



LAND OF THE FANNS

Teacher Briefing

Belhus Park / Belhus Chase

From, Land of the Fanns Online Resource

Bedfords Park

Romford Road,
Aveley,
South Ockendon
RM15 4PD

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/woods/belhus-chase/>

History

- Belhus Chase, Belhus Country Park and Little Belhus were all once parts of the historic Belhus Park estate.
- From the 17th century it was one of the largest estates in Essex.
- In the mid C17 Belhus was surrounded by elaborate enclosed formal gardens which included a 'wilderness' area for walking amongst trees and shrubs and a rock garden.
- In the 18th century, Belhus Park was owned by Thomas Bartett-Lennard (Lord Dacre).
- Lord Dacre commissioned famous landscape designer Lancelot 'Capability' Brown to update his park and gardens.
- Lord Dacre didn't have much money, but Capability Brown managed to create a fashionable modern park for him, with a natural style that looked like nature but only better, with lots of open grassland and clumps of trees.
- Landscape gardener Richard Woods also worked at Belhus in the 18th century.
- The landscape they created is depicted on an old map of Essex by Chapman and Andre in 1777.
- During the Second World War Belhus was damaged by bombing and by being occupied by military forces.
- The house was demolished in 1957.

What you might see

- The 'stench pipe'. It was a vent from Belhus House's sewerage system and was disguised to look like an attractive old chimney as an 'eyecatcher' to catch people's eyes as they moved through the park. This is on the northern edge of the park, at the edge of the Golf Course and the Long Pond.
- An 18th century brick-lined well used to store ice, in the woodland to the north-east corner of the park on the far side of the M25.
- Remains of the Long Pond, designed by Richard Woods in the 18th century.

Historic Documents

Maps:

- Belhus Park in 1619 (D/DL M14 and P1) - Essex Record Office <https://www.essexrecordoffice.co.uk>
- J Chapman and P Andre, A map of the county of Essex from an actual survey ..., 1777 - Essex Record Office <https://www.essexrecordoffice.co.uk>
- Ordnance Survey maps - <https://maps.nls.uk/os/>

Archival items:

- Engraving of the gardens in the mid C17 (D/DL T1/779A) - Essex Record Office <https://www.essexrecordoffice.co.uk>
- Bird's-eye view of Belhus in the late C17/early C18 century - Thurrock Museum <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/thurrock-museum/about-museum>
- Engraving by W Wallis from drawing by J P Neale, 1819 - Thurrock Museum <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/thurrock-museum/about-museum>
- Engraving by J C Armytage from drawing by W Bartlett, 1835 - Thurrock Museum <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/thurrock-museum/about-museum>