

In early spring, snowdrops grow in large numbers throughout the reserve, followed by crocuses, daffodils and bluebells. Later there are rhododendrons, camellias, magnolias, foxgloves and willowherb. From the two bird hides treecreepers, nuthatches, woodpeckers and the occasional firecrest can be seen. Eight species of bat have been recorded together with a good selection of butterflies and other invertebrates, including stag beetles.

The reserve is open to the public throughout the year, from dawn to dusk, for visitors to enjoy the peace and tranquillity. In spring, from the end of February to the middle of April, there are 'meet and greet' weekends. Visitors can then learn more about the nature reserve and its history with guided walks on Saturday mornings. On request, guided tours for groups are available at other times of the year.

Volunteering at Warley Place

The Warley Place Volunteer Work Party meets every Monday (except Bank Holidays) and Wednesday from 8.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. We are always looking for new volunteers and whatever your physical abilities, there is always some job that can be found to suit you.

Contacts: Mick Hedges: 01277 231367 or 07708 162111.
Fiona Agassiz: 01277 230436 or 07762 200594.

We are the county's leading conservation charity, committed to protecting wildlife and inspiring a lifelong love of nature.

We manage nature reserves and discovery parks across the county, providing outstanding outdoor learning and preserving places of wonder. Our climate is in crisis and nature needs our help.

Together we can protect the future.

We invite you to join us.

To become a member of the Essex Wildlife Trust, call us on 01621 862960
Or visit www.essexwt.org.uk



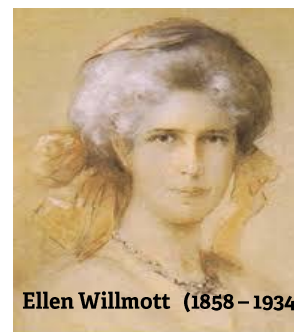
**Abbotts Hall Farm
Great Wigborough
COLCHESTER
CO5 7RZ**

Warley Place

Brentwood. CM13 3HU - Map Ref TQ583907
The entrance gate is next to the Thatchers Arms,
Great Warley.



History of Warley Place.



Ellen Willmott (1858 - 1934)

Warley Place is unusual among the nature reserves in Britain in that it had been a garden for many centuries. It was at its most famous during the last years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth. The owners of the estate from 1875 to 1934 were Frederick Willmott and then his daughter Ellen, who became one of the most important gardeners and plant breeders of her era. Upon her death the grounds were earmarked for

development as a housing estate, but this was prevented first by Brentwood's planning department, then the war, and finally by Green Belt legislation.

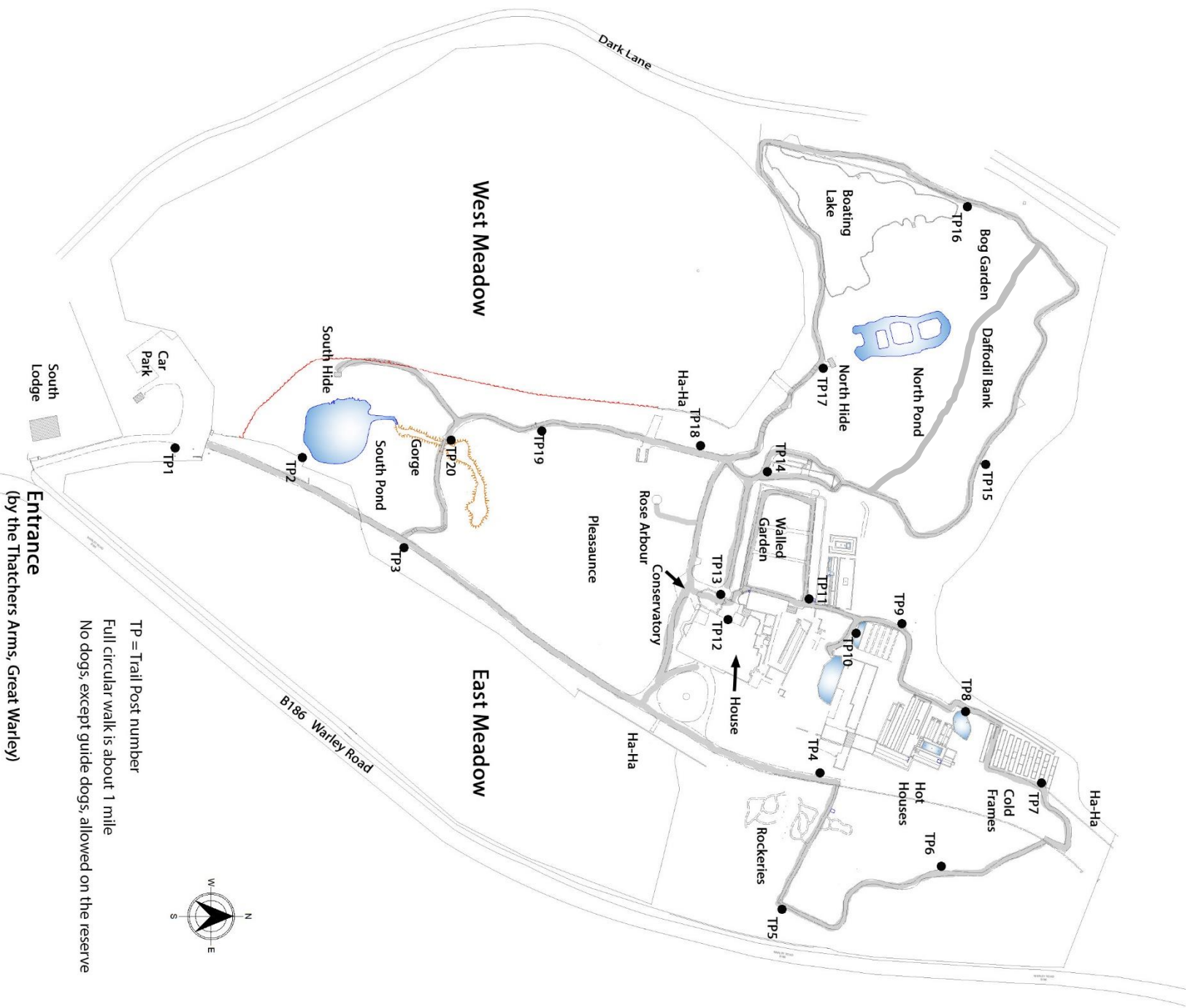
For the next 43 years the garden was left untended and rapidly became overgrown, reverting to woodland. Although relics of the old glass houses and the rocks in her famed alpine garden remain, the plants have long since disappeared, some went to her sister's home after her death, others dying as trees grew and blocked the light,

Warley Place as a Nature Reserve.

Including the meadows, the reserve comprises 25 acres. The marked trail is about 1 mile.

Since 1977 Essex Wildlife Trust volunteers have worked hard repairing the terrace and ha-ha, making the conservatory safe, repointing walls, dredging ponds and reservoirs, clearing paths and signposted, removing dangerous trees and unearthing rockeries. During this work the balance between the needs of wildlife and the importance of the garden is maintained. It has now been partially restored to the extent that visitors, with a little imagination, can visualise what the garden looked like in Ellen Willmott's time.

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TP = Trail Post number
Full circular walk is about 1 mile
No dogs, except guide dogs, allowed on the reserve