



# 'GEORGE DEAR'S DAFFODIL WALK'

2.5 miles, (40-50 minutes)  
Start at **ENTRANCE TO STREATHAM CEMETERY, GARRATT LANE, SW17**

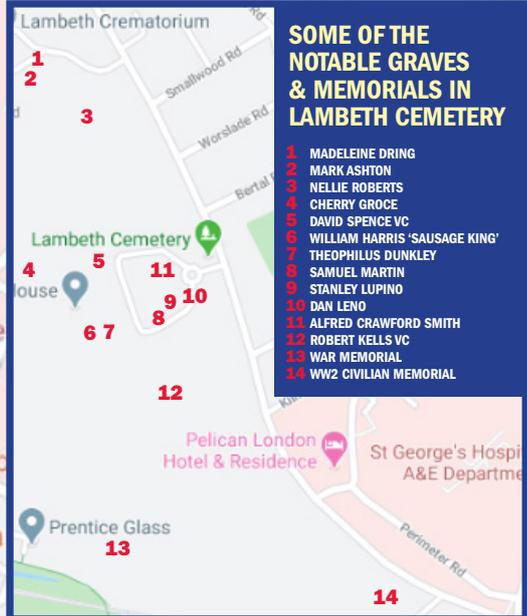


## SOME OF THE NOTABLE GRAVES & MEMORIALS IN STREATHAM CEMETERY



- 1 HENRY BUDDEN
- 2 CHARLIE WILSON
- 3 GILBERT MAPPLEBECK
- 4 PAULINE GOMPERS
- 5 ALFRED MAGER
- 6 CIVILIAN WW2 MEMORIAL
- 7 HENRY GENOCHIO
- 8 WAR MEMORIAL
- 9 JOHN THOMSON
- 10 ARTHUR LING
- 11 EDWARD FOSTER VC
- 12 HAZELHURST V2 VICTIMS
- 13 WW2 FIRE PERSONNEL
- 14 BERYL TROKE
- 15 HENRI-LOUIS VAN DER MEERSCHEN
- 16 HOLY FAMILY CONVENT NUNS
- 17 PADDY FLYNN
- 18 JOHN HEAVENS
- 19 SAM 'THE GATEKEEPER' MANGAN

## SOME OF THE NOTABLE GRAVES & MEMORIALS IN LAMBETH CEMETERY



- 1 MADELINE DRING
- 2 MARK ASHTON
- 3 NELLIE ROBERTS
- 4 CHERRY GROCE
- 5 DAVID SPENCE VC
- 6 WILLIAM HARRIS 'SAUSAGE KING'
- 7 THEOPHILUS DUNKLEY
- 8 SAMUEL MARTIN
- 9 STANLEY LUPINO
- 10 DAN LENO
- 11 ALFRED CRAWFORD SMITH
- 12 ROBERT KELLS VC
- 13 WAR MEMORIAL
- 14 WW2 CIVILIAN MEMORIAL

# GEORGE DEAR'S DAFFODIL WALK (3 miles, 40-60 minutes)



Thanks to these downloadable maps you can select your own short local history walk taking in significant features of interest in the **Tooting/Earlsfield/Wandsworth** area. Summerstown182 'Great Escapes' are just the job for your daily exercise allowance! You should be able to do each one in less than an hour. There are now multiple flavours to choose from, every one a winner! **Perfect for mind, body and spirit.**

Thanks to his research 25 years ago and an article in 'The Daffodil Society' journal, George Dear (1937–2020) put the local connection of Peter Barr 'The Daffodil King' firmly on the map. In 2019 a blue plaque was placed at the entrance to Aboyne Estate commemorating this history. With roots in the area stretching back to the 1830s, George was born and raised in Pevensey Road on the daffodil fields where his ancestors once worked. With a lifelong interest in the natural world, George worked for many years as a groundsman and maintenance manager for Wandsworth Borough Council. This walk acknowledges the gift of the precious history he has given us.

**1 START STREATHAM CEMETERY, GARRATT LANE** - Before it opened for burials in 1892, this was the site of Springfield Nursery, part of a wide network of market gardens and allotments on both sides of Garratt Lane. The rich alluvial soils of this stretch of the Wandle Valley were originally tilled by Huguenot market gardeners. From the late 18th century they were the site of a number of large nurseries, the most notable of which was run by the Rollisson family. For almost a century they were one of the most famous nurseries in England, they sourced plants from all around the world and supplied many of this country's grandest houses and gardens. There is now almost no trace of their existence in the area.

**2** Springfield Nursery was also known for a while as the American Nursery. A good circuit might start by turning left and continuing down the straight path to the perimeter wall. The cemetery has many notable graves; Corporal Edward Foster VC, vegan pioneer Arthur Ling, 'great train robber' Charlie Wilson, John Thomson photographer and Henri-Louis Van der Meerschen, one of the six founders of the London Symphony Orchestra to name a few. Among the 383 Commonwealth War Graves are those of seven women. There are also bee hives, fruit trees and regular community events organised by [The Friends of Streatham Cemetery](#). Start your walk with a circuit of this peaceful, tranquil place - it is beautiful all year round but of course in the spring you will see many historic daffodil types growing amongst the graves. Some were planted in memory of George 'Sam the Gatekeeper' Mangan who kept watch from a hut at the Broadwater Gate. His family were Pevensey Road neighbours of George Dear. Every grave has a story and there are many notable ones that we know about. Some are indicated on the map.

**3** Turn right out of the cemetery and follow Garratt Lane alongside the railings. Directly opposite is Copeland House built in the 1970s. Curiously one of the great daffodil growers of the early 20th century was called William Copeland who named flowers after his daughters, Irene and Mary. Just past this are the beautiful Holborn Estate almshouses, dating from 1848 and originally constructed as desirable homes in the country for the 'deserving poor' in the parish of the famous St Clement Danes Church on The Strand. The grounds include a chapel and landscaped gardens which originally featured over 2,000 shrubs, trees and plants and over 6,000 bulbs. A number of mature fruit trees at the back still produce a spectacular harvest.

**4** Just past a 1930s block called Moreton House, is the pedestrian entrance to the Aboyne Estate. Look out here for a historic plaque commemorating [Peter Barr 'The Daffodil King'](#). It indicates the entrance to his nurseries which were in a number of locations along Garratt Lane between 1863 and 1890. We chose this spot because of its busy location and the amount of people who pass through here. It was also indicated by Barr himself. When writing a letter to a visitor in 1885, he directed them from the newly-opened Earlsfield Station to the entrance of his nurseries 'opposite the Holborn Almshouses'. This correspondence is preserved in the Royal Horticultural Society's Lindley Library. Archives. Well worth a visit should anyone want to do more research on 'The Daffodil King'.

**5** Cross the zebra, looking carefully at the gable brickwork of Diprose Lodge where the year 1848 and letters 'CD' are picked out. Bear right into Wimbledon Road. Ahead of you, the Wimbledon Stadium redevelopment site dominates the area. The greyhound stadium opened in 1928 by Tallulah Bankhead had been around for less than ten years when George was born. Another popular local sport was pigeon-racing and The White Lion pub, currently a flooring shop at the corner of Summerstown on the right, was the centre of local activity with birds being released from the roof. The waiting room on Platform One at Earlsfield Station was used for Friday night gatherings of the Earlsfield Pigeon Club. Devotees would pack their birds off on the 'Pigeon Special' train to Southampton, from where they would fly home. Turn left into Hazelhurst Road passing the tower blocks. Bear round to the left in front of Smallwood School. Opposite here, Sutton Courtenay House marks the site of a [V2 bomb on 19 November 1944](#) which killed 35 people and destroyed 100 homes. A green plaque placed in 2015 commemorates them. It was unveiled by Arthur and John Keeley, two young brothers pulled from the rubble. The event was attended by at least 15 other survivors. Living just a few streets away, George recalled the event and his brother being thrown across the street by the blast.

**6** George was a pupil at Smallwood Road School, sometimes being dropped off on his uncle's horse and cart. Children who attended here in the 50s were

given daffodil bulbs to grow and some have proudly shown me their certificates. This was an initiative started after the War by Alice Street of the ['London Flower Lovers League'](#). I wonder how many of them would have been aware of the daffodil growing tradition in this area some eighty years before?

**7** Take a right onto Smallwood Road and right again into Blackshaw Road, crossing to enter Lambeth Cemetery via the Crematorium entrance. Bear left, passing through a section of Muslim burials and consider a short circuit of another fascinating cemetery, Lambeth Cemetery was built in 1854 on farm land purchased from Samuel Martin of Bell's Farm. Originally a farm manager at Mount Nod in Streatham and Hyde Farm in Balham, he died in 1867 and is buried in a prominent position in front of the southern Chapel of Rest. An inscription above the entrance of both these buildings records this sale, which required the creation of Fountain Road. Commemorated on his grave are three of Martin's wives, also his sons who ran public houses locally. Other notable graves nearby are entertainers; Dan Leno, Stanley Lupino and Charlie Chaplin Senior. Also close by is [William Harris 'The Sausage King'](#) and celebrity undertaker, Theophilus Dunkley. Buried in an unmarked plot is RHS orchid artist, [Nellie Roberts](#). The west side of the cemetery runs close to the Wandle and a number of large watercess beds were here until the 1960s. Think about that when you're next queuing up outside Lidl.

**8** From Beral Road, go left into Alston Road, then right into Rostella Road. This unusual but pretty name is the plural of the 'rostellum', part of an orchid's stigma, a delicate part of the flower, crucial to reproduction and something that fascinated Charles Darwin. So much so that he produced a book about orchid fertilisation in 1862. How this very ordinary terraced street was named must surely be something to do with the orchid connections close by.

**9** Turn right again into Pevensey Road with a great view of St George's Hospital looming on the horizon. It was once the site of two 19th century fever hospitals. Shortly after the war in the wake of the creation of the National Health Service, a decision was taken to relocate St George's Hospital and Medical School from Hyde Park Corner to this site. It was another 30 years before it was fully operational. Passing Fairlight Road, consider that serving this area here for 70 years was a massive social care facility called [Fairlight Hall](#), founded by Leonard Shepherd and the Shaftesbury Society. 'The Fairlight' was a rough, tough area, known for its poverty and deprivation and the Hall was a lifeline for local people in pre-NHS days. Many of the 'poorly-constructed' homes condemned as slums by the 1930s are still standing today. Widely associated with 'dusting' - the business of rubbish disposal was conducted at a couple of nearby yards. Many men in the area like [Tiny Ted' Foster](#) worked 'on the dust'. Other people like Cocker Woodley were scrap dealers or costermongers. Mrs Hammond sold second-hand clothes from barrows on the street. No 18 Pevensey Road is where George was born, the third generation of the Dear family to live in this area, at the heart of the Daffodil Kingdom.

**10** Take a left into Fountain Road. Stretching all the way down to Garratt Lane was Robert Parker's 'Exotic Nursery' renowned for its orchids, azaleas and amaryllis. Parker had been associated with some notable names in the orchid world and was a regular supplier of samples to the Botanic Garden collections at Kew. He came to the area in 1862 when he married Samuel Martin's daughter Winifred. Having sold the nursery for housing in 1883, he remarried and moved to Clapham. He died in 1892 and is buried in West Norwood Cemetery.

**11** Back on Garratt Lane, turn left and follow the road to Smallwood Road, opposite Streatham Cemetery. A small nursery here which closed in the sixties was the last one in the area. This is a key location in the daffodil story, the site of the main Bell's Farm building, associated with the Barr family, Robert Parker and Samuel Martin. The farm, upon whose fields Lambeth Cemetery and the Fairlight houses would be built. Hard to believe, but in this area was grown camomile, peppermint, licorice, lavender, roses and poppies. It was common practice for Tooting children to take time out of school to harvest the camomile. Traces of the farm remained until the 1960s with horses kept in a field behind Smallwood School and carts and barrows in a yard at the Garratt Lane end of the road where the main farm house was located. This is now the site of a small close a little way down on the left. In the 1930s a woman called Annie Kitz, the mother of nine children from Hazelhurst Road once stood at the cemetery entrance selling flowers.

**12** If you are heading back to Tooting Broadway, one other key location you might want to look at are a number of grand three storey houses dating from the 1850s. These are on the last stretch of Garratt Lane on the left hand side. Peter Barr and his family including seven children lived in at least two of these when he first established his nursery in Tooting. It was here that he experimented with new types of daffodil and embarked on travels to collect species not grown in this country for 200 years. As a result of this work, and a great 'Daffodil Conference' of 1884, the humble daffodil was transformed into one of this country's favourite flowers. Close your eyes and imagine how it was in 1876 when James Thorne described Tooting as 'A region of villas and nursery gardens, very pleasant'.

FOR INFORMATION AND MORE WALKS: [summerstown182.wordpress.com](http://summerstown182.wordpress.com)  @summerstown182

If you enjoy your walk, please consider making a donation to CriticalNHS, sustaining local business by keeping the St George's frontline staff fed [www.criticalnhs.org](http://www.criticalnhs.org)