



LAND OF THE FANNS

Teacher Briefing

Parklands Open Space

From, Land of the Fanns Online Resource

Parklands Open Space

Upminster,

RM14 2ET

www.thameschase.org.uk/visitor-centres/rainham-hornchurch/parklands-open-space

Summary

- 11.44 acres (4.63 Hectares)
- Surviving 18th century landscape
- Large lake with historic bridge, surrounded by woodland.

History

- Parklands Open Space was originally part of Gaynes (or Engaynes) Manor.
- The origin of the Gaynes Estate dates back to Roman Britain and in its hey-day in the Middle Ages, comprised about 1500 acres covering most of the south half of Upminster.
- Gaynes Manor was also known as Engaynes, based on the name of Vitalis (Viel) D'Engayne who owned the estate from 1218. It remained in the Engayne, family until the last one died in 1367.
- The manor was owned by lots of people, until it was bought by James Esdaile in the 18th century.
- The Esdailes built a new manor house, since demolished.
- They also laid out a 100-acre park. Clumps of trees were planted. Shrubbery walks of interesting bushes alongside paths were created.
- A stream was dammed to create a lake, with a bridge built at its east end. The bridge is an important feature, Listed at Grade II.
- In the 19th century parts of the estate were sold off to different people. In 1929 the bit that remained was sold for building development, but the area around the lake survived as open space.
- Over time the 18th century bridge fell into disrepair - some of the ornamental bits were removed, and it was overgrown with weeds. Fortunately, local volunteers were able to restore it.

Wildlife & Insects

- The lake is an important feeding site for bats, with large numbers of pipistrelles and smaller numbers of noctules and Daubenton's bats.
- Breeding birds in the woodland include goldcrest.
- A variety of dragonflies and common waterfowl live around the lake.
- Kingfishers are seen frequently.
- Fish

Landscape & Habitat

- Woodland
- Lake

Plants & Trees

- Tall herbs
- Willow (*Salix*) scrub
- **Wet marginal vegetation including:**
 - great willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*)
 - water forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpioides*)
 - gypsywort (*Lycopus europaeus*)
 - yellow iris (*Iris pseudacorus*)
 - great reedmace (*Typha latifolia*)
 - brooklime (*Veronica beccabunga*)
 - great pond-sedge (*Carex riparia*)
 - reed sweet-grass (*Glyceria maxima*)

Trees such as :

- Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)
- Sparse oak (*Quercus* sp.)

- English elm (*Ulmus procera*)
- Holly (*Ilex aquilifolia*)
- White, weeping and grey willows (*Salix alba*, *S. x sepulchralis* and *S. cinerea*)
- Hybrid black and Lombardy poplars (*Populus x canadensis* and *P. nigra ssp.italica*)
- Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*)
- Horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*)
- Ivy (*Hedera helix*)
- Wood false-brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*).

What you might see

- Some old trees survive amongst the new housing.
- Ornamental lake
- 18th century Parklands Bridge

Reading

- <http://www.friendsofparklands.org.uk>