

A WALK THROUGH ST. GEORGE'S FIELDS

There is much for you to see in the grounds which spread for some two and a half acres around the seven buildings that make up St George's Fields Estate, Bayswater. The grounds are generally suitable for the less able and those in wheelchairs, but there are three or four steps and not all paths are paved. Do feel free to wander around the gardens or to rest a while on one of the benches whilst you enjoy the tranquil hidden oasis you now find yourself in.

There is no single route we can suggest that will give you the chance to see everything without some doubling back, but here is a suggestion for you.

Begin by going back towards the main gates.

You will pass on your left an area we have just had cleared of dead trees, ivy and struggling plants and replanted with specimens of Austrian pines which in time will grow to form a focal point on driving into the Estate. The under planting beneath these trees is a species of lavender.

Pass beyond the point where the roads meet and take the path to your left through the gate that has been propped open and kept ajar for you. Once through the gateway on your left is one of the two ponds here at St George's Fields. You will see some very large specimen fish guarded by our plastic Heron to keep the wild, hungrier, herons away.

The path you are on joins the pathway leading to a gate into Albion Mews. Bear left and then right onto a lawn area.

Before going onto the lawn, pause and look up to your right into the canopy of one of London's largest Plane trees. The girth of this tree is over nineteen feet (9 metres). Like many of the trees at St George's Fields it was threatened by rampant ivy climbing up into the canopy and much time and effort have been spent to bring this ivy under control. Moving ahead, you will pass a new laurel hedge and under an arch into an informal area, through which the path wends its way, to a circular, paved area, where you may wish to rest for a while on one of the benches.

From the circle you can look across or walk across one of the lawned areas, between two of the Ziggurat buildings. This particular lawned area is used for the occasional fun game of croquet, and if the hoops are in place please take care and avoid them. **There are two alternative suggested routes at this point and we recommend the second.**

If you choose to wander across the 'croquet lawn' you will come to another footpath, which divides the lawned areas and ahead of you, you will see the famous geodesic globe, designed by John Zerning, a resident of St George's Fields. To your right will be an area being developed as a small rose garden fronted by a low box hedge, behind which we have planted, this year, some ornamental apple trees, currently being trained into the required shapes to the your left this same path will lead you up a step to a small area from which the tunnel on your right, passing beneath Kendal Steps, brings you back to the Estate Office where there is a photographic display, toilets and water available.

Follow the path to your right, which leads you to an open area, ending in a gateway, which residents use to gain access to the Bayswater Road. Hyde Park is opposite you at this point. In this area, as you look back toward the buildings, you will see the second and smaller of the ponds, and a change from the predominantly British trees, of which the evergreen laurel is a feature. Retrace your steps, pass by the small pond and go to your right, across an area in front of a cycle shed, to where we have opened up some double gates, so you can circumnavigate the perimeter of the grounds. You are now entering into an area with many tall, well developed, English trees. (Tucked away behind a screen of laurels, on your right, is

an area used by the gardeners to create leaf mould and to grow on some plants for the grounds. This area is uneven and not open to you today).

Moving ahead, you will come to a paved footpath, which winds in one direction towards a gate residents use as a short cut heading towards Oxford Street and, to the left, out towards the area next to which we have planted the ornamental apple trees mentioned above.

Proceed straight across the footpath onto another lawn area. If you are weary do have a seat on the bench, concealed in the arbour on your right, otherwise go on and you will come to a woodland area and the herb garden, created within the last eighteen months from a previously neglected part of the grounds. Earlier this year, when the cherry trees were in blossom and the tulips were in flower, it was a place of beauty, now for you and the residents it is a place of peace and quiet, to get away from it all, whilst being only ten minutes or so away from Marble Arch or Paddington.

Leave the woodland area through the raised beds of the herb garden and turn to your right, you will pass on your left, or take a walk onto and across the lawned area with the geodesic globe, or you can continue along the roadway when you will shortly come to the area by the Estate Office, where there is a photographic display, toilets, chilled water or orange juice.

We hope you have enjoyed the quick tour. You are welcome to revisit any part of the gardens that have caught your interest. During the course of the day there will be representatives from the gardening contractor Tony Heywood Landscapes to answer questions. We hope that you will come back next time the gardens are open so you can see how the process of transforming and maintaining the grounds continues.