



Dulwich Park trail



Uncover your Southwark

Refurbished in 2006, the Green Flag Award winning Dulwich Park covers 29 hectares and is packed with historic features, exciting facilities and perfect picnic spots.

Dulwich Park trail

STOP 01 Oak trees

Dulwich Park opened its gates on 26 June 1890. Some of Robert Browning's poems were inspired by walking in the Dulwich Woods near his home in Camberwell. John Ruskin, the great Victorian writer, thinker and artist, lived most of his life on Herne Hill.

This trail begins at College Gate. Follow the path to the boating lake and read the sign between the two shelters facing it. The 1907 photo shows two oak trees that are still standing today. Can you find them? Imagine the different families that have walked past these trees over the centuries. If you listen very carefully you might hear laughter on the wind.

STOP 02 Drought tolerant garden

Walk straight ahead until you arrive at the drought tolerant garden. Can you find any lizards hidden in the garden? Look in the wooden posts and ceramic tiles. Lizards like warm, dry habitats. Many of the plants in this garden come from the Mediterranean and have oils like lavender to stop them drying out in the hot sun, or furry leaves like lamb's ear to protect them. Feel how soft these leaves are.

STOP 03 Waterbirds

Leave the drought tolerant garden and follow the map directions along the boardwalk over the water. Look for places where water birds might nest. What materials do they use for their nests? Can you see them easily or are they hidden? A very special bird on the lake is the little grebe. In spring you maybe lucky enough to see their courtship rituals or spot their nest under the trees on the lake. Surrounding you, on each side of the bridge, are some quite tall plants, carefully feel their stems and use this rhyme to decide what type of plant they are: 'Sedges have edges, Rushes are round'.

STOP 04 Turkey oak

Using the map directions leave the boardwalk and follow the trail to the Turkey Oak tree. This Turkey oak is one of the great trees of London. What do you think makes it a remarkable tree? Do you have a favourite tree you like to walk past, look at and sit under? Even dead trees are good for wildlife, as you can see at the wildlife conservation area.

STOP 05 Wildlife conservation

Walk to the wildlife conservation area. Many tiny animals live in the cracks and crevices of dead wood. If it's summer look out for the male stag beetle with large antler shaped jaws. South London is an important breeding site for these endangered beetles. You may also find the common field grasshopper. Listen to their chirruping call. Do they call with their mouths or make the noise by rubbing their legs together? Watch out for spiders and their webs glistening in the early mornings of autumn. Listen for the 'yaffling' call of green woodpeckers, which sounds like they are laughing at you. They are a vibrant green with a splash of red on their heads.

STOP 06 Winter garden

Walk past the bowling green to the winter garden. What do the tree leaves look like? Are they large, curved, long or needle-like? What can you hear under the trees? Are the leaves still on the trees in winter? There are two types of coniferous species here; Lawson cypress and English yew. Very shy birds such as tree creepers, tiny goldcrests, and firecrests live in and near these trees.

STOP 07 American garden

Walk to the American garden. In May, you can enjoy the flamboyant show of colour when the rhododendrons are flowering.

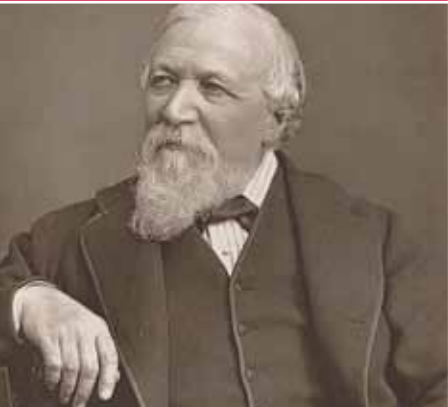
STOP 08 East Lawns

Walk to the East Lawns, close your eyes and see how many birds you can hear. Walter Besant once described a walk from Dulwich through the woods to Penge in 1899 as 'a cathedral of singing birds'. Today you'll still find a rich community of singing birds here.

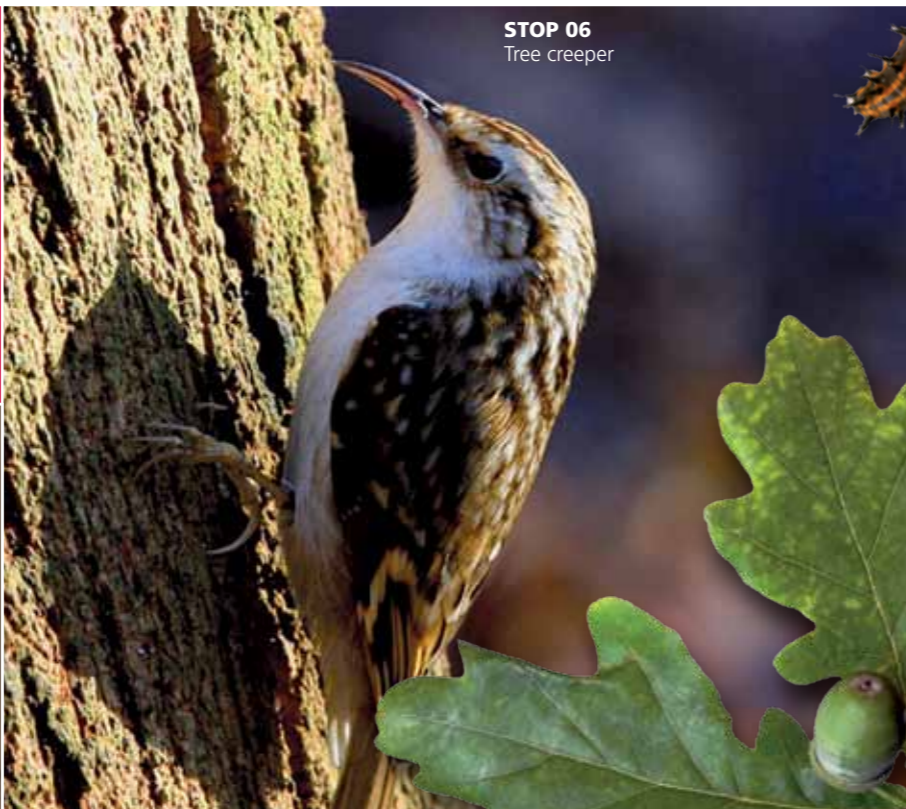
STOP 09 Cafe

Finally on your way to the Cafe, it is worth remembering that due to food shortages during World War two, Dulwich Park was used for allotments and horticultural lessons. Today the park provides a special place for south London families to enjoy nature.

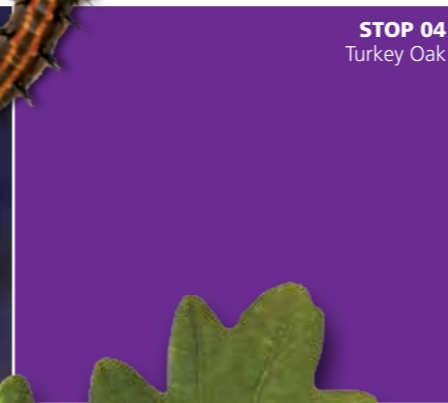
STOP 01 Robert Browning



STOP 06 Tree creeper



STOP 04 Turkey Oak



STOP 05 Stag beetle larvae



STOP 03 Common Yellow-sedge



STOP 02 Picture of ceramic tiles – lizard

