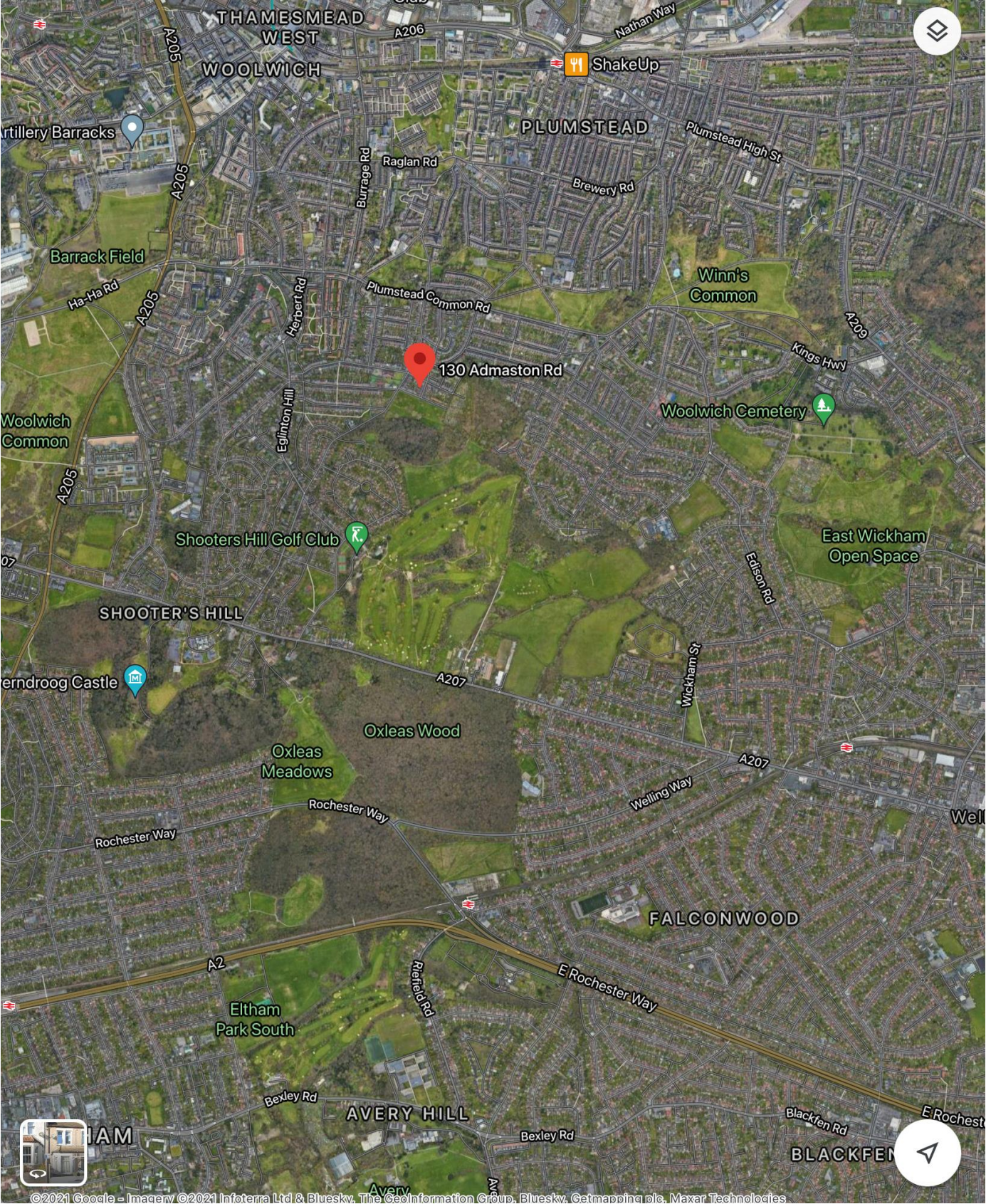


Walking from Admaston Road





When we hooked up, Sheila was living in Ankerdine Crescent. [REDACTED] Admaston Rd was the first place we bought together. We were expecting our first child and wanted to be near Plumcroft School because there was a lot of music going on there.

Google maps satellite view shows the large swathe of green that runs south almost from our doorstep. It forms part of the Green Chain Walk.

Between us and the northern boundary of Shrewsbury Park were disused allotments and the closed-off Dothill Road. Once proposals to build on the old allotments were overcome and the council eventually voted to retain the land's status as Metropolitan Open Land then the site became part of Shrewsbury Park. This happened in the first years we were living in Admaston Road and was our first experience of the tensions between building for humans and retaining open space and habitats for humans and other species to share.

Walking into Shrewsbury Park and up quite a steep climb you're rewarded with long views as far as Epping Forest where I loved to walk as a teenager (we lived in Harlow) and where my dad used to roam from his childhood home in Loughton. I liked being able to see the northern lip of the London Basin.





There is mature woodland in Shrewsbury Park that we would often walk through, but more often we headed for a gate in the south eastern corner that took us through the Laing Estate towards Eaglesfield Park and then beyond into Oxleas Wood.

In 2004 Sheila's brain tumour was diagnosed. After surgery and radiotherapy, and while she was having chemotherapy, Oxleas Wood was a place we liked to walk together. Over the years since 2004 Sheila's mobility has gradually become more compromised. Our walks usually begin with a car ride.

We spent a lot of time in Castle Woods where there is a good path for a rollator or wheelchair.



There's Sevedroog Castle to see and some fine beech trees. I love beech trees. And there's a long view to the south.

Once travelling by car ahead of walking became the norm we liked to go to Well Hall Pleasance, Greenwich Park and May Place (near Bexleyheath).

Since we moved to Woolwich, and Sheila uses the wheelchair always, we've spent more time in Charlton Park, Maryon Wilson Park and Maryon Park.

Sheila can't propel the wheelchair herself so I push her, assisted sometimes by powered wheels we can attach. We used to enjoy long walks, but now we look more often for places with cultivated plants.

Sheila had a long hospitalisation that ended just before Covid arrived. We've been shielding ever since and the large garden we share with the owners of the other flats in the house has sustained us.

I've taken lots of photos with my camera phone and that's shaped how I look at what's to be found in the garden and how things change. I've also made patterns from some of the photos which has been a way to spend time looking closely at images. Covering less ground but paying much closer attention to what's near me.

The garden has been a safe place to spend time with our young grandson. It's been a joy looking over his shoulder as he's got to know it.

The changes in Sheila's health have brought big new challenges. Lockdown has given her time for further recovery and to work things out at home. We had to postpone exploring the practicalities of getting out and about. Now we're talking a lot about how we'll emerge from lockdown and where we'll want to go. Walking with our grandson is a new thing to look forward to.





