of Chase Park (a large house pulled down to make way for the railway to Cuffley circa 1910) agreed with the New River Company that they could build a drain through his land. In return the company dug an ornamental pond in front of his house and allowed the island today, and gave him the rights to build a summer house, use a boat and fish on the river.

Enfield's Most Dangerous Spot

Carr's Basin or, the Enfield Reservoir, as it was more commonly known in 1913 was at one time described as the "most dangerous spot in the district". On the 5 September 1913 the Enfield Gazette reported that Thomas Beaumont aged 60 had fallen into the River here and drowned in just five feet of water. It was reported that there was no fencing for 200 yards at this point to keep people away from the River. Over a year and a half later on 22 May 1865, the town clerk, Cornelius Hill, drowned at the same spot. It was assumed that he had gone to fetch milk for a cat in nearby Windmill Hill as there was no apparent reason for him to be anywhere near the spot. It was reported that he had been talking about the death of Beaumont a week before and had shown considerable jealousy in the spot where he had drowned. He was incredibly short sighted and had a habit of removing his glasses, so it was assumed that he had done this, somehow dropped them and fallen in while trying to retrieve them and drowned.

Enfield Grammar School

The school originated as a form of charity; (A charity is an endowment founded for a priest or priests to celebrate masses for the soul of the founder) at St Andrews and was first recorded on the site in 1507; it survived the dissolution of Chantries in 1547. The earliest parts of the building were identified. The school became a comprehensive in 1967 and amalgamated with Chase Boys School; they became separate institutions again in 1970. The School has retained the word 'Grammar' in its name despite being a comprehensive school.

Holly Walk & The Enfield Preservation Society

From 1961 to 1967 Enfield Preservation Society fought a long and hard battle against plans to build a ring road through Enfield Town. The ring road was an attempt to ease traffic congestion and it would have cut through St. Andrews Church Yard, Holly Walk and Gentleman’s Row. In preparation for the road some early 19th Century woods were cleared and gravel foundations of the Church were knocked down where the car park stands today. The unpopular plan was finally rejected by Anthony Greenwood the Minister for Housing and Local Government from 1964 to 1969.

WW2 at Southbury Road.

At 9.00pm on the October 15 1940 a bomb fell in Park Avenue destroying three water pipes (24 inches wide) through which 46m gallons of water passed each day. Eight people in a bomb shelter nearby narrowly missed being drowned by the deluge of water. The surrounding roads were flooded with the water reaching the Hertford Road. The water was turned off by 9.45pm at the north end of the river by a member of the MWB. It was vital that the water supply was quickly reconnected due to the Blitz and the need to have good water supplies to put out any fire.

At 5am the next morning around 2,000 soldiers had arrived from across the London area. They dug out the parts of the New River that had been filled and reconnected it back to the old original Loop. Meanwhile the National Fire Service pumped the water a quarter of a mile away beyond where the soldiers were digging. By 8.00pm that evening the soldiers had dug a rough trench which drained the water to starting again; the next day 10m gallons were flowing, and by the day after it had increased to 10m gallons. The pipes were eventually fixed by November 6th. Local Rumour was that it was sabotage and not a bomb that had caused the damage, and the local papers, due to the heavy handed censorship of the time, were unable to report what really happened until the end of the war.