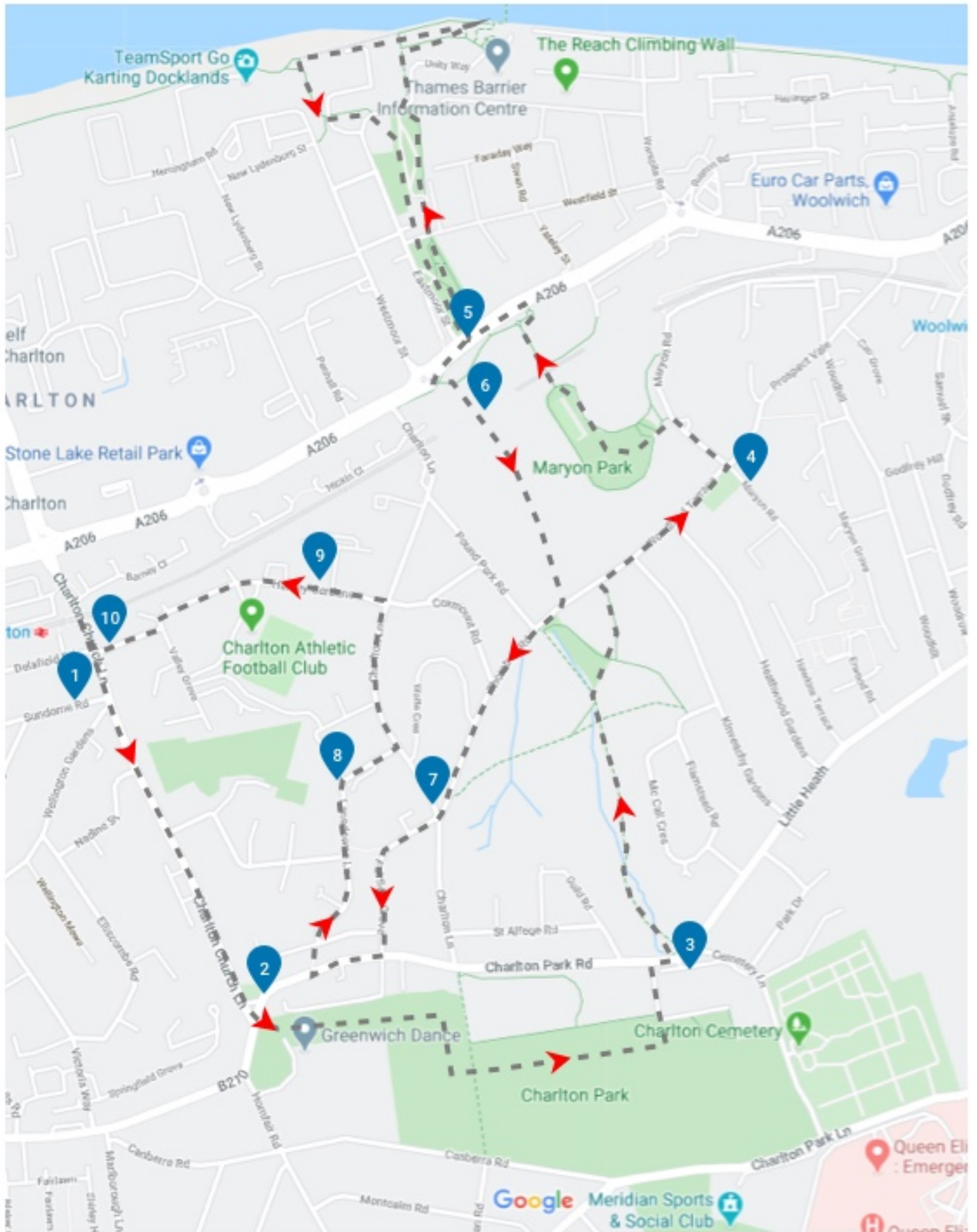


Secret Charlton

Route distance: 4.5 miles | Walk time 2 hours



Secret Charlton

This walk around Charlton will show you some unique places and fascinating facts.



Step 1: We begin the walk at Charlton Train Station. Head up Charlton Church Lane where you will pass house number 67. This was the home of the Italian writer Aron Hector Schmitz, better known by his alias 'Italo Svevo'. During his lifetime he wrote a number of novels, the first of which was called 'A Life', and became friends with the Irish author, James Joyce.

Carry on to the top of the road where you will come to St Luke's Church on your left. A church dedicated to St Luke existed on the site around 1077. It was then rebuilt in 1630. Among the people buried at the church are two whose deaths were political assassinations. One was the British Prime Minister Spencer Perceval.

In front of the church, you will see a drinking fountain which was erected in 1902 and a War Memorial which was erected in 1920. There is also

a horse trough which was erected by Sir Spencer Maryon Wilson to commemorate the Coronation of King Edward VII in 1902.

Step 2: From here cross directly over the road where you will see a beautiful but slightly derelict, red-brick, Grade I listed building. This building is known as the Summer House and is attributed to the architect Inigo Jones. Work has started to restore it to its former glory.

Take the steps leading up to the Summer House and continue past it until you see a Mulberry Tree surrounded by a metal fence. This tree is the oldest of its species (*Morus nigra*) in the country, thought to have been planted in 1608 at the order of James I.

On the right, you will see one of the finest examples of Jacobean architecture in the country, Charlton House. Built between 1607-12 by Sir Adam Newton. Originally it was the residence of a nobleman associated with the Stuart royal family. From 1767 it was owned by the Maryon Wilson family who gave it to Greenwich Council in 1925. It served as a wartime hospital, then a museum and library, and is now a community centre.

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Keeping the park wall on your left-hand side walkthrough Charlton park, until you come to the Old Cottage Coffee Shop. Just past the coffee shop turn right towards the skate park and then turn left. Continue down the path passing the outdoor table tennis on your right. Continue past the children's play area and carry on to the car park. Turn left through the car park and exit the park, where you come out onto Charlton Road.

Step 3: On Charlton Road turn right, cross the road and follow the path until you will see a signpost for Maryon Wilson Park. Maryon Wilson Park is on a hilly site. It was created out of ancient woodland known as Hanging Wood, which was once part of the estate of the Manor of Charlton belonging to the Maryon-Wilson Family.

Walk down the main path directly in front of you, at the fork in the path keep to the left, continue over a small bridge with a wooden fence on either side. Continue along this way until you come to a cross-section with animal enclosures to your right. These include deer, horses, goats and various ducks and geese. Follow the yellow arrow to continue straight ahead and keep walking until you reach the exit for the park which takes you onto Thorntree Road.

Step 4: Cross Thorntree Road and turn right, walking up the hill. Ignore the first sign towards Gilbert's Pit and carry on to the top of the hill. Here you will see a sign pointing left towards the Green Chain Walk. This dirt track takes you to the second Maryon Park which is wonderfully hidden and hardly known outside the local area. The park was also the location of the 1960's cult classic film 'Blow-Up'. Continue along the small track through the enclosed field until you come to a metal gate and some steep steps leading down through the park. At the intersection follow the yellow arrow and go right. Follow the path down some more steps until you come out onto the main lawn of the park area. This time ignore the yellow arrow and continue to go right. Follow the path until you see the sign for the public toilets.

Behind the sign and diagonally across from the public toilets you will see a path leading upwards.



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Take this path all the way until you come out onto a hidden meadow area. Walk through the two trees and across the meadow. At the back of the meadow, you will see some steps with a metal handrail in the middle. Follow the steps down to the bottom.

Once at the bottom turn left and keep walking. You will see an exit with four trees in front of it. Ignore this exit and carry on walking on the main footpath until you come to another intersection with signposts. Turn right and continue out of the park, passing over the railway tracks and a small children's play area on your right-hand side.

Step 5: At the end of the path take the left turn and continue on the path to the park exit. At Woolwich Road take the Pedestrian crossing to the other side, turn left and then immediately right at

the signpost pointing to the Thames Barrier. Follow the path through the small park where on the left you will pass the Barrier Animal Clinic. This is a listed building and was once a public house first known as 'Lads of The Village' and then later renamed to 'Thames Barrier Arms' when the flood barrier was built. It is a listed building now and dates back to 1880.

Carry on a little further down the path and you will see Charlton Art studios on your right. Continue along until you come to a set of steps leading up to the Thames. At the top of the steps, you will get an iconic view of the Thames Barrier. The Thames Barrier has been in operation since 1982 and was designed to protect Greater London from high tides and storm surges from the North Sea.

Once you have enjoyed the view of the Thames Barrier head back towards Woolwich Road and cross over the pedestrian crossing once again, to enter the park through the main entrance. This time turn right and follow the signs towards Gilbert's Pits. These were formerly known as Charlton Sand Pits; a Site of Special Scientific Interest in Charlton.

Step 6: Follow the yellow arrow for the green chain walk and continue up the wooden steps to the blue metal barrier. Walk through the barrier veering to the left. Continue up the wooden steps, ignoring

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the smaller dirt track to your left. Continue up the steps and follow the arrow turning left for the Green Chain Way. On the right, there is also a big sign for Gilbert's Pit. Continue up the steps until you come to a grey/blue barrier and continue up the steps a bit further until you see a yellow arrow pointing right. Follow the path which will take you through a lovely wooded area and continue along with it until you come to through an open clearing. Walk across the clearing until you come to some more metal barriers where you exit the pits and are back on Thorntree Road.

Step 7: Cross Thorntree Road and turn right. Walk up the hill in the direction of Charlton Village. At the roundabout at the top of the road take the road called Fairfield Grove. Towards the top of this road on your right-hand side, you will pass St Lukes Almshouses. These date back to 1706 and are still in use today.

Carry on a bit further up the road until you come out onto the junction of The Village. Directly opposite you will see the beautiful ornate, red-brick building of the Assembly Rooms which date back to 1881.

Step 8: Turn right, towards Charlton Village. At the Co-op walk through the passage next towards Lansdowne Lane. Continue walking on the left-hand side of Lansdowne Lane until you come to number

here you will get a spectacular view overlooking Charlton Football Club and towards Greenwich Peninsula and Canary Wharf in the distance.

Step 9: Continue to the end of the road and turn left onto Charlton Lane. Carry on down Charlton Lane, down the hill and take a left turn into Harvey Gardens. Continue down this road, passing Charlton Football Club on your left. At the end of the road, cross over the junction onto Floyd Road.

Step 10: Walk to the end of Floyd Road and turn right. Walk past the small Sainsbury's on your right-hand side and you will see Charlton Train station directly opposite. This is the end of the secret Charlton walk, we hope you enjoyed it, and hope you learned some interesting facts about the area.

But, ssssh, it's a secret! Don't tell everybody!

