

Summerstown 182
GREAT ESCAPES

'NELLIE'S EXOTIC ORCHID TRAIL' HISTORY WALK

3 miles, (40-50 minutes)
Start at **TOOTING BROADWAY, UNDERGROUND STATION**

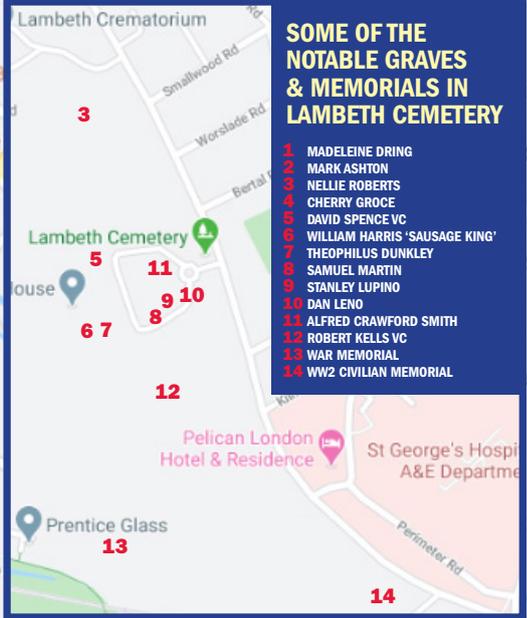


SOME OF THE NOTABLE GRAVES & MEMORIALS IN STREATHAM CEMETERY



- 1 HENRY BUDDEN
- 2 CHARLIE WILSON
- 3 GILBERT MAPLEBECK
- 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

NELLIE'S EXOTIC ORCHID TRAIL (3 miles, 40-50 minutes)

Originally devised to help everybody through the lockdown, these great downloadable walks take in significant features of historical interest for you to enjoy in the **Tooting/Earlsfield/Wandsworth/Wimbledon** area. There are now multiple flavours of Summerstown182 'Great Escapes' to choose from, every one a winner! **Perfect for mind, body and spirit.**

FOR MORE ABOUT [NELLIE ROBERTS AND THE LOUGHBOROUGH ROAD HISTORY PROJECT](#)



This walk connects the two great south London cemeteries and celebrates someone who has been championed over the last few years by the outstanding Loughborough Road History Project. They have shined a light on Nellie Roberts, whose dedication to her craft resulted in some 4,500 beautiful orchid illustrations, painted in a 56 year long career as the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Orchid Committee artist. When normality resumes, we'll be holding a special commemoration for Nellie at her unmarked grave in Lambeth Cemetery. In the meantime, enjoy a stroll through streets where orchids, daffodils, azaleas and tropical ferns were widely grown in the 19th century. Its a legacy so strong that one of the roads was even named after part of an orchid. Flower to the People!

1 START TOOTING BROADWAY - The statue of King Edward VII recognises the great Edwardian age which saw rapid development in terms of the construction of magnificent public buildings and homes in this area. The statue was unveiled on 4 November 1911 by the Mayor of Wandsworth, Archibald Dawney. The King, but more especially his long-suffering wife Alexandra were great orchid lovers. His mother, Queen Victoria was on the throne at the height of 'Orchid mania' in the second half of the nineteenth century, with wealthy collectors like Sigismund Rucker from Wandsworth despatching explorers to far flung parts of the world to find and bring back to Britain, previously unknown orchid species. Collectors were also employing skilled gardeners to cultivate new hybrids. A lavish display of 60,000 orchids from every part of the Empire, crafted into the shape of a crown was displayed at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.

2 With the station behind you, cross the High Street and aim on your left for Garratt Lane. This is the gateway to the nurseries and one prolific nurseryman who changed the fortunes of the daffodil during his time in Tooting was Peter Barr, renowned the world over as 'The Daffodil King'. He lived in a number of the buildings on the right hand side of the road, raising a family of seven children. Dating from the 1850s, these dwellings had names like Sussex Villa, Myrtle Villa and Severn Villa.

3 At the bend, Gambole Road on your left leads to St George's Hospital. Two fever hospitals were built here on the 1890s, [The Fountain and The Grove](#). The Grove Nursery was on this site. From this point onwards, most of the land on [both sides of Garratt Lane](#) would have been cultivated by market-gardening of some description. The log books at Kew Gardens indicate the level of contributions that came from the nurseries in this area, particularly the Rollissons. On the right was Springfield Nursery, on the left Bell's Farm. All would be swept away by frantic housebuilding at the turn of the twentieth century.

4 Continue along Garratt Lane turning left into Fountain Road. On the right was Robert Parker's Exotic Nursery. It extended to Khartoum Road, two streets further on and all the way to Alston Road. The son of a florist, Parker worked at the Pineapple Nursery in St John's Wood - whose legacy survives in 'The Nursery End' at Lord's Cricket Ground. He was then a partner of [Benjamin Samuel Williams](#) at the Victoria and Paradise Nursery in Holloway. Charles Darwin sought out their orchids for his 1862 book. Parker came to Tooting that year and married Winifred, daughter of the Duke of Bedford's farm manager, Samuel Martin. The Exotic Nursery, clearly indicated on maps of the 1870s appeared to thrive and in 1881 employed 20 men and two boys. Its sale in the South London Press in 1883 suggested it was 'ripe for building'. Even after this had started the houses at the bottom of the road on the right hand side were called 'Exotic Villas'. Traces of the horticultural history survive in some of the front gardens on this stretch, one of which has won the 'Wandsworth in Bloom' Award.

5 Continue down Fountain Road, crossing Cranmer Terrace which leads to the hospital and passing two historic plaques, [Corporal Edward Foster VC](#) at No92, jazz pioneer [Sadie Crawford](#) at No143. Anderson House opposite this was the site of the 'Tooting Dust Destructor' a rubbish incineration facility, famed for its 153 foot chimney and 'objectionable odours'. Fountain Road Recreation Ground replaced it in 1930.

6 Turn right into Blackshaw Road which runs the length of Lambeth Cemetery. A list of some of the more notable burials is on the map. It was built in 1854 on farm land purchased from Samuel Martin. 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 this records his involvement. Robert Parker's wife who died in 1882 is also buried in this plot along with Martin's sons who ran public houses locally. Parker himself, having sold the nursery, remarried and moved to Clapham. He died in 1892 and is buried in West Norwood Cemetery. Other notable graves nearby are entertainers; 'The King's Jester' [Dan Leno](#), Stanley Lupino and Charlie Chaplin Senior. Also close by is [William Harris 'The Sausage King'](#) and celebrity undertaker, [Theophilus Dunkley](#). The west side of the cemetery runs close to the Wandle and a number of large watercress beds were here until the 1960s. A substantial amount of land were allotments and some of these have survived, though now surrounded by light industry, electrical pylons and the massive AFC Wimbledon Stadium redevelopment on [Plough Lane](#), another name evoking the old farm days.

7 [Nellie Roberts](#) is buried in a public unmarked plot with no indication. Its at the northern end of the cemetery bordering the crematorium, section d3, grave number 262. Nellie was born on the 15th October 1872, the daughter of William and Rebecca Roberts who ran a jewellery and watchmakers shop at 72 Loughborough Road, Brixton. The young Nellie had developed some skill in botanical painting, particularly orchids and her father proudly put some of these in his shop window. The story goes that the son of local orchid collector, Richard Isaac Measures spotted the work and invited Nellie to paint some of the orchids in the [Measures collection](#) at Woodlands on what is now Tooting Bec Gardens in Streatham. Measures' gardener Henry Chapman was a member of the Orchid Committee in 1896 and it is thought he may have suggested Nellie as a possible artist to document the Committee awards. In any case, between 1897 and 1953 Nellie painted every orchid given an award by the RHS Orchid Committee. The RHS collection of over 4,500 of Nellie's paintings is still used today by the Orchid Committee in their awards decision making. Nellie was the [orchid artist](#) for the RHS for 56 years, yet largely unknown outside the world of orchid growers. On 29 March 2019, the 60th anniversary of Nellie's death, the Loughborough Road history project, placed a poster with a short history of her life, on the shop window of the building she had lived and painted in all her life. They have now submitted an application to English Heritage for a blue plaque at what is now 92 Loughborough Road.

8 Exit Lambeth Cemetery from the Crematorium gate and go right, cross the road and turn down Smallwood Road. This was the main track leading from Bell's Farm to the fields on which Lambeth Cemetery was 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.

9 Take the second right into Pevensy Road, then first left into Rostella Road. This unusual but pretty name is the plural of the 'rostellum', part of an orchid's stigma, preventing its self-fertilisation. It also forms a liquid which allows pollen to stick to visiting insects. It fascinated [Charles Darwin](#) who 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. Nellie would surely have appreciated being laid to rest near a place with such an appreciation of her favourite flower.

10 At the end of Rostella Road, on your right is the Posterhaus picture framing shop. Take a left turn and cross Garratt Lane, proceeding to Streatham Cemetery. In the 1930s a woman called Annie Kitz, the mother of nine children from [Hazelhurst Road](#) once stood at the entrance selling flowers. A small nursery here on the corner of Smallwood Road which closed in the sixties was the last one doing business in the area.

11 [Streatham Cemetery](#) was previously the site of Springfield Nursery, also once known as the American Nursery. Connecting what is now the Fishponds Playing Fields with the Rollisson family's Tooting Nursery which employed some 65 people in its mid-19th century heyday. Some 60 years before that William Rollisson Senior undertook revolutionary [hybridisation of Cape Heaths](#) here. Collectors came from some of the greatest gardens and grandest houses in England to buy from the Rollisson collection. Joseph Paxton and the Duke of Devonshire were regular patrons. The main glasshouses were on the area where Moffat and Hereward Road now stand. Medieval water features known as 'fishponds' were used to grow aquatic plants and add to the aspect of what was described as 'the finest show house in the trade...climbers hanging down in long festoons from the roof around the principal entrance, tall stately tree ferns spreading their large fronds in graceful form producing a sight not easily forgotten'. The cemetery opened in 1892, along with Lambeth, in response to the second cholera epidemic of 1848-49. Mark Apsey, an 8 year old boy from Hereward Road was the first person buried here.

12 If you can, exit the cemetery via the Broadwater Gate. If this is closed you might need to continue down Garratt Lane. Going through this gate, turn left into Broadwater road and follow this down to Tooting High Street, past Fishponds Road and St Augustine's Church. In some of the private gardens along here you might see ferns and greenery giving a hint at the type of plants once grown so long ago.

13 Behind St Augustine's Church is a wall dating from the late 18th century, the early years of the Rollisson Nursery. Its almost certainly part of one of a cluster of manor houses which populated this area. One of these, owned by a Sir Henry Maynard was visited by Queen Elizabeth I in 1600. She usually travelled with an entourage of 200 people. The house is roughly on the site of the Al-Muzzamil Mosque on Gatton Road.

14 Take a right into Tooting High Street and return to the station, passing the markets, the Defoe Chapel and Selkirk Road.

FOR INFORMATION AND MORE WALKS: 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