

PARKS, PILGRIMAGES AND PENTECOST

It has taken 29 years of Unlock walks to get to the borough of Brent, and this walk is almost entirely within it. We should have come long ago, because a borough that contains one or two of the poorest wards in England demonstrates only too well the kind of communities on which Unlock's work is focussed.

Brent, however, is blessed with a surprising number of lovely parks. One, Queen's Park, was re-named in honour of Queen Victoria's golden jubilee, so it is a good place to visit in our present Queen's diamond jubilee year. It is quite small in London park terms, but it is worth remembering that in the 19th century Christian campaigners fought for open spaces as London grew. They took the fourth commandment, which is about a day of rest, very seriously. They believed free access to parks was vital for a population living in over-crowded districts, and working in grim conditions six days a week.

To stumble across a place of pilgrimage was a great surprise to us. We had heard of many exotic places called "Our Lady of....", but Willesden was not among them! But there it is, a Roman Catholic shrine with a black Virgin and a well, claimed to have healing waters. In the 14th and 15th centuries it was wildly popular, with many ribald pilgrims descending on what was a little village and causing trouble for the inhabitants. It must have been a bit like living today next to a football ground on a local derby match day. A sober Scottish friar preached against such goings on, but that didn't stop a famous person like Sir Thomas More going there. However, in the Reformation the image of the Virgin was destroyed. It had been in what is now the ancient parish church next door (Church of England), but in the 19th century a Roman Catholic parish priest revived the old tradition with a new image of a black Virgin. It is to be seen now in the much more modern Catholic church. It is now a 21st century place of pilgrimage, no longer in a village, but part of inner London. - Our Lady of Willesden.

On the day of Pentecost people of many nationalities were amazed to hear the followers of Jesus speaking in their own languages. The first immigrants to arrive in Willesden were Irish, but since then an extraordinary variety of different people have settled there. It is revealed in the number of languages in which people can worship in Willesden churches "each in their own tongue": French, Brazilian (Portuguese), Polish, Rumanian, to quote those we have seen advertised on church notice-boards. Pentecost is realised over and over again, as those engaged in the faithful labour of Bible translation bear witness. The King James Bible we celebrated last year is now one of thousands of translations so that people can read it "each in their own tongue" all over the world.

Christians who had a vision to create parks in London, raucous mediaeval pilgrims now followed by present day more reflective ones, the never ceasing work of the Spirit who came at Pentecost, - all matters to ponder during a walk in the Willesden part of Brent.

Peter Hall

Date of next year's walk is
April 20th 2013



Wood sculptures in Queens Park



F ELIM PENTECOSTAL
French/English
Church on the High Rd



D OUR LADY OF WILLESDEN
Roman Catholic



C CITY MISSION
Pentecostal



E NEW TESTAMENT
CHURCH OF GOD



B ST MARTINS
Anglican



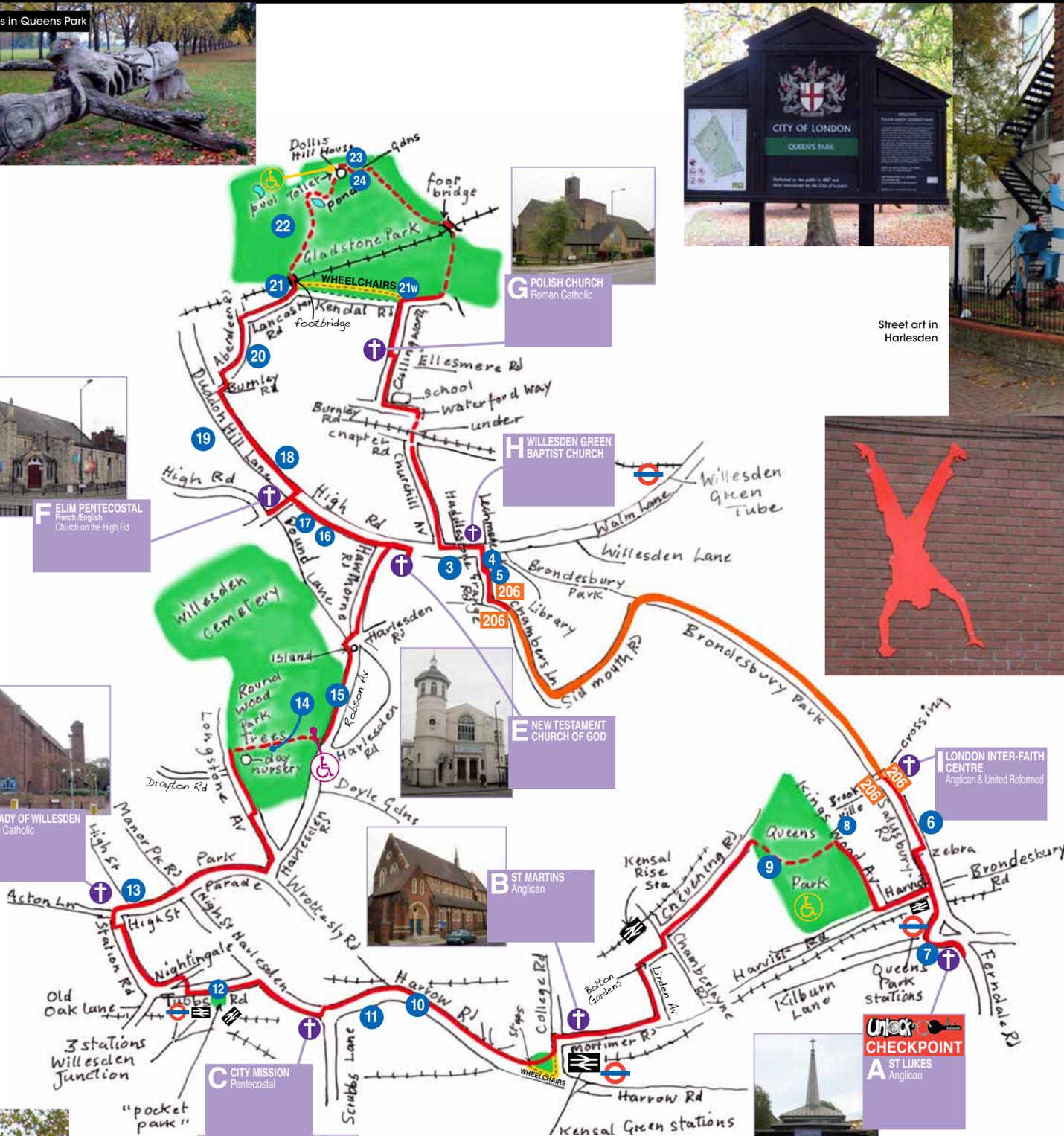
G POLISH CHURCH
Roman Catholic



Street art in Harlesden



On the Willesden Library wall



Gladstone Park



Shops in Willesden Green



Dudding Hill Railway Junction



HOW TO GET THERE BY TUBE

Very easy access by tube.
Bakerloo Line to Queen's Park direct from Waterloo, Charing Cross, and Marylebone, and from Euston and Kings Cross via Oxford Circus.
 Also
Jubilee Line to Willesden Green direct from London Bridge and Waterloo.
 * None of the Tube stations on or near the route have lifts.

BY RAIL
 Silverlink services connect with Willesden Junction.

BY BUS
No. 6 to Queen's Park stations, from Aldwych and Trafalgar Square.
No. 18 to Harrow Rd., at Kensal Green, from Euston.
No. 36 to Queen's Park Stations, from New Cross Gate, Victoria and Paddington.
No. 52 to Kensal Rise Station, from Victoria.

IMPORTANT NOTE
Using the bus: walkers have often felt that taking a bus is somehow "cheating", although in 2011, more people did follow the guidance about the bus section of the walk. This year there are 9 host churches, more than usual, and they all take time. Please use the **206** bus between Chambers Lane and Brookville Av., level with the Interfaith Centre on Salusbury Rd. Every 15 minutes, stop names displayed.

WHEELCHAIR USERS
 Wheelchair users: only two diversions, one at the top of the map just inside the hedge in Gladstone Park, as the route crossing the park has steps over the railway. The other is a very short detour at the bottom of the map, on Harrow Rd. Note however that the tube lines are all old, and without lifts.

LENGTH OF ROUTE
 Approx 7 1/2 miles (bus route not included)

DON'T FORGET

- The route can be walked in either direction.
- You can begin anywhere on the route.
- Start at any time after 9am at any church checkpoint, but with time to get back again by 5pm.
- Get your map stamped at each checkpoint.
- Do the quiz.
- Take time to learn about the churches you visit and about Unlock.

CHURCH CHECKPOINT
WALK ROUTE
WALKERS BUS 206 BUS NUMBER
ROUTE FOR WHEELCHAIR USERS
DISABLED ACCESS TOILET
TUBE STOP
RAILWAY/STATION
QUESTION

Unlock Glasgow also run an annual walk, usually in the summer. Contact the Unlock Office, if you'd like to try an Unlock walk in completely different location.

Whilst every care has been taken in the design and compilation of this map & notes, Unlock cannot accept any liability arising from any inaccuracy within any part of this document or for any injury sustained whilst doing the walk.

Acknowledgements:
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