**Woolwich Heritage & High Points, Wednesday 23rd September 2020**

5 walkers, 7.5 miles – leader Paul Lawrence

This walk explored the military history of Woolwich and its high points, parks and woods, along with its role in the 2012 Olympics. It took in the Arsenal, the site until recently of England’s historic armaments factory and birthplace of Arsenal FC, strolled along Woolwich riverside, and viewed the VCs Memorial and the impressive frontage of Woolwich Artillery Barracks. Joining the Games 100 route, we crossed the Common, that was the assembly point where British armies in ages past assembled and camped, passing the site of the 2012 Olympic shooting and archery venue, now restored. Up to Shooters Hill, we enjoyed leafy Oxleas Woods with its Severndroog Castle, a folly with extensive views of seven counties, now restored and reopened to the public. At the Oxleas café with its distant rural views south east, we briefly stopped, donning our waterproofs for a passing shower. Here in the Olympics there was a missile battery nearby. Then passing the water tower, a local landmark, and on through Shrewsbury Park, the walk’s highest point, with extensive views now to the north and across the Thames. We returned to the town centre across Plumstead Commons using parts of the Green Chain Walks. A less attractive memory of Woolwich’s recent past was of the 2011 riots when the Great Harry Wetherspoons was burnt down. Crossing the square over the Black Lives Matter logo we reached the now restored Great Harry for a post walk supper where all the nation’s problems were easily resolved over a convivial drink!

There is a useful free PDF guide from Greenwich Heritage: Woolwich\_Walk\_adults at [www.greenwichheritage.co.uk](http://www.greenwichheritage.co.uk).. For route notes see below

Photographs by Paul Lawrence. More on this link: WoolwichHeritage230920 https://photos.app.goo.gl/AJuJaHjPmZtiZW637.

**Route Notes**

**Woolwich Centre**

During the [2011 England riots](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_England_riots) Woolwich, on Monday 8 August, was one of the areas affected. Several buildings were attacked, with a few being destroyed. Blue Inc. in Powis Street had to be demolished following a major fire. The Great Harry Wetherspoons' Pub was also set on fire, leaving it a burned-out shell. The Wimpy burger restaurant and Coral bookmakers were also damaged by fire. Several other shops were looted or damaged, including Nando's, Charles Dance (the oldest jewellers in Woolwich) and other shops in Powis Street and Hare Street. Many local residents felt that the destruction of Woolwich was under-reported by local and national media, and on Saturday 13 August local residents began writing their thoughts on the hoarding around the shell of the Great Harry. This writing was later deemed to be graffiti, and painted over by Greenwich Council.

The square is one of the 'Live Sites' with a large screen, used during the Games.

**History of the Royal Arsenal**

Formerly a mysterious white space on the A-Z maps, the Royal Arsenal is gradually being transformed from a secret place into a thriving community with diverse leisure, commercial and residential facilities. The entire site is owned and managed by the [London Development Agency](http://www.lda.gov.uk). Alongside Firepower is the [Greenwich Borough Heritage Centre](http://www.greenwich.gov.uk/Greenwich/LeisureCulture/HistoryAndHeritage/HeritageCentre) (operated by the [London Borough of Greenwich](http://www.greenwich.gov.uk)) telling the history of the area from earliest times and the industrial background of the Royal Arsenal buildings. The new Riverside Pier is situated between the two Guardhouses which are proving very popular with commuters travelling into London - this service is run by Thames Clippers.

Ordnance stores were first set up at the dockyard at Woolwich in the 16th century under a directive of Henry VIII. In 1545 the first recorded building on the present Royal Arsenal site was a mansion called Tower House, built within an area known as The Warren. Gun manufacturing and proofing had taken place within the City of London but a more isolated area was desirable. In 1715-1717 the Royal Brass Foundry was established after an explosion at the private foundry in Moorfields. By that time The Warren was the largest gun repository in the country. Guns were tested at The Warren. This was also the site of a 60-gun stockaded fort, built by Prince Rupert to deter attacks from the Dutch in the mid-17th century. 1716 - The first two permanent companies of The Royal Artillery were formed by Royal Warrant, Tower Place became their headquarters. 1720 - The military academy established.

There have long been artillery museums in Woolwich and in 1820 the main collection was moved to the Rotunda on Woolwich Common. In 1967, the Royal Ordnance Factory closed with the loss of thousands of jobs. 2001 saw the return of much of the collection to the Royal Arsenal, at the start of Firepower, The Royal Artillery Museum development and the Royal Artillery Museum opened occupying buildings once part of the Royal Laboratory Department, which controlled the manufacturer of ammunition, from design, testing and administration. The development of the Royal Artillery Museum in these historic buildings has served as the catalyst to the regeneration of The Royal Arsenal. The History Gallery houses a rich and unique collection of historic artillery, instruments, models, uniforms, books, illustrations and personal accounts.

**Royal Brass Foundry**

A plaque tells us that the building is attributed to Sir John Vanbrugh. It was built following an explosion at Bagley's Foundry (Moorfields) during 1716 which killed seventeen people and guns (for government service) were manufactured here until circa 1870.

**Arsenal: Not Just a Football Team**

The history of the Arsenal Football Club dates from 1886 when a group of workers from the Woolwich firm, Royal Arsenal founded the team. The firm was an armaments factory, hence the nickname the team later acquired: "The Gunners". The original name of the club was taken from one of the workshops of the firm "Dial Square" (1886). On Christmas Day of the same year it was decided, in a meeting at the Royal Oak, to change the name to "Royal Arsenal" (1886). It was also known by other names: "Woolwich Reds" and a mixture of all these: "Woolwich Arsenal" (1891) and finally Arsenal Football Club (1914), known as simply "Arsenal". The name "Woolwich Arsenal" was its first name as a professional team. This name was changed to "Arsenal" when the team moved from its location in Woolwich, in South London, to Highbury.

**Guns for the Gunners**

Most football fans will know that Arsenal Football Club have moved into their new multi million pound Emirates Stadium and to add the finishing touches to his splendid building, the club approached The Royal Artillery Museum to enquire if we had any ‘guns' which could be placed at the entrance. Two suitable guns were identified and despatched to North London and stand proudly in place. The two guns on loan are 32-pounder smooth bore muzzle loading cast iron guns on iron garrison carriages. They have a close link to the club in that they were manufactured in the Royal Gun Factory on the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich in 1859. They were mounted on ships and used as coastal batteries and also siege artillery.

**Sculptures - Assembly**

Near the Thames Clipper Pier are some sculptures by Peter Hurst called 'Assembly'.

**Thames Clippers**

From the Woolwich Arsenal Thames Clipper terminal, a water-bus service operates between eastern and central London carrying around 7,500 passengers daily. It calls at North Greenwich Pier adjacent to the 02 arena (renamed North Greenwich Arena, when a London 2012 Games venue), among many places on the riverside.

**VCs Memorial**

The ruined Royal Garrison Church of St George, Grand Depot Road, Woolwich, London Borough of Greenwich, was destroyed during 1944 by a flying bomb. The site is now maintained as a memorial garden and contains the Victoria Cross Memorial of the Royal Regiment of Artillery. The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in 2011 awarded just over £396,000 for much-needed conservation works. The money will see up to twenty students work alongside newly appointed mural conservators under the Heritage of London Trust Operations (HOLT Op) scheme to preserve the remains of the Royal Garrison Church, currently on the English Heritage At Risk Register. The scheme, expected to take just over two years to complete, will also make the site fully accessible to the public for the first time.

Key to the conservation works will be a new tensile roof structure to be erected above the building to conserve its precious mosaic interior from the elements. Interpretation will also be created at the site for visitors, and a programme of associated educational activities and open days for the local community and school groups is to be developed.

St George’s Garrison Church was built between 1863-67 to serve the Woolwich Garrison community. Designed in the Lombardi style of stock brick construction with red and blue vitrified detailing, it was decorated internally with mosaics, inlaid marble, and monuments to battles and servicemen fallen in armed conflict. It became the Royal Garrison Church in 1928 after a visit by King George V, however was reduced to a roofless shell after being hit by a V2 Flying bomb in 1944. Subsequently partly demolished to leave only the lower sections of the perimeter walls, the remains of the church now enclose a walled garden that has the feeling of a ‘secret' garden.

Today, the church remains consecrated and is used for open air services by Service personnel in the Royal Artillery Barracks, and significant decorative interior remains. Notably, this includes the **Victoria Cross memorial** with a mosaic depicting St George and the Dragon, flanked by marble tablets inscribed with the names of all deceased gunners who won the Victoria Cross from the Crimean War to mid World War II. The HLF grant will ensure the success of the project, and the chapel will be ready in time for the Olympic Games.

**Royal Artillery Barracks**

The [Royal Artillery Barracks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Artillery_Barracks) were built between 1776 and 1802 on a site overlooking [Woolwich Common](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woolwich_Common). The facade is 1000ft long and it housed 4000 men.

Their use by the RA ended with the departure of [16 Regiment, Royal Artillery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/16th_Regiment_Royal_Artillery) in July 2007. Woolwich has extensive links with weaponry. Besides the Royal Artillery Barracks it was the location of the [Royal Arsenal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Arsenal) complex, which was the British Government's principal armaments manufacturing facility for over 200 years, and the [Royal Military Academy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Military_Academy%2C_Woolwich) which trained artillery officers and engineers from 1741 to 1939. There was also a [military hospital](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_hospital) based at Woolwich which closed in the mid 1990s. [Woolwich Common](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woolwich_Common) is still a designated military training area although troops are not often seen nowadays. [Woolwich Dockyard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woolwich_Dockyard) was one of the principal [Royal Dockyards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Dockyard) during the [Tudor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tudor_period) and [Stuart periods](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stuart_period), although it closed in the late 19th century for [Royal Navy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Navy) use as the [Thames](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thames) was by then too difficult to navigate for the naval vessels of the time.

It has been uncertain whether the [Ministry of Defence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ministry_of_Defence_%28United_Kingdom%29) would dispose of the barracks as surplus to requirements. This is now not the case as the barracks has been designated one of the MoD's "core sites". At one time it was rumoured that the only reason that the barracks was not being closed and sold was that the members of the Royal Artillery Mess who owned their officers' mess in the building would not consent to sell, and so the MoD were forced to recognise that they could not dispose of the building in its entirety. Now it is planned that, now the last RA unit has moved out, the [public duties](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_duties) line infantry battalion and [incremental companies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guards_Incremental_Companies) of the [Foot Guards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foot_Guards) will be moved from [Chelsea Barracks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chelsea_Barracks) and [Cavalry Barracks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cavalry_Barracks%2C_Hounslow), which will be closed. Also, the [King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King%27s_Troop%2C_Royal_Horse_Artillery) moved from the St John's Wood barracks to new quarters and stables on the Woolwich site during 2011, bringing a complement of 75 or thereabouts horses, historic gun carriages and artillery pieces used for their displays. They may be seen practicing in Charlton Park.

**Woolwich Artillery Barracks Olympic Shooting & Archery Venue**

The Olympic shooting events were to be held at Woolwich Common and the eye-catching venue is now demolished. It hosted shooting in the main Games and archery in the Paralympics. There was a catch net is to catch most of the stray shot and clay pigeons, and beyond that during shoots there was an exclusion zone and the energy of the shot is by then much reduced as it falls. The venue encompassed Ha Ha Road, the sunken lane to keep cattle out of the military area when the area was common land.

**Woolwich Common and Royal Military Academy**

The route crosses Woolwich Common, an area of military land. Once used extensively by the Royal Artillery as a training area, it is close to the former gun foundries in the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich. It includes a reservoir dug out by convicts about 1850. In the 18th and 19th centuries the Army would assemble and camp here before collecting weapons from the armoury and embarking on ships on the Thames. There was a sports stadium on the Common.

On the hill opposite, Shooters Hill, is The Royal Military Academy (RMA) at [Woolwich](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woolwich), in south-east [London](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London), was a [British Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Army) [military academy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_academy) for the training of [commissioned officers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commissioned_officer) of the [Royal Artillery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Artillery) and [Royal Engineers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Engineers). The Royal Military Academy Woolwich was founded in 1741: it was intended to provide an education and produce "good officers of [Artillery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artillery) and perfect [Engineers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_engineer)". They were also taught French and Latin and writing, fencing and drawing. RMA Woolwich was commonly known as "The Shop" because its first building was a converted workshop of the Woolwich Arsenal.

Woolwich Common is an area of military land. It is still possible to see [soldiers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soldier) from the nearby [Royal Artillery Barracks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Artillery_Barracks) training there occasionally. Formerly, the common was used extensively by the [Royal Artillery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Artillery) as a training area, as the common is also close to the former gun foundries in the [Royal Arsenal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Arsenal), Woolwich. The attractive [Rotunda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rotunda_%28Woolwich%29) building on Green Hill to the north used to hold many artillery pieces now displayed at [Firepower](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Firepower_-_The_Royal_Artillery_Museum) in Woolwich. The octagonal building, designed by [John Nash](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Nash_%28architect%29), began life as a display space in [St. James's Park](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._James%27s_Park) during the peace celebrations there in 1814 and was re-erected in Woolwich between 1819 and 1822.

The water tower further down Shooter's Hill was originally built in the 1890s to designs by Thomas Aldwinckle to supply water to the 'Brook Fever hospital', which was demolished in the 1990s, to be replaced by a housing development. The tower consists of a plain brick pillar ornamented simply with bands of terracotta tiles and windows like arrowslits. It is not listed, but it has just been cleaned, repointed and underpinned for conversion into a family home. It is the centrepiece of the housing estate.

The Royal Herbert Hospital was designed by a nephew of Florence Nightingale and had long corridors and ward partitions. It is now residential with the gardens as part of the Green Chain.

**Oxleas Woods, Castle Wood and Jack Wood**

A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the ancient Oxleas woods cover 77 hectares and are at least 8,000 years old, with woods of oak, silver birch, hornbeam and coppice hazel. [Oxleas Wood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oxleas_Wood) remains a public open space close to the top of Shooters Hill; there is also a golf-course and one of the last remaining areas of farmland in inner London, [Woodlands Farm](http://www.thewoodlandsfarmtrust.org/) (now an educational charity).

**Severndroog Castle**

Other local landmarks include [Severndroog Castle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Severndroog_Castle), a [folly](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folly) designed by the architect [Richard Jupp](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Jupp) in 1784 and built to commemorate Commodore Sir [William James](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_James_%28naval_commander%29), who on 2 April 1755 attacked and destroyed a [pirate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pirate) fortress at [Suvarnadurg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suvarnadurg) along the western coast of [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India), between [Mumbai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mumbai) and [Goa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goa). James died in 1783 and the castle was built as a memorial to him by his widow, Lady James of [Eltham](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eltham%2C_London). The [Gothic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gothic_architecture)-style castle is 63 feet (19 m) high and triangular in section, with a hexagonal turret at each corner. From its elevated position, it offers views across London, with features in seven different counties visible on a clear day.

In 1988, the local council could no longer afford the building's upkeep and it was boarded up. In 2002, a community group, the Severndroog Castle Building Preservation Trust, was established. In 2004, it featured in the [BBC TV](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BBC_Television) series [Restoration](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Restoration_%28TV_series%29) (presented by [Griff Rhys Jones](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Griff_Rhys_Jones), [Ptolemy Dean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ptolemy_Dean) and [Marianne Suhr](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marianne_Suhr), producer-director Paul Coueslant) - with the aim of gaining support for a programme of work to restore the building and open it to the public.

From the 20s until the mid-80s the tower and its beautiful woods was a favourite destination for local families. A tearoom on the ground floor would serve drinks and cakes or families would picnic in the grounds. For a treat people would pay the tower keeper and climb to the top to view some of the most breathtaking views of London. You can see seven counties on a clear day, as far afield as Bedfordshire! In 1986, the GLC was abolished and Severndroog passed to Greenwich Council who closed it. Since then it has fallen into disrepair.

The [Green Chain Walk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_Chain_Walk) (long distance path) leads through Eltham Common and Castle Wood and past this castle from Shooter's Hill towards Eltham. At Oxleas Meadows near the cafe, a Rapier missile battery will be operating for the Games as part of the security plans. It was there on the Games 100 marshals walk in May under test.

**Water Tower - Shooters Hill.**

The distinctive [Victorian Gothic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gothic_Revival_architecture) water tower at the top of Shooter's Hill is a [landmark](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landmark) that can be seen from far around. Within its walls is a tank 75x25ft. Water is pumped from chalk wells in Orpington and to the reservoir on Academy Road and then falls by gravity to a pumping station on Well Hall Road.

**Shooters Hill**

Shooter's Hill Road stretches eastwards from the heath at Blackheath up and over the hill, initially as part of the [A2 road](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A2_road_%28Great_Britain%29) and then the A207. The road follows the route of [Watling Street](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Watling_Street), a [Roman Road](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Road) linking London with Roman settlements in north [Kent](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kent). This was used as a route for horse-drawn mail-coaches linking London with [Dover](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dover).

Eltham Common was the site of Shooter's Hill police station (now closed). Eltham was allegedly the only town in England with two fully functional police stations (the other in Well Hall Road), having been placed there due to the lawlessness associated with that area.

It reputedly takes its name from the practice of [archery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archery) there during the [Middle Ages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_Ages), although the name is also commonly linked to its reputation as a haunt for [highwaymen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Highwayman) and was infamous for its gibbets of the executed ones as referred to in 1661 in Samuel Pepys diary. The wider area of woodland stretched from Woolwich to Charlton and was known as 'Hanging Wood'. The name is also linked to the Second World War, where it was the site of an array of anti-aircraft guns which protected London.

Celia Fiennes, who in 1697 proceeded out of London along the Dover Road, wrote in her diary of stopping at "Shuttershill, on top of which hill you see a vast prospect ...some lands clothed with trees, others with grass and flowers, gardens, orchards, with all sorts of herbage and tillage, with severall little towns all by the river, Erith, Leigh, Woolwich etc., quite up to London, Greenwich, Deptford, Black Wall, the Thames twisting and turning it self up and down bearing severall vessells and men of warre on it".

As the name also implies, the district is centred upon a hill - one of the [highest points in London](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_highest_points_in_London) 129 metres (423 ft), offering good views over the River [Thames](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thames) to the north, with central London clearly visible to the west.

## **Literary associations for Shooters Hill include:** [**Byron**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byron)**'s** [**Don Juan**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don_Juan) **is waylaid while romantically musing on Shooter's Hill when he first arrives in London (Canto XI).** [**Charles Dickens**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Dickens) **mentions carriages "lumbering" up Shooter's Hill in** [**A Tale of Two Cities**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Tale_of_Two_Cities)**, and refers to a** [**public house**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_house) **there in** [**The Pickwick Papers**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Pickwick_Papers)**. The name Shooter's Hill is also mentioned in** [**Bram Stoker**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bram_Stoker)**'s** [**Dracula**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dracula) **although referring to the Hampstead area, some distance away, and also in** [**H.G. Wells**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H.G._Wells)**'** [**The War of the Worlds**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_War_of_the_Worlds_%28novel%29) **and by** [**Thomas Carlyle**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Carlyle)**. On 11 April 1661, diarist** [**Samuel Pepys**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Pepys) **mentions passing under "the man that hangs upon Shooters Hill" (probably a** [**highwayman**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Highwayman) **hanged and left to rot as a warning to other criminals - at '**[**Gibbet**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gibbet) **Field', now part of the local golf-course). In the** [**graphic novel**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graphic_novel)[**V for Vendetta**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V_for_Vendetta) **by** [**Alan Moore**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan_Moore) **and** [**David Lloyd**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Lloyd_%28comic_artist%29)**, the character Evey Hammond describes her childhood, spent on Shooter's Hill.**

In 1749, 'The Bull' [public house](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_house) opened just west of the summit of the hill, and was used as a refreshment stop by the [coaches](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coach_%28carriage%29), although not by the [Royal Mail](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Mail), which had an interchange of mail bags at the Post Office by the Red Lion on the London side of the hill.

**Eaglesfield Park**

This park is on the summit of Shooters Hill, the highest natural point in Greenwich at nearly 130 metres. Divided in two by Eaglesfield Road, the eastern side is a simple, pleasant grassed area offering views over Kent and Essex, including the Queen Elizabeth Bridge at Dartford. The western side has a planted landscaped area with a pond. On a windy day, this is an excellent place to fly a kite. Sports and play areas: Children's playground for all ages. Eaglesfield Park is a short walk to Shrewsbury Park and is part of the Green Chain Walk.

**Shrewsbury Park**

Formerly part of the Estate of the Earls of Shrewsbury, and adjacent to Shrewsbury House, this large open space has distant views over London, Kent and Essex, as well as some wooded areas. While not an official nature reserve, parts of the park are designated conservation areas. Dot Hill, situated to the north of the Shrewsbury Park, is a former allotment site that has now reverted to grassland and scrub. It is what is known as 'emergent woodland'. There are all sorts of shrub species growing here that attract a variety of birds. A small stream runs at the eastern end, lined with Great Hairy Willow Herb. Sports and play areas: There is a football field in the park. Shrewsbury Park is also part of the Green Chain Walk.

**Plumstead Commons**

The name is from the many past orchards on land owned by the Lesnes Abbey monks, who lost their land in the sackings. In 1736 there were riots against military use and enclosures and the local authority bought the land to preserve it as an open space.