

Preservation Society Theydon Bois & Epping Forest Walks
TB&DRPS Walk 01: - 'Tracks – Past and Present'

Route (see Map below):

Along Coppice Row to Forest Drive.
Along Forest Drive to its end.
Along footpath, a few yards, to kissing gate on right.
Cross field diagonally to gap in far left hedge line.
Cross the next field diagonally to the left to kissing gate at bottom of hill.
Having gone through gate, follow fence line up to the top of the hill.
Turn left and follow fence line along top of the ridge.
When end is in sight, angle left towards the kissing gate at corner of golf driving range.
Go through kissing gate and follow path straight ahead and then bear right on concrete path.
Cross motorway via stiles and bridge.
Go straight ahead to gap between houses in Ivy Chimneys.
Turn left and follow pavement (in single file) to the pub called "The Greyhound"..
Cross road to stile between houses opposite and follow footpath to Bell Common.
Turn left and follow pavement to Ivy Chimneys Road.
Cross over, follow path over motorway and cross Theydon Road into the forest.
Bear left over motorway and then cross road into forest.
After about 200 yards a gravel ride will open to your left.
Follow this until there is a junction, it's called the 'four wantz'.
Take the left hand fork, it goes down and then up, till you see the golf course on your left.
Continue a little further to a clear crossing of paths.
Turn left alongside the garden of the house at the top of Piercing Hill.
Follow the old Piercing Hill Road back to civilization.

Points to note along the way:

From village hall to the shops refer to earlier names – Theydon Green, Theydon Gate (before advent of the railway); draw attention to the avenue of trees, the village sign (see the turnpike gate and the outline of the village cattle branding iron) and The Bull and explain their historical significance.

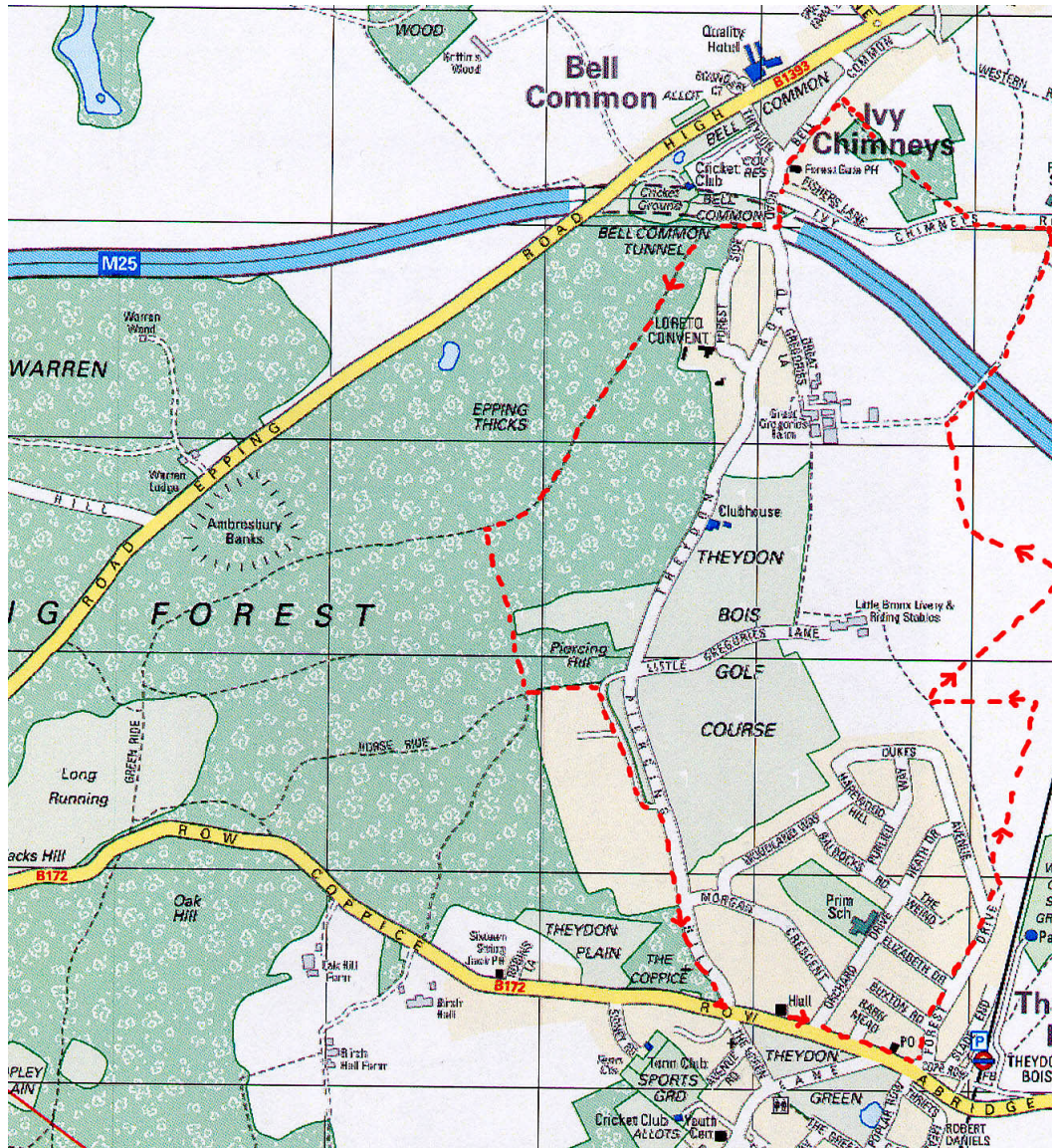
At the top of the hill indicate the line of the Roman Road and how it parallels the M11; to the east point out Hill Hall, the tower of Theydon Garnon church (now with a recently restored peal of bells); to southwest the ex Natwest tower and Canary Wharf on the horizon.

On entering the forest, at the point before you turn left on the Green Ride, point out the most expensive cricket field in Essex (built on top of the M25) and tell how the windmill at Bell Common (pulled down in 1869) was one of the first trig points to be used in making the original Ordnance Survey map in 1799 – when we expected to be invaded by the French!

While on the Green Ride, explain that this was constructed by the Victorians and follows the spine of the forest all the way to Chingford.

When you reach the top of Piercing Hill explain the significance of the Purlieu Hedge – last perambulated in 17 C – as boundary of the royal hunting forest. ('Forest' is a Norman-French word that meant not just trees but what was later called 'waste', which had some trees and was generally uncultivated but could be used for harvesting wood, grazing cattle and 'pannage' for pigs, i.e. eating beech nuts). Mention that in Chapman and Andre's map of 1779 the top of Piercing Hill was called 'Priors Horne Corner' because the road to Epping went via Little Gregories and Great Gregories. Perhaps it was called Piercing Hill because it pierced the forest and went straight on instead of taking a dogleg via the Gregories? The new, straight Piercing Hill road was only built in the 1950's.

TB&DRPS Walk 01 Route Map: -



TB&DRPS Walk 01: - 'Tracks – Past and Present'

Basic Map with Route marked in Red. For greater detail see the Ordnance Survey Maps.