

## Following the Fillebrook

**Length of the walk** : about 45 minutes each way.

**The ground** : Firm surfaces, shallow slopes, crossing many streets but otherwise suitable for wheelchairs and baby buggies.

**Starting point** : Leytonstone Station is on the Central Line. Bus routes W15, W16 and W19 serve the Grove Green Road side where the walk starts, routes 66, 145, W13 and W14 on the other, Church Lane side. There is a station car park (payment necessary).

**Refreshments** : there are cafés and shops in Church Lane, Grove Green Road and Leyton High Road.

**The route** : cross Grove Green Road and look along Fairlop Road.

**Some background** : The Fillebrook stream was an important feature of the local landscape, before the fields were covered with housing. Now it is buried underground in a pipe, but the valley through which it ran can still be seen. Fairlop Road dips down to where the Fillebrook used to be, and rises up the other side. The Fillebrook was the boundary between the manors of Ruckholt (which included Leytonstone) and Leyton Grange. It flows from right to left, from north-east to south-west.

To the left of Fairlop Road is Fillebrook Road, now blocked to traffic by a flower-bed and paving. Follow Fillebrook Road to the end and turn right into Drayton Road.

As you go down the slope of Drayton Road, nearer the pavement on the left-hand side, is a manhole cover, from which can usually be heard the rush of the Fillebrook stream. Through the blocks of flats opposite gaps can be seen in the houses, marking the route of the Fillebrook.

Turn first left into Southwest Road.

Note again the gaps in the houses, marking the route of the Fillebrook.

Turn first right into Avebury Road, then right again down Cavendish Road.

At the junction, note the railway viaduct crossing the valley of the Fillebrook.

Turn sharp left into Scarborough Road.

At the top turn right.

Just before the railway bridge glance right along the cobbled lane beside the railway arches, sloping steeply down.

Continue under the railway bridge and keep straight ahead into Richmond Road, but immediately turn right into Pretoria Road. At the bottom you get another view of the railway viaduct, but turn left into Newport Road. Follow Newport Road to the end.

You are walking along the valley of the Fillebrook, which rises to each side of you.

Cross Francis Road to the alleyway opposite between the houses. Go through and then keep straight on, to reach the entrance to Sidmouth Park.

At one time watercress beds were here. One of the earlier streets of Leyton was built here, but the ground must have been unsuitable. The middle section has been demolished and replaced with Sidmouth Park.

Carry straight on through the Park, and into Sidmouth Road. At the end cross Leyton High Road and enter Coronation Gardens.

The Fillebrook was dammed in the 1720s to create an ornamental lake in the grounds of Ruckholt House (see later in this walk). Later the area became watercress beds, and in 1902, the year in which Edward VII was crowned King, a park.

Go through the park and at the end out into Oliver Road and turn left. At the end turn right, round the car dealership.

The other side of the church opposite, now Greek Orthodox, is the site of Ruckholt Manor House, visited by Elizabeth I, James I, Charles II, John Evelyn and Samuel Pepys. Ruckholt Manor was acquired by Robert Knight, Chief Cashier of the South Sea Company, infamous for having shares that rose and rose in price, only to fall suddenly to almost nothing in 1720.

Continue past the car dealership along Ruckholt Road and turn right down to a roundabout. Turn right into Gateway Road - the entrance to a recycling centre.

On the right peering through a fence and down you may see a channel of water. This cannot be the full flow of the Fillebrook, but it is roughly in line with where the stream would have run down to the River Lea before the railway line, goods yard and wagon works were built.

Return to a roundabout and Ruckholt Road and turn left.

**End of the walk :** bus route W15 will take you back to the start of the walk at Leytonstone Station, and route W14 goes to the Church Lane side of the station. Alternatively, retrace your steps over the route.



