

The Ice Age tree trail is a guided walk around Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park, taking in 34 species of tree. These are all trees that established colonies during the 5,000 years of ice retreat. In other words they arrived after the ice started to melt, but before Britain became an island. It is possible that small populations of certain species managed to survive the Ice Age in very small numbers.

On the interpretation panels next to each of the trees is a short description and a number which corresponds to that tree's position in the chronological order of colonisation of Britain. A number of the trees were already in existence at the park and the ones missing from the list were planted by Trees for London, Southwark Council and the local community in early 2003.

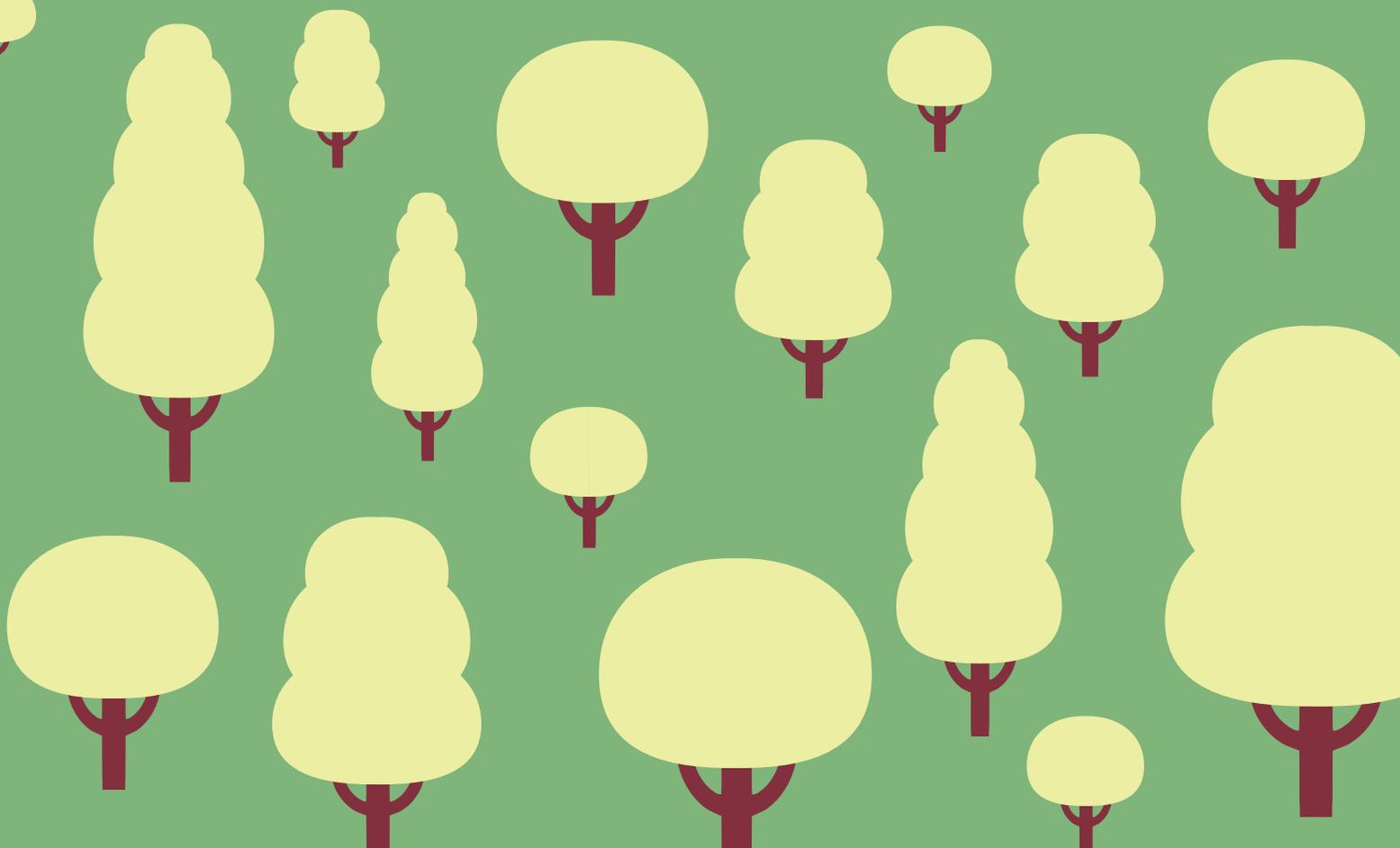
The last Ice Age started about 70,000 years ago. It began to retreat about 12,000 years ago. However, we are still in the grip of it in what is known as interglacial period. The ice has retreated to the poles and we are experiencing a warm blip that has caused the surrounding seas to rise. During the last Ice Age, Britain was covered in sheets of ice up to 300 metres thick. These are all gone and our countryside is heavily wooded.



Find out more information on this and other parks in Southwark at www.southwark.gov.uk/parks

For more information on Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park visit the park office located next to the children's playground.

Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park Ice Age tree trail



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About 12,000 years ago the spot you are standing on would have been covered with a thick layer of ice. Britain was in the grip of the last Ice Age. But over the next 5,000 years the ice started to melt and retreat, exposing vast swathes of open countryside.



During the Ice Age, most trees and shrubs had died off due to the harsh cold that kept temperatures well below freezing or scraped off by the moving ice. But by 7,000 years ago, most of the ice had gone and Britain was an island. It had been cut off from mainland Europe by the newly forming English Channel and 34 species of tree had colonised in our countryside. These are now widely regarded as Britain's native species.