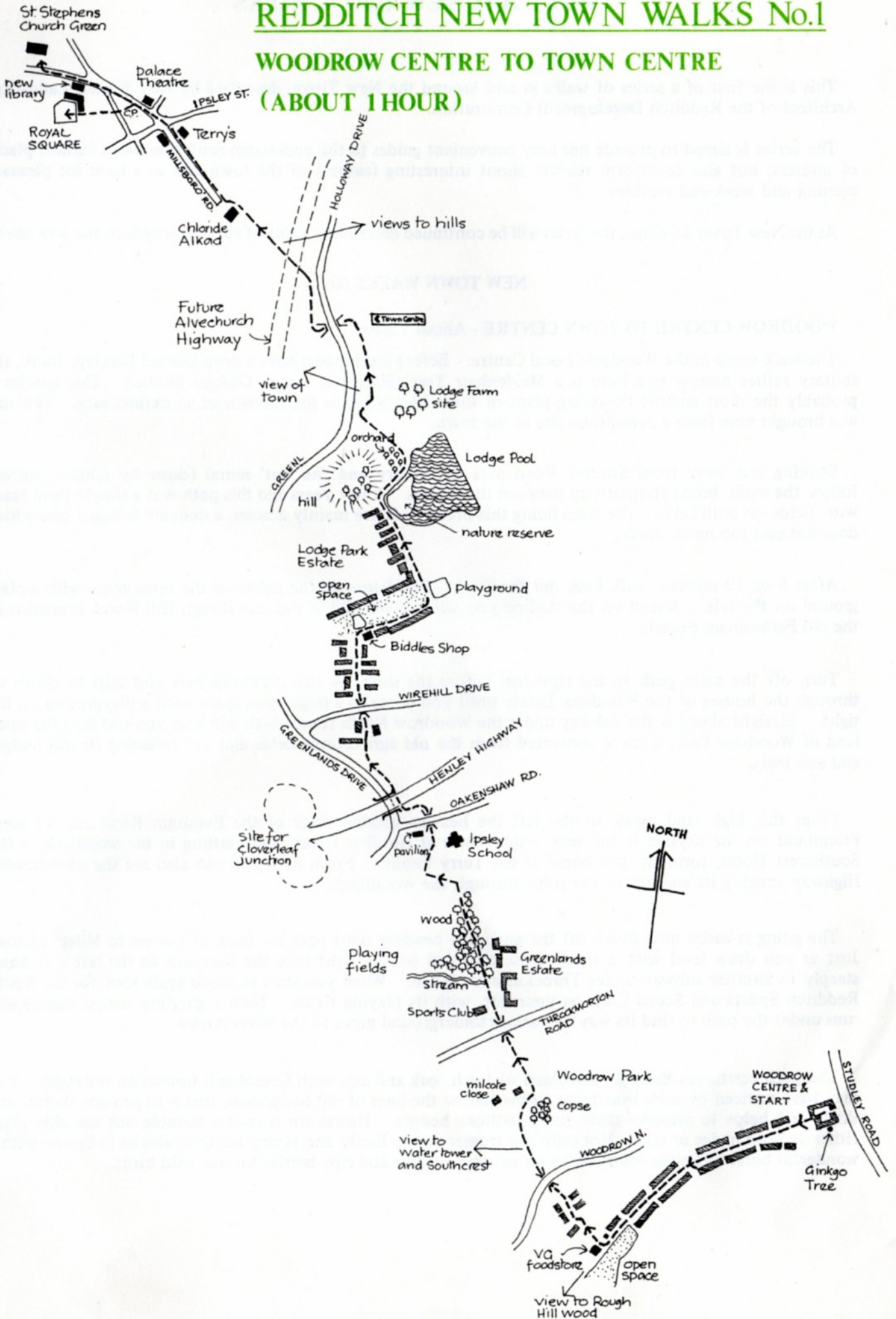


REDDITCH NEW TOWN WALKS No.1

WOODROW CENTRE TO TOWN CENTRE

(ABOUT 1 HOUR)



REDDITCH NEW TOWN WALKS

This is the first of a series of walks in and around the New Town, described by Roy Winter, Landscape Architect of the Redditch Development Corporation.

The series is aimed to provide not only convenient guides to the pedestrian routes between various places of interest, but also to inform readers about interesting features of the town and as a basis for pleasant evening and week-end rambles.

As the New Town develops, the series will be continued describing walks of varying length in the new areas.

NEW TOWN WALKS No. 1

WOODROW CENTRE TO TOWN CENTRE - About 1 hour

The walk starts at the Woodrow Local Centre. Before leaving just have a peep behind Barclays Bank, the solitary rather narrow tree here is a Maidenhair Tree (Botanical name, *Ginkgo biloba*). This species is probably the most ancient flowering plant of these islands and is the survivor of an extinct race. This one was brought here from a demolition site in the town.

Striking out away from Studley Road past the library and the 'cat' mural (done by schoolchildren) follow the main, broad footpath up between the houses. A few years ago this path was a simple farm track with fields on both sides. The trees lining this broad walk are mainly acacias, a delicate foliated tree which does not cast too much shade.

After 5 or 10 minutes walk look out for the VG Foodstore on the right and the open space with a playground on the left. Ahead on the skyline you will see Wirehill Wood and Rough Hill Wood, remnants of the old Feckenham Forest.

Turn off the main path to the right just before the shop, by the telephone box and start to climb up through the houses of the Woodrow Estate until you come to a large open space with a playground on the right. Straight ahead is the subway under the Woodrow North road which will lead you out into the open land of Woodrow Park, a space converted from the old agricultural fields and yet retaining its old hedges and oak trees.

From this high land away to the left the heavily-wooded ridge of the Evesham Road can be seen. Prominent on the skyline is the new water tower at Headless Cross, and nestling in the woodland is the Southcrest Hotel, formerly the home of the Terry family. From here you can also see the new Henley Highway snaking its way up to the ridge through the woodland.

The going is easier now down off the park and bending right past the back of houses in Milcote Close. Just as you draw level with a small copse and dell on the right take the footpath to the left and down steeply to another subway under Throckmorton Road. When you start to climb again look for the South Redditch Sports and Social Club on your left, with its playing fields. Now a gurgling stream comes and runs under the path to find its way by various underground pipes to the River Arrow.

The path continues through woodland of larch, oak and ash, with Greenlands houses on the right. You may have noticed by now that many paths follow the lines of old hedgerows, this is to provide shelter and shade and helps to preserve these fine hawthorn hedges. Hawthorn is such a humble but valuable plant either as bush hedge or tree. Not only is it tremendously hardy and strong but provides us in Spring with a wonderful burst of flower followed by its autumn colours and ripe berries for our wild birds.



The Water Tower - Headless Cross

The water tower will now be straight ahead and serves as a convenient landmark on your journey. Follow the path to the right along the chain link fence and playing fields and past Ipsley Primary School. If you wonder about the houses clustered up on the hill to the right, they are part of the Greenlands Estate.

Before encountering another subway under Oakenshaw Road the building on the left is the L.P.R.A. pavilion - a reclaimed building brought in pieces and re-erected on the site.

Once on the far side of the subway turn left and go alongside the road and under the huge concrete bridge which carries Henley Highway overhead. Although these structures seem pretty inhuman, when I was there I noticed that many sparrows and starlings were nest-making in the crevices at the top of the wall. No doubt they like the shelter and are not in the least bothered by the noise!

The path climbs steeply, so when half-way up stop for a while and observe the scene on your left. Again the water tower is prominent on the skyline and the broad sweep of Henley Highway curves up through the woods.

You may wonder what all the waste land down in the bottom is for; this is the site of a massive new cloverleaf junction between Henley Highway and the new Alvechurch Highway which will soon be sweeping down from the north. The whole of this land - and it is a huge area - may be afforested after completion of the road.

Now at the top of the rise where the white houses of Lodge Park Estate mingle with the giant oak trees of long ago you can start to descend again to the subway under Wirehill Drive. These subways are heavily planted to give protection and relief to the concrete structures.

Straight on past one of the little toddlers' play areas you arrive at the 'corner shop', in this case, Biddles. Before turning right past the shop, just linger awhile overlooking the sunken garden with its roses, currant bushes, forsythia and daffodils. This garden was once a derelict marl pit, now drained and transformed into a sheltered spot.

Now follow the old hedgerow past the shop to the right, the open space is again part of the old field pattern, although alas, most of the magnificent stately elm trees which once lined its edges have perished with elm disease. At the end of this walk, by the playground, follow the yellow and white signs to Lodge Pool and Town Centre, and before you opens up the view of Lodge Pool itself.

This pool, once perhaps an ornamental lake on the Earl of Plymouth's estate and then a war-time reservoir is now partially restored to its former glory, full of carp, tench, perch, roach and pike sometimes up to 17 lbs., and most popular with anglers.

Skirt the edge of the pool, lined with pussy willow and fringed with reed beds. On the other side of the water channel you will be able to see a nature reserve island - plenty of grebe, coots, duck and moorhen here.

Now turn right at the yellow sign 'Town Centre'.



The small hill on your left is man-made to screen the road and is planted mainly with sweet-smelling balsam poplars. At the far end of the path as you turn left is the remains of an old plum orchard and now planted with an edge of roses. The path then turns right to follow the road, with the water tower right behind you in the distance.

On the right is the hillside site of the old Lodge Farm, alas demolished many years ago but still marked with a group of fine sycamore trees and lime trees. A notice proclaims this now as a site for 'beautiful houses'.

The old town lies on the left, a jumble of houses and factories with the spire of St. Stephen's Church rising above it. In the foreground just on the other side of Holloway Drive is soon to be seen the new Alvechurch Highway, hopefully to be softened by the shrubberies of elder, rose, and dogwood which line the path.

The path then dives under Holloway Drive (sign to Town Centre) and bears away left towards the town. One of the few views of the distant hills behind Mappleborough Green is from here. The path then deteriorates into an old surface between two derelict wire fences to the bottom of Millsborough Road, with Chloride Alkad Ltd. on the left.

Now you are back in the old town to walk up Millsborough Road where, at its junction with Ipsley Street, is the factory of Herbert Terry and Sons, a long-established firm making springs and allied products. The factory buildings on the right are well disguised by planting which has been allowed to develop unhindered. Particularly attractive are the strikingly coloured maple trees and shrubs. Someone had some forethought here.

The route to the Town Centre is then across the road into Alcester Street, past the Palace Theatre and either up to Church Green or through the subway on the left to the new Market and Royal Square.

Buses leave from Church Green back to Woodrow at regular intervals.

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