



GUNNERSBURY PARK

Present day walks on Gunnersbury's past

Designed for adults for whom English is an additional language

Supported by



Co-financed by



Gunnersbury Park MAP



This walk takes you around seven key areas in the park, each location is numbered on the map.

Follow the numbers on the map to complete the tour. The leaflet is accompanied by a podwalk available to download as an mp3 from: www.ealing.gov.uk/gunnersbury/walks

- ① Tale of two Mansions
- ② The Bathhouse
- ③ Not such good Neighbours
- ④ Exotic Gardens
- ⑤ Potomac Tower
- ⑥ Sports
- ⑦ The Temple

Gunnersbury Park INTRO

The Webb House

We have developed a tour of the park for English learners to highlight some of the stories we found most interesting and to give you a taster of Gunnersbury's history.

This leaflet is accompanied by a podwalk available to download as an mp3 from www.ealing.gov.uk/gunnersbury/walks.

The name Gunnersbury may have come from Gynylda, the niece of King Canute. King Canute was the King of Denmark, England, Norway and part of Sweden. Gynylda lived in Gunnersbury until she was sent away from England in 1044 when the Normans took over the country.



Go straight to the museum. Walk left around the museum and stop next to the arch. Stop here.

1 Tale of two MANSIONS

John Morley bought Gunnersbury in 1800 then he demolished the existing house and divided the estate into 13 plots. He sold plot one to Stephen Cosser. Before Cosser died in 1806 he sold the land to Major Morrison who built Gunnersbury House (small mansion) on it. The rest of the 12 plots were sold to Alexander Copland who built Gunnersbury Park House known as the large mansion. A few years after that, the Rothschilds bought the big property which included Gunnersbury Park House. The estate was divided between the two owners with a big wall down the middle until the Rothschild family bought the small mansion in 1889 and re-joined the estate.

Gunnersbury Park House:

The large mansion in Gunnersbury Park is a historic regency house, which belonged to the Rothschild family from 1835 to 1925. Some things still remain the same, for example: it still has a range of grand rooms which were designed by Sydney Smirk. Also it has a servants' wing that contains the Victorian kitchens which give the feeling of being back in history.

In 1929 the large mansion became home to the museum, which shows a wide range of local history of the boroughs of Ealing and Hounslow. In the museum there are many different items like objects, paintings and photographs, which help us to understand the history of local people. These objects are so sensitive that most of them are kept in storage to protect them. The museum is now owned jointly by the boroughs of Ealing and Hounslow and it is a great place to visit for a day out.

Gunnersbury House:

This mansion was built at the beginning of the 19th century by either Cosser or Major Morrison and later a service wing was added. The building did suffer some damages from World War Two. The small mansion is surrounded by nature, with Princess Amelia's bathhouse on the right and the large mansion on the left.



Walk through the arch and go straight past the house. Walk down the stairs on the right. Stop outside the bathhouse. Stop here.



1 House Servants



The Webb House



Gunnersbury House



Gunnersbury Park House

The 2 BATHHOUSE

Princess Amelia (10 Jun 1711 – 31 October 1786) was a member of the British royal family, the second and favourite daughter of King George II. Princess Amelia bought Gunnersbury Park in 1761 and used it for holidays until her death in 1786. Shortly after she moved to Gunnersbury, Princess Amelia built a summerhouse and grotto here. The current bathhouse is the result of the work of several owners. The original building may have been a bath house or a dairy in which Princess Amelia could pretend to be a servant and make milk and cheese.



Princess Amelia



Man restoring the inside of bathhouse 1950



Follow the path, next to the wall and over the bridge. Turn left at the bamboo. You can see the gothic ruins on your left and the stables and Japanese Gardens in front of you. Stop here.



2 The Bathhouse

3 Not such good NEIGHBOURS

One owner of the small mansion built many walls at the bottom of his garden because he didn't want to see the Rothschild's stables or the large mansion. This wall was built like a gothic ruin in order to look beautiful and old. Most of these have now been removed but you can still see the wall with a small tower today.

The Rothschild family was rich and important and they eventually bought the small mansion so that they owned all of the estate. The family moved here from Germany and Lionel Rothchild was the first Jewish Member of Parliament in Britain, who did not have to swear on the Bible.

They used to hold parties to celebrate and show off their gorgeous gardens. They had a huge knowledge about oriental cultures, as they were a cosmopolitan and open-minded family. For this reason they made a beautiful Japanese garden with original plants and trees from Asia. Today we can see the ruins of this magnificent landscape.

The Stables were designed by Sydney Smirke for Nathan Rothschild in the 1830s. Although they are covered by vegetation and are in a very poor state of repair, they are listed buildings because of their special architecture and history. These ruins include a Portland stone Rothschild coat of arms shield.



The Ruins



The Stables



Go back to the bamboo and turn left. Cross the small bridge to your right. Turn left after the bridge and walk towards the building (the Orangery). Stop here.

3 Japanese Gardens



4 EXOTIC GARDENS

The Orangery was designed by Sydney Smirke for the Rothschild family. Sydney Smirke is best known for the circular reading room at the British Museum (1854-1857). In the 19th Century, all fashionable houses had an orangery, a type of glass house, to show everyone how much money they had. Owners would take their guests there on tours of the garden to admire not only the fruits and exotic plants inside but also the beautiful architecture.

In the past, there was a horseshoe shaped pond on the grass in front of the two mansions and the Orangery. The water made a beautiful reflection of the building. Unfortunately this area was filled in with earth in the second half of the 20th Century. For this reason you can now only see what looks like two bridges. Behind the Orangery, you can see a square formed by trees. These trees were the old beech hedge surrounding a tennis court built in the 1920s / 30s for the public park. As nobody cut the hedge, it grew into trees.



Tennis Court



Two Bridges



Walk left around the Orangery and take the path on the left. On the right, you will find the tennis court with the lines of trees around the edge. Turn right after the tennis court and walk along the small path onto the grass. Keep going straight, across the field. Take the small hard path to the right. Straight away you will be in the trees. Follow the path until you see the Potomac Tower in front of you. Stop here.



Orangery & Horseshoe Pond

4 Orangery

51

Potomac TOWER

In the far corner of Gunnersbury Park is the Potomac Lake and Tower. The Potomac tower is a romantic Gothic style boathouse and octagonal tower. James Pulham & Co built it during the 1860s or 1870s for the Rothschild family. It is a fine piece of architecture that was influenced by the Gothic revival of the 19th century.

This boathouse is made of brick and built on the former brick kiln that was used to make roof tiles. After years of using the clay from here to make bricks, a lake was formed in the hole. It is said that in the bottom of the lake you can still find the engine that was used to pump out the water.

Today the Potomac Tower is not in use because it is in very bad condition and you cannot go into the tower. Also, the lake is very deep and can be dangerous.



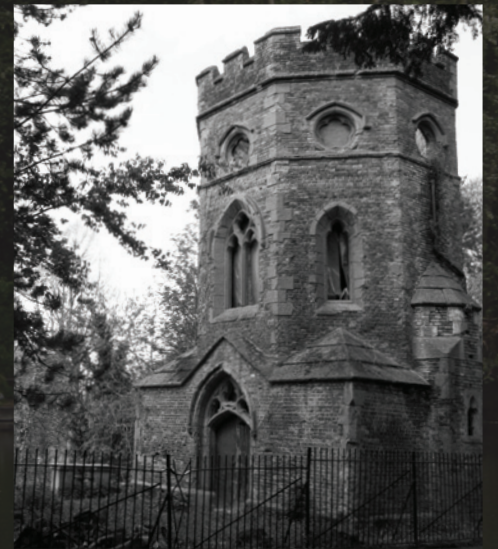
The Potomac Lake



Go past the tower and follow the path around the pond. You can see on your left a big area used for different sports. Keep walking on the path and turn left on the same path and keep walking until you can see a children's playground. Stop here.



5 Potomac Tower & Lake



Potomac Tower

In the west part of Gunnersbury Park there is a big area used for different kind of sports including:

- Football
- Cricket
- Tennis
- Golf
- Bowling
- Rugby

People have played sports there for about 100 years and before that the Rothschilds used the area for farming. In the north of the field the family used to play polo where today it is still possible to see the mounting block to climb onto your horse, near the corner of the children's playing area.



Walk around the playground to the right. Follow the path until you see the temple and the pond in front of you. Stop here.



Games on the playing fields



Playing Fields

6 Playing cricket

The TEMPLE

The Temple is one of the older buildings in the park. It was built probably just before or after Princess Amelia arrived at Gunnersbury. It is made of red brick with four columns and decorations built by Sir William Chambers. Today it is used as a “Victorian Classroom” for school visits to the park and the museum.

The Italian garden in Gunnersbury Park is behind the Temple. The garden was inspired by Italian gardens in the 14th century with its geometric forms and the perfect symmetry. In the garden you can find many varieties of plants like climbing wisteria and clematis, box hedges, lavender and iris. There is a deep circular pond with a fountain surrounded by a camomile lawn and stone pedestal for a sundial at the centre.

In front of the temple is a round pond. The round pond is one of the oldest parts of the park built at the same time as the Temple. The pond was used for boating by the public in the last one hundred years. A lot of visitors to the park can remember going boating on this pond when they were children.



Take the path to the left until you are next to the temple. Go behind the temple. Here is the Italian Garden. Cross the garden to the back wall. Turn right and you will be back at the main entrance of the park. Take the path to the left until you are next to the temple. Go behind the temple. Here is the Italian Garden. Cross the garden to the back wall. Turn right and you will be back at the main entrance of the park.



Italian Gardens 1905



Italian Gardens



Boating on the pond

Opening of the park 1926





Gunnersbury Park, London W3 8LQ

- TUBE:** Turn left out of Acton Town tube station (Piccadilly line) and walk for about 10 minutes, crossing the North Circular.
- CAR:** Off North Circular A406 north of Chiswick roundabout.
- BUS:** E3

Gunnersbury Park

- Museum
- Café
- Two playgrounds
- Two ponds
- Public toilets (next to café)
- Sports pitches (rugby, cricket, football, tennis, bowling, pitch and putt golf)

This podwalk has been developed by a group of English learners from Action Acton (Cristina Cots, Francesca Crucitti, Sayjai Prasert, Eman Al-Salihi, Nadia Zikara, Maria Nieto, Aurora Urbano) in partnership with Ealing Council, Hounslow Council, John Laing and Accession Social Enterprise. The project has been funded by Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) and Skills Funding Agency Equality and Diversity Partnership Project Fund

Thanks to Francesca Crucitti for supplying the modern photographs for this pod walk

