

CAPITAL CHALLENGE 2026

Saturday 28th March 2026



THE WINDMILL WALK

ROUTE DESCRIPTION AND GAZETEER

Total Distance 25.0 miles

START 07.30-08.30

St John's Church 73 Waterloo Rd, Lambeth SE1 8TY

TQ311801

What3words: ///vets.vibrate.exists

FINISH 14:00 -18.30

St Hugh's Community Centre, 42 Castledine Rd, London SE20 8PL

TQ346701

What3words: ///slice.frock.locate

Introduction

Over 40% of London consists of parks and gardens open to the public, and with 8.3 million trees there are almost as many as there are people. The walk will allow you to enjoy the biodiversity (and diversity) of this vibrant city. Nearly half of this walk is north of the Thames and the rest in the south. Not only will you get near to some of the big sights but also lots of lesser attractions that most tourists never get to see.

You will visit no fewer than five Royal Parks (Victoria Tower Gardens, St James's Park, Green Park, Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens), seven major open spaces (Holland Park, Battersea Park, Clapham Common, Brockwell Park, Dulwich Park, Sydenham Hill Woods and Crystal Palace Park), as well as several less well-known smaller parks and woodlands.

Inevitably, you must follow roads in between the open spaces, mostly in quiet residential areas, but we have tried to find a route that avoids walking along main roads for any great distance.

The walk is full of little surprises, which hopefully will challenge your perception of London as well as your feet. Of course, if it rains you are never too far away from a café or pub. Just don't stay too long - there is a time limit!

Practicalities

Toilets are indicated in the route description. Some of them are free, however it is useful to have a few coins especially 10p and 20p to hand, for the central London area. Bring some toilet paper as well!

Water refill points, that are still functioning, are infrequent, but are mentioned where available to minimize use of plastic. So bring your own bottles.

Refreshments. Simple refreshments will be provided at the checkpoints, and hot drinks and cake at the finish. You should carry drinks and some food and snacks. There are many cafés along the route, so you are unlikely to starve. Please bring a mug with you if you would like a hot drink at the end.

A torch may be necessary for the later stages of the walk.

Hazards and emergencies

Roads. You often need to cross busy roads, and mostly this is possible at a controlled crossing, but in a few cases there is none available and you should take extra care. We remind you with the symbol ☒ – it means ‘Cross with great care!’ And bear in mind rogue drivers and cyclists! Cycling is being strongly encouraged in London and you will encounter many stretches that are shared with cyclists, indicated by this symbol C. Do take extra care.

Surface. Most of the route is on a firm surface, usually tarmac, bonded gravel or pavement, but a one-mile section in woodland after 21 miles will be on a rough earth surface, which may be muddy and slippery in wet weather.

Other pedestrians. The route passes many popular places, and if it’s a nice day there will be many families out walking. Please show consideration for others, especially on narrow paths.

Key to symbols

☒ = take extra care crossing busy road C = beware cyclists

How to reach St John’s Church

From Waterloo Mainline Station. From ticket barriers or Underground exit inside the station, turn left then Way Out 5 next to Pure shop down steps to exit station. (NB If you arrive on Platforms 20-24 walk ahead to Way Out 5.)

At bottom of steps turn left then turn right over three zebra crossings. Keep ahead through broad, short walkway under railway, then turn right past bus shelters. Turn left over zebra and traffic lights then turn right to St John’s Church on right.

From Waterloo Road Underground exit (Exit by Scribbler kiosk). Cross Waterloo Road then turn left to cross Sandell Street and pass Wellington PH. Go under bridges and keep ahead 125 yards to St John’s Church.

From Waterloo East Station. Before reaching main barriers, turn left through barriers for Imperial War Museum/Waterloo Road exit. Descend many steps to exit in Sandell Street, turn right then turn right again past Wellington pub. Go under bridges and keep ahead 125 yards to St John’s Church.

Buses. Dozens of bus routes serve Waterloo Station. The columned spire of St John’s Church is very prominent, but if in doubt locate your nearest station exit then follow instructions as above.

Route Description

Entries in CAPITALS are briefly described in the **gazetteer** at the end.

1. Exit ST JOHN'S CHURCH. Turn sharp right past pillar-box to cross Stamford Street. Go straight on past red-brick Cornwall House and continue down a 20mph road. *Do not enter underpass*. Continue ahead passing the National Theatre on the right to reach river. Turn left under Waterloo Bridge C. Continue along SOUTHBANK passing the London Eye. Pass through tunnel under Westminster Bridge to emerge on Albert Embankment with the pink hearts of the National Covid Memorial Wall on the left. Shortly after passing the castle gatehouse to Lambeth Palace on the left, climb steps onto Lambeth Bridge and turn right to cross river.

1.4 miles

2. Descend steps by obelisk on right to enter VICTORIA TOWER GARDENS. (*Toilets at bottom of steps on left 20p but free drinking fountain*). Keep straight ahead past the colourful Buxton Memorial. At the end turn left to pass the Burghers of Calais and continue over a cross path to exit gardens by statue of Emmeline Pankhurst. Turn left to cross road at zebra crossing and then turn right to cross Great College Street to small green on left. Continue on paved path, with a medieval wall on the left, soon passing the Jewel Tower on the left. Keep ahead on road with the PALACE OF WESTMINSTER on the right.
3. Pass statue of George V and back of St Margaret's Church on left. Turn left into Parliament Square with Westminster Abbey on the left. Continue past the front of the abbey and statue of St George slaying dragon *on top of column with lions*. Turn right over crossings across Victoria Street and Tothill Street. Pass front entrance of Methodist Central Hall and just after the Westminster Arms turn left past bollard into alley. Continue ahead into QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, with its statue to the lady herself on the left. Take first right to pass through gate. Cross road and enter **ST JAMES PARK**.

2.4miles

4. Continue straight on and over bridge then left to continue with lake on left. On reaching white stone wall, with a golden Nike *winged goddess of speed and victory* looming ahead, turn right up slope and cross the Mall. Turn left and follow pavement round to the left (Memorial Gardens to the left) to pass in front of golden gates. Just beyond end pillar turn right to enter **GREEN PARK**.

2.8miles

5. Bear left crossing "No cycling" instruction on ground, avoiding Broad Walk with its central line of bollards and railing. (*Watch out for fast bikes C*). Walk over a raised plaque on the ground, PRINCESS DIANA MEMORIAL WALK following path between two trees. *If in doubt the straight line of the P in Princess on the raised plaque is pointing the right way*. After 30 yards continue over cross-path, with the CANADIAN WAR MEMORIAL, *the sloping water feature*, immediately on the right. Continue to a 6 way path junction with an old gas lamp. Take the second of the three paths on the left and continue.

Just before the colonnaded entrance to the park, turn left to pass the BOMBER COMMAND MEMORIAL on the right. At hedge turn left and then right to cross road with Wellington Arch ahead. Do not go under arch but turn immediately right along path to pass through the NEW ZEALAND WAR MEMORIAL. Continue to enter an underpass ahead with the Duke of Wellington on left. Take first right passing two entrances to the Underground Station.

Exit the underpass up a ramp and turn immediately right and up steps into **HYDE PARK**.
3.5 miles

6. Turn right for 30 yards to cross road at crossing C. Take path half left and then after 100yards take path half right next to large rubbish bin to enter Rose Garden . Continue past naked female archer bearing right. Walk straight past lamp post along a winding path. Eventually pass through gate and continue. At a T-Junction, shortly after the Holocaust Memorial rock on the left, bear right up slope.

In front of café, turn sharp left at the top keeping lake (Serpentine) on the right. Shortly after a white urn monument to Queen Caroline on the right, curve right to follow bank of Serpentine, keeping close to the water. (*Just after passing café with Clock tower look out for FREE toilets on left*). On past Princess Diana Memorial Fountain and continue right of the beautiful bird statue to pass under arched bridge. You are now in **KENSINGTON GARDENS**.

4.4 miles

7. Keep going along Serpentine with Queen Caroline's temple away to the left. Continue passing Henry Moore's white arch on the opposite bank and the charming statue of Peter Pan on the left. You finally reach the Italian Water Gardens. Take second turn on the left just before a fountain with two cuddly bear cubs. Keep ahead turning left at Speke's obelisk and continue past the equestrian statue Physical Energy towards the Albert Memorial (*C beware of fast cyclists on cross-paths*). At finger post turn right. (If you get to the entrance to South Flower Walk you have gone 10 yards too far. Walk straight on until you reach wide Broad Walk. (Note café on left,)

Cross Broad Walk (*C take extra care as it is popular with fast cyclists, roller bladers, scooters etc*) to continue on "No cycling" tarmac path, which soon curves right. Straight on past two cross paths

Bear second left and walk out of the park at the red telephone box. Turn right on Kensington High Street. Carry on crossing Kensington Church Street at pedestrian crossing. Immediately turn right in front of church. First left into Holland Street.

6 miles

8. After 50 yards turn right into a narrow alley Carmel Court. At end turn left and follow road round to the right and then to the left. Right into Gordon Place, left into Campden Grove, right into Hornton Street and left at T-Junction into Sheffield Terrace.

At main road turn right and continue, crossing road when you get to a zebra crossing and turn right. 50 yards beyond the Windsor Castle turn left into Aubrey Walk. Second right into Hillsleigh Road, left into Campden Hill Square and take second right to descend left hand side of square to main road. Turn left and take third turning on left into Holland Park (not Holland Walk) next to the statue of St Volodymyr (ruler of Ukraine 980-1015). Follow road round right bend and at end of white wall turn left through arch into **HOLLAND PARK**.

7.4 miles

9. Veer right up tarmac slope and on reaching junction of 5 paths take sign to Café/Toilets, veering slightly right to reach seated statue of Lord Holland. Cross wooden bridge and take second on right on path signposted to Kyoto Garden. At cross paths turn left and after 50 yards turn left again into the beautiful Kyoto Garden. Walk clockwise round garden past

waterfall and rocks to take second exit, *with large metal panel set in stone*, down stone steps and turn left.

Keep straight on, passing Fukushima Gardens on left, to reach the top of a staircase on the right. Turn left and then take first right into Dutch garden. Turn sharp right to walk the length of the garden. Just before hedge turn left, past sundial and pond, towards clock tower. On reaching painted arcade turn left. Exit arcade, (*drinking fountain ahead*), and turn right (*FREE toilets on right*). Continue to exit park through handsome metal gates.

8 miles

10. Continue on left pavement bearing left into Melbury Road to eventually reach Kensington High Street. Turn left to cross road at lights. Switch back 30 yards towards tiny white lodge. Turn left into Edwardes Square and continue straight on to reach Pembroke Square, turning left at pillar box. At main road, Earls Court Road, turn right and on reaching traffic lights cross road into Stratford Road. Continue along Stratford Road, to the left of the church. Keep straight on for 300 yards past shops. At T-Junction cross road at crossing, just beyond Devonshire Arms, to Temperance Fountain set in alcove *just opposite the pub!* Turn right then turn left into Lexham Gardens. Keep left round the gardens.

Bear left past black bollards into Lexham Walk. Cross cobbled lane and go up slope. Keep straight on to Cornwall Gardens and continue. Take first right into Grenville Place. Keep going to cross main road at traffic lights *on left* and continue into Ashburn Place. Pass the high and tower building take second right into Harrington Gardens. Continue straight on over crossroads to T Junction. Turn left then right into Bramham Gardens. Walk the length of the gardens and turn left at post box. At the end cross half right and pass under white arch into Wetherby Mews. Follow this round to the right and at main road turn left to traffic lights. Turn right to cross into Old Brompton Road and continue on right hand pavement. After 100 yards cross at zebra crossing and continue to

CHECKPOINT 1 : THE PEMBROKE

10:00-12.30

9.7 miles

What3words: *///sting.poem.beard*

261 Old Brompton Road, SW5 9JA. TQ256782.

11. Continue along Old Brompton Road, crossing Finborough Road, to reach the entrance to **BROMPTON CEMETARY**. Turn left into cemetery. Continue down the wide Central Avenue C past mausoleums, Celtic crosses, dozens of angels and the General's Balls (on the left)! Keep straight on *with the stands of Chelsea FC looming up ahead on the right*. Just before the domed Chapel turn left. Turn left again at cross path, curving right to exit cemetery through gates and past telephone kiosk.

10.4 miles

12. Turn right and after 150 yards cross road at zebra crossing. Switch back 20 yards and turn right through gate to enter gardens, with the large yellow brick King's Chapel on the left. Continue passing tennis court on the left. Exit gardens and turn left to cross road and continue down Thorndike Close. *Dimitri's Chandeliers will light the way*. Enter Westfield Park and keep straight on, heading towards chimney to exit park. Take first left into Burnaby Street, second right into Tadema Road, left into Stadium Street, right along Ashburnham

Road and left along Lots Road, crossing it ⊗ via traffic island, just before reaching main road.

Continue along the river embankment and just after a statue of the painter Whistler, turn right onto Battersea Bridge to cross river. At far end cross road ⊗ at island crossing. Descend to river promenade C, passing two swans and continue to the pretty arched Albert Bridge. Turn right up slope and cross road at crossing to enter **BATTERSEA PARK**.

11.7 miles

13. Curve left to continue along river, past the beautiful Buddhist Peace Pagoda. Continue and just before small car park, turn right to reach a wide avenue C. (*FREE toilets on right just beyond café kiosk*). Veer slightly left over roundabout to continue past tennis courts. Just after passing Millennium Arena building on left, turn right C along avenue with lake on left. After 100 yards turn left to pass wooden lakeside shelter. 10 yards before reaching spherical bollards at entrance to yellow brick pump house, turn left.

Follow the serpentine lakeside path, ignoring all right turns. After 500 yards you pass the Three Graces by Henry Moore on your right and shortly afterwards the path curves left, passing sub-tropical gardens on right. Pass information panel on right and continue straight on over a wide avenue C to exit park with high rise looming ahead.

13.1 miles

14. Cross road and continue down Alexandra Avenue. Cross main road and continue down Austin Road. Right into Dagnall Street. Continue to the end. Left into Culvert Road and continue past The Flag and through a tunnel, taking path on left hand side, under multiple railway lines. ⊗ (*Watch out for the occasional car*). Keep going another 30 yards till you reach a high fence. A ramp on the left leads up and over even more railway lines. On the far side turn left along Eversleigh Road, right into Birley Street, left at end into Ashbury Road, right Tyneham. At end turn left into Shirley Grove bearing right uphill to Lavender Hill. Cross this main road (Lavender Hill) at the crossing by the Co-op and turn left. Take second right into Garfield Road which turns sharp left after 150 yards. Soon turn right into Wix's Lane. Follow this to the end to cross main road, using crossing on the left. Turn left to cross two cycle tracks (*C take great care*) and immediately turn right, onto **CLAPHAM COMMON**. Continue straight ahead along tree-lined avenue. At crossing of several paths take the second on right and continue to Bandstand and café.

14.9 miles

15. Turn left along the wide path, with the lamp-posts, immediately to the right of the café. After 300 yards fork left to pass to left of pond. Cross minor road at crossing. Keep ahead for a few yards before turning right.. Continue to light controlled crossing and cross main road. Lambeth College is on your right. Turn left along pavement or use paved path behind railings. Take first right into Crescent Lane and right again into Worsopp Drive, which you follow past an ancient Greek temple, on the left.

Turn left into Tableer Avenue and second right back into Crescent Lane. Follow this for 600 yards bearing left After crossroads with traffic lights, continue to pass 6th Form College on left to reach a T-Junction. Turn right on Lyhan Road passing ball court on right. *Watch out for wonderful mural on left*. Continue on left pavement past Prince of Wales and 5 yards after John Ashby Close turn left through a doorway. Soon a high wall appears on your right. Continue past an exclusive but welcoming gentlemen's establishment with a fine restaurant.

Continue to main road *Brixton Hill* and turn left. At next traffic lights turn left into Blenheim Gardens. 25 yards after passing a Royal Mail building on the right, go through barrier and turn left for a close up of **BRIXTON WINDMILL**.

CHECKPOINT 2 11.30 – 16:00

16.9 miles

What3words: ///mild.trout.eaten

TQ304744

(Toilets and drinking fountain)

16. Retrace steps through barrier and just after Royal Mail building turn left into Halliwell Road. Left into St Saviour's Road and after passing church turn right at T-Junction on Lambert Road and continue back to Brixton Hill. Cross at lights on left and continue along Brixton Water Lane. After 200 yards turn right into Josephine Avenue. Just before right bend take third left into Leander Road. Follow this road as it curves right. After quarter of a mile, *just after house 127*, turn left into a minor road leading through Tulse Hill Estate. Cross main road and continue through gates into **BROCKWELL PARK**.

17.9 miles

17. Take first turn on right and in a few yards turn left over a wooden bridge. Turn right and continue straight on with ponds on right and soon a high wall on left enclosing a garden. At end of wall continue over a cross path. *(FREE ladies toilets on left next to what looks like a small Greek temple)*. Head uphill to junction of five paths, where there is a green clock tower on left. *(Men's toilets on left)*. Veering slightly left continue past park buildings on left *(More ladies toilets)*. Follow path round to the left, avoiding left fork up to house. Keep ahead on terrace to pass the bow fronted entrance of Brockwell Hall. *There is an excellent café in the hall*. At end of terrace, follow path round to the left. At T junction, by flagpole, turn right onto wide path and continue downhill to exit park through gates.

Cross onto island, bear right and cross road *somewhere over the rainbow!* Turn left under Railway Bridge and follow pavement round into Half Moon Lane. Take first right into Stradella Road and follow road round to the left. At T junction with Burbage Road, cross road and turn right. Go under theatrical Railway Bridge and continue to pass the entrance to Herne Hill Velodrome on left, *worth a short detour*. Continue over cross-roads and keep on to a roundabout with a red granite fountain, in **DULWICH VILLAGE**. Cross Burbage Road ⊗ via traffic island and turn left to cross Gallery Road. Immediately turn right through the imposing gates *God's Gift* of Old Dulwich College and walk ahead to the stone cross and statue of Elizabethan actor Edward Alleyn *more theatre*. Turn left and right to cross road and enter **Dulwich Park**.

19.4 mile

18. Keep ahead on *left* pavement. Ignore right turn and pass road barrier C. Continue ahead for a further 30 yards. When the road swings left, fork right and continue to the left of a lake, past a shelter in the middle of the path. After second shelter turn right. Turn right again *(for FREE toilets situated in brick building turn left then second left)* to continue along a path. At the end continue ahead over grass to the right of the four picnic tables. Cross a broad avenue and keep ahead on a road. This soon swings right to exit park at the five white pillars of St Mary's Gate. Turn right along the main road. Just before traffic lights turn right into Frank Dixon Way.

At small green follow road round to the left and continue to main road. Cross road ⊗ and turn left. Continue straight on over crossroads *use crossing on right*. Ahead is Crystal Palace Tower. Pass the imposing buildings of Dulwich College on the right and continue straight on passing mini roundabout. Just before reaching London's only toll road with its neat little white toll hut, turn left into the rural Grange Lane, ⊗ (*No pavements on this lane*) which bends right and then climbs towards **Dulwich Woods**. Just after passing Dulwich and Sydenham golf club on the left, turn left into 'The Fort' (South London Scout Centre) and proceed to

CHECKPOINT 3: GRANGE LANE

13:00 – 17:30

21.5 miles

(*Toilets and drinking fountain*)

What3words: ///urban.coast.demand

TQ340726

19. Leave the Fort and turn right and immediately left through black metal gate into Dulwich Woods. Keep ahead on wide path for 200 yards climbing gently uphill. On reaching a path junction, with a litter bin and bench on right, turn sharp first left on a wide path which soon curves right. Continue on this main path for about 500 yards. Pass a pond on the right followed by a golf course on the left. Go over a short board walk to continue with fence to golf course on left. Continue uphill, curving right to a clearing with a Sydenham Hill Woods notice board.

Turn sharp right in front of a notice board with the cutting of an abandoned railway line on left. In 100 yards turn left down steps and continue right along disused railway track. After 100 yards, at a large clearing with Green Chain Walk post, turn left to a bench and follow path right to second bench. Turn left then after 30 yards turn right.

22.2miles

20. After 80 yards at number four post ignore a right fork to a ruined folly and bear left uphill. Bear slightly right over bridge next to large Cedar of Lebanon, curving right and then left. Continue passing number 2 post to climb steps. Pass a notice board to climb more steps, curving left through a gate. You are now out of the woods.

Turn right along road, following Green Chain Walk signs, eventually passing the Wood House pub on the left, to reach main road. Cross and continue down Wells Park Road on right hand side.. Continue down road following the step free route of the Green Chain Walk. Cross Longton Avenue and immediately turn right into **Sydenham Wells Park**.

23 miles

21. Bear right then left to descend steps and bear right. After 10 yards bear left and continue over crosspath following Green Chain Walk through attractive park. Ignore toilet signs, *usually closed anyway*, and continue straight on, curving left past large pond on left. Just before end of pond fork right to exit park and continue up Ormanton Road to reach main road at bus shelter, where turn left and bid farewell to Green Chain Walk signs. Pass red pillar box and turn right to cross main road at traffic island and continue along Amberley Grove, with school on left. Pass through barrier and curve right to follow bollarded Chulsa

Road. On reaching main road cross at traffic island on left. Turn right for a few yards then left into **CRYSTAL PALACE PARK**. **23.6 miles**

22. Straight ahead, cross over tarmac drive, onto earth path and then after 20 yards curve right. Ahead looms Crystal Palace Tower. Continue past a rusty construction *an ancient laptop* on the right! then take first right on wide drive to pass a café, an equally rusty pillar and a lake on the right.
23. Continue uphill to “The Bowl” finger post. Turn left. After 150 yards turn left. After 20 yards turn right. After 150 yards go past barrier and enter car park. Turn left. Keep straight ahead through car park to pass an enormous head covered in scaffolding.. Continue with tennis padel courts on the left. Keep going onto a raised walkway passing the entrance to the Crystal Palace National Sports Centre on the left and the Crystal Palace athletics stadium on the right. Descend stairs, go left then right after 20 yards to descend more stairs. Bear left and left again to continue on a wide path with the bridge directly behind.
24. Just after toilets and a phone box on left, turn right ascending path to lake side. (Life brown and green café is on the right). At the top of the path when you reach the lake, turn left walking clockwise round the lake. After 400 yards, just before the railway embankment, turn left to exit park through gate on the right.

24.7 miles

25. Turn right to go under Railway Bridge and then left into Anerley Park Road. Turn right then left into Castledine Road. Follow road round right bend and continue ahead for 100 yards. Just beyond ball court on right is St Hugh's Community Centre. **25.0 miles**

FINISH 14:00 -18.30

St Hugh's Community Centre, 42 Castledine Rd, London SE20 8PL
TQ346701

What3words: ///slice.frock.locate

WELL DONE!

Train Stations

Anerley

Just a 5 minute stagger away. Continue along Castledine Road past the Anerley Arms.

The side entrance to the station is just beyond the pub.

Southern Trains to London Bridge.

London Overground to Highbury and Islington.

Crystal Palace

A good 15 minutes walk. Backtrack to the lake and continue on wide path parallel to railway line. The path ascends to reach station.

Southern Trains to London Bridge and Victoria.

London Overground to Highbury and Islington

Gazetteer

Monuments and Murals

A feature of this walk is the statues and monuments north of the Thames. Not only are they interesting in their own right they are invaluable way indicators.

South of the Thames there are some wonderful murals. You should be able to spot at least half a dozen on the walk.

St John's Church

Built in 1824 in Greek revival style on what was then swampy ground. During the construction of the Jubilee Line the soil started to dry out and millions of gallons of water had to be pumped into the foundations to stop the church from collapsing. Hopefully should hold up for the Capital challenge. It's worth peeking inside to admire the Classical Interior, murals, organ and font.

Southbank

The marshy area south of the Thames had been a place of commerce and entertainment since the middle ages. Bear pits and brothels have long since disappeared but not the theatres. Between Waterloo and Hungerford bridges is the Southbank Centre built in 1951, as part of the Festival of Britain celebrations, and now Europe's largest centre for the arts. The unofficial skateboard park underneath is very popular.

The London Eye is Europe's tallest cantilevered observation wheel with a diameter of 120 metres. You will certainly have a good view of Crystal Palace Tower from the top but you will get an even better view after you have walked another 23 miles!!!

County Hall was built as part of a restoration scheme in 1917 on the site of the former Lion Brewery. The lion now stands proudly on a plinth just before Westminster Bridge, looking radiant in spite of being over 180 years old. It is made of weather resistant Coade stone, named after its inventor Eleanor Coade.

Southbank leads onto Albert Embankment, one of Joseph Bazalgette's grand projects. Not only is this embankment striking, with its sturgeon lamp standards and swan benches, but unlike the northern embankments there are no sewers underneath. Note the statue of Violette Szabo, the Second World War heroine, on the left just before Lambeth Bridge

Victoria Tower Gardens

The Gardens were created during the 1870s by Joseph Bazalgette and was part of his project to provide London with a modern sewerage system following the 'Great Stink' of 1858.

Look out for a number of memorials celebrating emancipation including the colourful Buxton fountain commemorating the abolition of slavery in 1834, French sculptor Auguste Rodin's dramatic Burghers of Calais and the statue of Emmeline Pankhurst whose grave will be passed later on walk.

Palace of Westminster

Site of the Houses of Parliament. The oldest part, Westminster Hall dates from the 11th Century and was part of the king's palace. Note the statues of Richard I and Oliver Cromwell just outside. The king's treasure was kept safe in the Jewel Tower next to Westminster Abbey. The abbey was founded by Edward the Confessor. The whole ensemble, including the 15th Century St Margaret's church, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Queen Anne's Gate

This street boasts the finest examples of Queen Anne architecture anywhere in the country. Many of the houses have original features including ornate porches, fanlights, iron railings and foot-scrappers. Number 26 even has a torch snuffer.

Queen Anne came to the throne in 1702 and was the first monarch of Great Britain. She died without an heir. In spite of 17 pregnancies only one child survived infancy and sadly he died at the age of 11. The nearby Westminster Arms pub is popular with MPs and even has a division bell.

St James Park

Originally given as a gift from the Russian Ambassador to King Charles II in 1664, the pelicans have made London their home. With free fresh fish daily and prime estate on Pelican Island they have shown no inclination to leave. Their present number is about 40.

Green Park

The park was 'greened' by Catherine of Braganza, the Queen of Charles II, after she spotted her husband showing off the flowers there to his mistresses. The park has been green ever since though there have been recent attempts to brighten it up in the spring with daffodils.

War Memorials

Canada The inclined, marble sculpture is inset with bronze maple leaves, the emblem of Canada.. Water flows across the sloping surface and creates an illusion of floating leaves.

RAF Bomber Command Memorial The memorial, built of Portland Stone, features a bronze 9-foot sculpture of seven air crew designed to look as though they have just returned from a bombing mission. The memorial was only unveiled in 2012.

New Zealand 16 bronze standards are adorned with small sculptures, all symbolic of New Zealand, including canoes, fern shapes, plants, animals and of course a Rugby ball.

Hyde Park

Hyde Park started as a hunting ground for Henry VIII. It has since been associated with duels, May Day celebrations, concerts, demonstrations and a venue for free speech.

In 1730 the Serpentine was created at the request of Queen Caroline, the wife of George II.

It is 1.2 km long and extends into Kensington Gardens where it is known as the Long Water.

Whatever it is called you will be walking its full length!

The Holocaust memorial consists of two boulders lying within a gravel bed, surrounded by a copse of silver birch trees. It was the first public memorial in Great Britain dedicated to victims of the Holocaust.

The Princess Diana memorial fountain was designed to express Diana's spirit and love of children. Its creation was beset by problems, also maybe a reflection of her life. The fountain is a very popular attraction and now at last everyone is allowed to paddle in it.

Kensington Gardens

The gardens are full of interesting features

Queen Caroline's temple was built in 1734, in classical style, so the queen could enjoy the view of the lake which she had helped to create.

The Italian gardens are believed to have been a gift from Prince Albert to his beloved Queen Victoria.

The seated statue at the far side is that of Edward Jenner, the pioneer of vaccination.

The Albert Memorial by contrast commemorates the undying love of Vicky for her beloved Albert.

The four statues at the corners symbolize Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas.

There is also the Flower Walk, Kensington Palace and lots of interesting sculpture.

Princess Diana Memorial walk

If you want to explore the four Royal Parks above at a more leisurely pace this is an excellent 7 mile circuit. You will almost certainly have tripped over one or more of the 90 rose embossed waymark plaques. Download information and a map at

<https://www.royalparks.org.uk/parks/hyde-park/things-to-see-and-do/sports-and-leisure/the-diana-princess-of-wales-memorial-walk>

Holland Park

This is another park with lots of features including two Japanese gardens, a Dutch garden, woodland, the ruins of a Jacobean mansion, a giant chess set and peacocks. The facade of the mansion provides the backdrop for the Holland Park Opera Festival in the summer.

Brompton Cemetery

By the beginning of the 19th Century London's church graveyards were becoming very overcrowded and were posing a serious threat to public health. To cope with rising demand seven magnificent cemeteries were created encircling the capital.

The Grade I listed Brompton Cemetery was established in 1840. Unlike the other cemeteries, it was owned by the state and is now a Royal Park. With its Great Circle, Basilica Chapel, colonnades, catacombs and wide avenues it soon became as popular with the living as well as the dead.

Nestled among the spectacular trees and undergrowth are over 35,000 gravestones and monuments, including some well-known names like Emmeline Pankhurst and John Snow, the founder of modern epidemiology. Emmeline's grave is near the entrance to the cemetery. After passing between two mausolea look out for the Celtic Cross, just after the third tree on the left.

The cemetery is alive with the amazing stories of the people buried there, including the Sioux Chief Long Wolf who defeated General Custer at the battle of Little Bighorn. In 1996 following a campaign his body was returned to South Dakota.

Battersea Park

The park is an oasis of calm. It has a wide riverside promenade and a large attractive lake.

The Peace Pagoda was built by monks and nuns of the Japanese Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist Order as part of the 1984 Greater London Council Peace Year. At a time when the cold war appeared to be escalating the offer of a Peace Pagoda to promote world peace and harmony was certainly very welcome.

Shaftesbury Estate

You can hardly fail to notice that there are a lot of railway lines round here. Less than half a mile away is Clapham Junction. With well over 100 trains passing through every hour this is the busiest

railway hub in Europe. Before the coming of the railway lavender was cultivated in this area. Some street names still recall this obliterated bucolic past.

In the 1870s a philanthropic initiative was to improve the living conditions of workers and labourers, many of whom were working on the railways. The Shaftesbury Estate provided not only housing but also social facilities such as meeting rooms, school rooms, a wash house and baths. However one facility certainly not included was a public house!

Clapham Common

Originally common land for the parishes of Battersea and Clapham, it was converted to parkland in 1878. The handsome bandstand in the centre of the park is the largest in London.

Brixton Windmill

The mill was built in 1816 and worked by wind until 1862. After the sails fell into disrepair it was worked by steam engine until 1934 supplying wholemeal flour to West End hotels and restaurants. After the war, there were proposals to demolish the mill, which had become derelict, and build a block of flats. The proposal was rejected and in 1964 London County Council decided to conserve the mill. Repairs were carried out including the fitting of new sails. Finally in 2004 a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund enabled full restoration to be carried out on this much loved local landmark.

Opposite is the other Brixton Windmill. The strange, apocalyptic looking pub is Britain's most improbable hotbed for cutting edge music. Described by Billboard Magazine as a 'divey hangout for indie-spirited DIY musicians' it hosts gigs most nights.

Brockwell Park

As well as extensive views of the skyline of Central London from Brockwell House the highest point in the park, there is also a beautiful walled garden, a clocktower and some lovely old trees.

Dulwich

Dulwich Village has some fine Georgian houses. Old Dulwich College was founded in 1619 by Edward Alleyn, a friend of Shakespeare, for the education of 12 poor boys. The college was considerably expanded in the 19th Century and became one of the top public schools in the country. Poverty was no longer an entry requirement! Notable and notorious alumni include Ernest Shackleton, PG Wodehouse and Nigel Farage. The Old Grammar School was founded in 1842 and catered for boys from the village. It was quite separate from the college. Behind the Old College is Dulwich Picture Gallery opened in 1811 as the first public art gallery in Great Britain. It has a fine collection of Dutch masters.

With its attractive park, woods and playing fields Dulwich feels semi-rural. It even has the only toll road in London. Don't miss the table of charges on the left hand side just before the toll hut.

Sydenham Hill Woods

It is hard to believe that the Crystal Palace and South London Junction Railway once passed underneath the bridge linking Dulwich Woods and Sydenham Hill Woods and that there was a station nearby. In 1871 the French Impressionist painter Camille Pissarro painted his famous painting of Lordship Lane Station from this bridge, complete with a steam engine. The view has certainly changed. The line closed in 1954 and the station was demolished so no more trains and instead you will just have to walk to Crystal Palace!! The painting is in the Courtauld Art Gallery. All is peaceful now in the woods, which are an important nature reserve.

The Cedar of Lebanon is the largest tree in the wood and is over 150 years old.

The Ruined Folly originally made to look like an old medieval chapel is in fact Victorian.

Crystal Palace Park

The park was named after the Crystal Palace, which was moved from Hyde Park after the 1851 Great Exhibition to form the centrepiece of a Victorian pleasure ground. Sadly the palace was destroyed by fire in 1936.

The park has it all and features Italian terraces, sphinxes, a maze, lakes, a concert bowl and dinosaurs. These may not strictly conform to modern ideas about prehistoric animals but they are utterly unique and have served as inspiration for generations of children.

There is also a National Sports Stadium and an imposing yellow brick railway station.

BLUE PLAQUES

Some folks are obsessed with celebratory spotting so here is a list of some of the blue plaques you may see on the route.

SIR EDWARD GREY 1862-1933, Foreign Secretary, 3 Queen Anne's Gate

CHARLES TOWNLEY 1737-1805, antiquary, 14 Queen Anne's Gate

LORD FISHER 1841-1920, lived here as First Sea Lord, 16 Queen Anne's Gate

WILLIAM SMITH MP 1756-1835, pioneer of religious liberty, 16 Queen Anne's Gate

LORD PALMERSTON 1784-1865, PRIME MINISTER, born 20 Queen Anne's Gate

LORD HALDANE 1856-1928, statesman, lawyer and philosopher, 28 Queen Anne's Gate

WALTER CRANE 1845-1915, artist, Old House Holland Street

AGATHA CHRISTIE 1890-1976, novelist, 58 Sheffield Terrace

BILL BRANDT 1904-83, photographer, No.3 Airlie Gardens, Campden Hill

CHARLES MORGAN 1894-1958, novelist, 16 Campden Hill Square

SIEGFRIED SASSOON 1886-1967, writer, 23 Campden Hill Square

WILLIAM HOLMAN HUNT 1827-1910 artist, 18 Melbury Road

CETSHWAYO 1832-1884 King of the Zulus, 18 Melbury Road

G LOWES DICKINSON 1862-1932, author, 11 Edwardes Square

UGO FOSCOLO 1778-1827, Italian poet & patriot, 19 Edwardes Square

SIR TERENCE RATTIGAN 1911-1977, playwright, 100 Cornwall Gardens

SYLVIA PANKHURST 1882-1960, suffragette and political activist, 120 Cheyne Walk

JMW TURNER 1775-1851, artist, (a square, dark plaque), 119 Cheyne Walk

PHILIP STEER 1860-1942, painter, 109 Cheyne Walk

JOHN TWEED 1863-1933, sculptor, 108 Cheyne Walk

HILLAIRE BELLOC 1870-1953, poet, 104 Cheyne Walk

WALTER GREAVES 1846-1930, artist, 104 Cheyne Walk

EDVARD GRIEG 1843-1907, composer, 47 Clapham Common

Website for further info <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/blue-plaques/>