



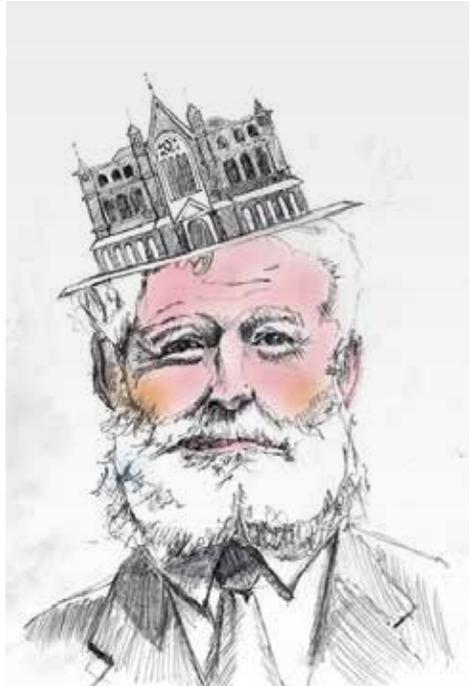
# Eccentric Dulwich Walk

2.5 hours

Brockwell Park SE24 0PA

Dulwich Library SE22 8NB

Explore Dulwich and its unusual architecture and characters including Dulwich College, Dulwich Picture Gallery - the oldest purpose-built art gallery in the world, and Herne Hill Velodrome.



Eccentric Dulwich Illustration, by Geles Tomas

**1 Dulwich Library**  
John Passmore Edwards was a 'champion of the working classes' and created 70 major buildings, such as libraries, hospitals, drinking fountains, schools and art houses for the general public. Opened in 1897, the Library is one of them.

**2 Dulwich Park**  
The park originated as a group of meadows known as "five fields" and many of the ancient boundary oaks survive today. The park was given a makeover in 2003 to reinstate the original Victorian planting. What you see today is very similar to what it would have looked like in 1890. Bear right as you walk through the park and exit via the old College Gate.

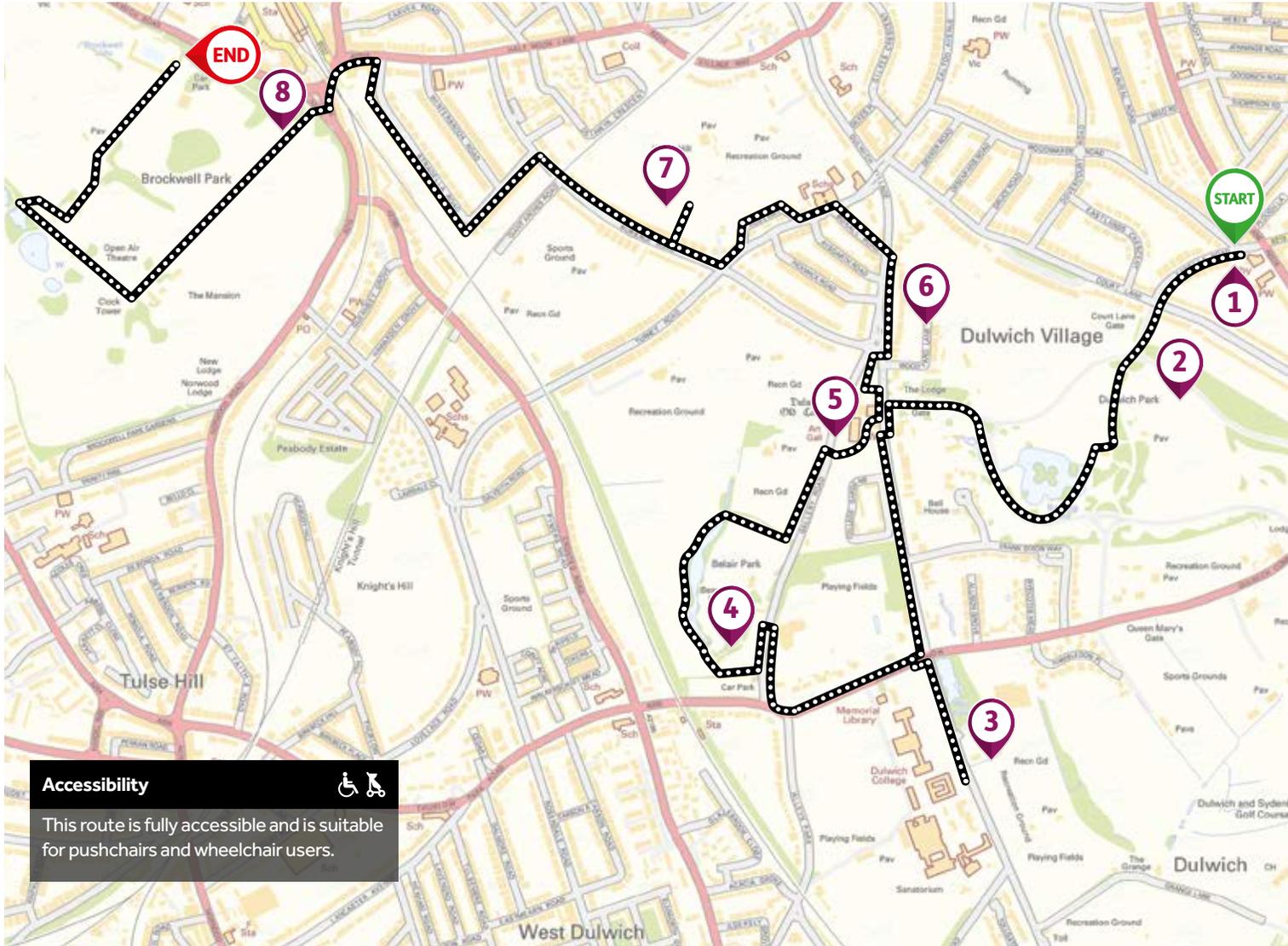
**3 Dulwich College**  
Founded in 1619, the school was built by successful Elizabethan actor Edward Alleyn. Playwright Christopher Marlowe wrote him some of his most famous roles. Originally meant to educate 12 "poor scholars" and named "The College of God's Gift," the school now has over 1,500 boys, as well as colleges in China & South Korea. Old boys of Dulwich College are called "Old Alleynians", after the founder of the school, and include: Sir Ernest Shackleton, the Antarctic explorer; Ed Simons of the Chemical Brothers; the actor, Chiwetel Ejiofor; Raymond Chandler, detective story



Edward Alleyn, photograph by Sara Moiola

writer; Sir Edward George (known as "Steady Eddie", Governor of the Bank of England from 1993 to 2003); C S Forester, writer of the Hornblower novels; the comedian, Bob Monkhouse, who was expelled, and the humorous writer PG Wodehouse, best known for Jeeves & Wooster.

On the opposite side of the road lies The Mill Pond. This was originally a clay pit where the raw materials to make tiles were dug. The picturesque cottages you can see were probably part of the tile kiln buildings that stood here until the late 1700s. In 1870 the French painter Camille Pissarro (1830-1903) fled the war in Europe and briefly settled in the area. Considered one of the founders of Impressionism, he painted a famous view of the college from here (now held in a private collection).



**Accessibility**  
This route is fully accessible and is suitable for pushchairs and wheelchair users.





Dulwich College, photograph by Sara Moiola



Bel Air Park, photograph by Ishwar Maharaj

4 Belair Park The landscape of this park is Grade II listed and other listed structures in the park include the park lodge and entrance gate. In 1965 Belair became a public park when the London Borough of Southwark was formed. Walk along the path next to the water, this is a small part of the mostly underground River Effra that flows under Brixton. This ancient river was once wide enough for a boat to pass; Canute the Danish King and conqueror sailed up to Brixton from the Thames in c.1016 AD.

5 Dulwich Picture Gallery Opened in 1817, this is the oldest purpose-built art gallery in the world, designed by Sir John Soane (of Bank of England fame). It houses one of the largest collections in the country of Old Masters, from Tudor to 19th century pieces, and was bequeathed by the noted art collectors Desenfans & Bourgeois, on condition that they should be available for the 'inspection of the public' and that a mausoleum be built for their bodies within in the picture gallery. The most stolen painting in

the world, Rembrandt's Jacob III de Gehyn, has been taken from the gallery four times and is now known as the "Takeaway Rembrandt".

6 Dulwich Village William Joyce, aka Lord Haw-Haw, held National Socialist League (pro-Nazi) meetings in Dulwich village, addressing crowds on a soapbox. This famous traitor began broadcasting pro-Nazi propaganda to the allies in 1940 in an effort to demoralise them during WWII. He was the last person to be hanged for high treason in the UK. Ironically, his family home in Allison Grove was among the first to be destroyed by German bombs.

After a brief resurgence of interest in the 1980s, the track gradually fell into decline as various attempts at resurfacing wore out. In 2005 it was closed when no one could be found to run it. However its fame and reputation as the home of cycling in the UK won out, and British Cycling agreed to take on the lease along with volunteers from the cycling community. Since then it has gone from strength to strength, with a new, all-weather track laid in 2012.

7 Herne Hill Velodrome The first cycle track was built here in 1891 and is one of the oldest in the world. During WWII this hidden but historic velodrome was used as a barrage balloon site, but was resurfaced to host cycling events in the London Olympic 1948 games.

8 Brockwell Park Created in 1811, the Brockwell Hall Park Estate was purchased by Lord Rosebery in 1892 for the people of Southwark and Lambeth, saying "Whatever happens, this is preserved to you and your descendants forever as an open space". The park has a huge range of facilities, including sports pitches, a BMX track, and even a miniature railway.

What the walkers say...

"A really good walk to learn more about the history of the area – drawing attention to the history of things I'd see everyday and not consider."