Located in Bermondsey, Green Flag Award winning Southwark Park offers a wide range of sporting facilities, a boating lake, wonderful gardens, a new cafe and an art gallery.
Welcome to Southwark Park, the first municipal park in London opened on 19 June 1869 an important landmark in London’s history. Renowned novelists Charles Dickens and George Orwell wrote about parts of Bermondsey and Rotherhithe in their books.

This trail begins at the Christchurch Gate entrance on Jamaica Road. Walk to the elegant bandstand. A classic feature of Victorian parks, this is a replica of one of a pair bought from the Royal Horticultural Society by the Local County Council in 1899. View the narrow avenues of London plane trees which replaced earlier plans for building plots which local people campaigned against. The trees that you see would have been young trees in the 19th Century.

Walk to the Ada Salter garden. Alfred (1873-1945) and Ada Salter (1866-1942) were active in getting health care for local working class people to alleviate extreme poverty and ill-health they witnessed in the area. Ada became a member of the London County Council beautification committee and instigated the building of this garden. There are many interesting plants and it is a peaceful place to sit and reflect.

Leaving the bandstand, walk towards the bowling green, you will come to a drinking fountain memorial to Jabez West, a member of the local temperance society. It is said to be the first public memorial in London dedicated to a working man and was erected by public donation. On the way to the wildlife garden you’ll pass the bowling green where Southwark Park Bowls Club was formed in 1908.

Walk to the playground, which if you have young children in your family, will be the place to stop for a while to play. Grace Kimmins (1871-1954) the driving force behind the Guild of Play, felt that education should not just be schools and timetables but ‘invade all public playing-spaces, parks and open places’. Remember this as you walk round the park exploring the sights and sounds of nature with your children.

Before you leave the park at the Gomm Gate entrance take a moment to look at the ceramic collage on the side of the café.