



'TOOTING MAGICAL, MUSICAL HISTORY TOUR'

3 miles, (50-60 minutes)
Start at **TOOTING BROADWAY UNDERGROUND STATION**



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TOOTING MAGICAL MUSICAL HISTORY TOUR (3 miles, 50-60 minutes)



Select your own local history walk with one of these downloadable maps, taking in significant features of interest in the **Tooting/Earlsfield/Wandsworth** area. Summerstown182 'Great Escapes' are just the job for your daily exercise allowance! Depending on how much you want to take in, you should be able to do each one in less than an hour. Multiple flavours to choose from, every one a winner! **Perfect for mind, body and spirit.**

The historic streets of Tooting have always attracted people looking for a good time. Whether in boozy smoke-filled pubs or cavernous theatres, basement flats, churches or the back-room of high street bakeries, those recording music or performing live have left their mark and this tour tells their story. From 'First Lady Sadie' through to the much-loved Sound Lounge, Tooting folk have loved their music and some of the biggest names in the world have come here to entertain them.

1 START TOOTING BROADWAY UNDERGROUND STATION - Look at the statue of King Edward VII - his reign in the first decade of the 20th century was an extraordinary time when a wave of African-American performers and musicians descended on London. Rag-time artists such as Pete Hampton performed at Buckingham Palace and the King himself had banjo lessons from the Bohee brothers. Hampton and his wife Laura Bowman lived in Wimbledon Park. They were a great influence on the young Louisa Marshall from Fountain Road, now 'Sadie Johnson' treading the boards as a dancer at the Empire Theatre in Leicester Square and learning the saxophone with her future husband Adolph Crawford.

2 Cross the main road to your left and the shabby vacant building sandwiched between the pub and Halifax was the location of a Wimpy burger bar. Young Mark Feld had moved with his parents from Stoke Newington to a prefab in Summerstown in the early 60s. His Dad worked as a delivery driver at the Earlsfield Airfix factory, his Mum on Berwick Street Market. After a brief spell at Hillcroft School, now Ernest Bevin College, Feld told the local Labour Exchange he was looking for a job as a poet. Instead he got one flipping burgers opposite Tooting Broadway and in a nearby menswear shop called Edgars. Home was opposite The Corner Pin pub and he busked outside The Prince of Wales, now Tesco. Many older people have memories of meeting him. Discovered by Simon Napier-Bell, the manager of the Yardbirds, Feld and his band 'John's Children' morphed into Marc Bolan and T.Rex becoming Britain's biggest selling pop star of the early 70s with a string of enduring Number One hits like 'Get it On', 'Metal Guru' and 'Children of the Revolution'. Aged 29 and planning a comeback, he was tragically killed when his car crashed into a tree on Barnes Common on 16 September 1977. A much-visited shrine there marks the spot.

3 The next roads on your right opposite Sainsbury's are Garratt Terrace and Gilbey Road. Stan Tracey 'The Godfather of British Jazz' grew up in these streets before and during WW2. An only child, he kept his mother company while his father worked in a West End Club. His musical influence came from listening to his neighbours' radio from the bottom of the stairs and his Mum's piano. A 70 year musical career was honed in the 50s on transatlantic cruise ships. In the 60s he was the resident pianist at Ronnie Scott's jazz club and his sound can be heard in the titles of Michael Caine's 'Alfie'. He played with all the greats and wrote songs on the night bus home to Streatham. After a career dip in the 70s when he considered becoming a postman, he went on to win many accolades and awards. One composition in later life was inspired by a visit to the WW1 battlefields of Loos and dedicated to his father Stanley Clark Tracey who was wounded and captured in 1915 aged 18.

4 At No19 Gilbey Road in 1901, 15 year old Louisa Marshall worked as a 'general domestic servant'. In 2014, a mention on a Radio 4 programme 'The Lost Women of British Jazz' led to local awareness that a pioneering musician had been born in a house on Fountain Road. Raised in extraordinary poverty into a world of asylums, workhouses and domestic service, Louisa Marshall travelled the world, played with some of the greatest musicians of the age and is believed to be the first British female musician to feature on a jazz recording. 'Sadie' spent the last 30 years of her life in the USA and is buried in Washington DC. For that and the fact she is the first woman to be recognised with a blue plaque in Tooting, we call her 'First Lady Sadie'. The nearest theatre to this area where we know she definitely performed was at Wimbledon Theatre on 29th March 1915, where she and Adolph Crawford, her future husband were billed as 'Crawford and Johnson, Creole instrumentalists and dancers'.

5 On the corner of Coverton Road was a clothes shop called Daisys'. Charlie Harper, the lead singer of Britain's most enduring punk band, The UK Subs ran a hairdressers shop here. Still touring and venerated as the godfather of UK punk, the band had seven consecutive UK Top 30 hits between 1979-81.

6 On the other side of the road the historic Tooting Constitutional Club established in 1917 as a working men's club is soon to be redeveloped as a hotel. It was home in its later days to the Court Sessions Folk Club, hosting groups like The Wandle Delta Blues Band which featured Van Morrison's keyboard player Joe Gillespie.

7 Continue down Tooting High Street with the roads leading to St George's Hospital to your right. Just past The Manor pub, consider the tragic story of Mary Millington. She was this country's biggest adult movie star of the 1970s and a tabloid fixture. A plaque in Soho observes that her film 'Come Play With Me' screening for almost four years, was the longest-running British film in history. In 1978 she ran the 'International Sex Centre' complete with 50-seat cinema from [London House](#), the non-descript grey building just beyond the bus-stop on the bridge. Beset with personal problems and financial worries she very sadly took her own life on 19 August 1979, shortly after completing work on the Sex Pistols movie 'The Great Rock and Roll Swindle'.

8 Cross into Longley Road, known as Tooting's 'Beverley Hills' as it was home to so many music hall stars; Pat Rafferty the Irish comedian, Harry Tate and Charles Whittle, famous for the song 'Let's All Go Down The Strand'. Easy access to the trams taking them all the way to the West End was one major draw. No46 was the home of [Harry Lauder](#), one of the biggest musical stars and the highest-paid performer in the world when he lived here between 1903 and 1911. Touring the world relentlessly, he is believed to be the first British artist to sell more than a million records. With a widowed mother and six younger siblings to support, he went down the Lanarkshire pits at the age of 13. WW1 sealed his popularity. He was active in encouraging recruitment though his only son died at the Somme inspiring his most famous song 'Keep Right on to the End of the Road'. Lauder usually performed in full Highland regalia, kilt, sporran, tam o'shanter, and twisted walking stick and sang Scottish-themed songs. The plaque was unveiled in 1969 accompanied by a piper playing 'Highland Laddie'.

9 Take a left into Charlmont Road then left again into Trevelyan Road. The houses numbered 22-24 have a curious tale to tell. The Beatles, enjoying their first Number One 'From Me to You' played at The Granada on 1 June 1963 alongside Roy Orbison and [Gerry and The Pacemakers](#), all huge acts at the time. Local word got round that the Fab Four were staying in Trevelyan Road and there were a number of sightings of them in and around this property. Earlier that day they recorded a radio show at BBC studios in central London and the following day moved on to Brighton and the next leg of a hectic tour. The house may have provided a tranquil resting place near the venue for them to catch their breathe. In that crazy summer 'Beatlemania' took hold and the next time they came to the area in December for an appearance at [Wimbledon Palais](#), all police leave in Tooting and Mitcham was cancelled.

10 Opposite the house follow Mellison Road, taking the third right into Brightwell Crescent, then second left into Charlmont Road. Turn left out of here onto Mitcham Road. A few doors down is the Mixed Blessings bakery. The Tooting Music Centre AKA 'TMC' recording studio was once located behind here. It was frequented in the 70s and 80s by an eclectic mix of famous names, including glam-rockers, synthpopsters, post-punks and reggae artists. Popular local legend has it that one of these was Bob Marley, who left his mark by scrawling his signature on a wall. In the early 80s it was a hugely significant reggae studio. Black Slate, Errol Dunkley, Aswad, Mikey Dread, Dillinger and Leroy Smart all passed through. The founders of 'Dub Vendor' recorded their early hits here on the 'Fashion Records' label. The late Junior Delgado, one of reggae's most distinctive voices and a major artist in the 70s and 80s ran a recording studio in the nearby Trident Centre called '[Incredible Music](#)'.

11 Other artists recording here included Mud, a glamrock band from the Carshalton and Mitcham area who got the break with an appearance on the Basil Brush Show. Tigerfeet was the biggest selling record of 1974, a year when they also had the Christmas Number One. New Musik's '[Living by Numbers](#)' was one of the first synthpop hits of the 1980s, a tune later used in a Casio advert. The Nick Straker Band, Captain Sensible and The Piranhas also recorded here. Gary Glitter took time out from a session to get his boots fixed at Konstantino's next door.

12 Continue on Mitcham Road, looking down the streets opposite to see All Saints Church, high on the hill on the edge of the Totterdown Fields estate. Renowned for its acoustics, stunning interior and majestic organ. Artists who have recorded here include Pavarotti, Kiri Te Kanawa and Paul McCartney chose it for his 'Tribute to Linda'.

13 The [Tooting Granada](#) was a hugely popular local music venue from the 50s before converting into a bingo hall in 1976. Frank Sinatra played here in 1953 and Jerry Lee Lewis was famously jeered off stage. During the 60s the top artists of the day all performed here; The Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix, The Beach Boys, Dusty Springfield, The Who, James Brown, The Kinks, The Bee Gees, The Supremes, Gene Pitney.

14 Cross the road and continue left. On the corner of Longmead Road, Primark is on the site of another grand building, the Central Methodist Hall, whose stately presence stands out in all the old photos of this area. Built in 1910 by Joseph Rank, the bread magnate who taught occasionally in the Sunday school, it was a huge concert and recital venue. Extremely popular was a Saturday night performance by the band of the Irish Guards. Damaged in WW2 it was knocked down in place of a Marks & Spencer's store in 1967. Pass down Longmead Road with the market to your left and turn left into Totterdown Street, then first right into Blakenham Road.

15 At the peak of their popularity, on 21 December 1980, 5,000 people attended The Police concert in a circus tent on Tooting Common. Part of their Zenyatta Mondatta Tour, initially planned to take place at the Oval Cricket Ground, but cancelled for fear the ground might be damaged. They were bizarrely supported by comedian Tommy Cooper and Citizen Smith actor Robert Lindsay was the compere.

16 A number of churches in this area are renowned for their gospel music and choirs. The New Testament Assembly on Beechcroft Road and an old Methodist chapel on Lynwood Road, now the home of 'The Church of God of Prophecy' and associated with Karen Gibson, leader of [The Kingdom Choir](#) who sang for Nelson Mandela and at Harry and Meghan's wedding.

17 Take a second left into Letchworth Street and follow this into Upper Tooting Road. Ahead of you, a major development is taking place on the site of the old 'Royal Arsenal Cooperative' store. Associated with the Sri Lankan tamil community, in 1975 a revolutionary group was founded here by Arul Pragasam. His daughter Mathangi is better known as the singer 'MIA' - her '[Paper Planes](#)' the soundtrack to the film 'Slumdog Millionaire'. She was part-raised in Tooting where her Mum worked as a seamstress. For just over a year a hugely popular community-focused live music venue called 'The Sound Lounge' run by [Hannah White](#) and Kieron Marshall made its home here before sadly being forced to relocate because of the new development.

18 Cross the road and bear left. Broadwater road, home of the popular annual [BATCA Community Fun Day](#) is the third road on your right. A scottish singer called Sandi Thom emerged from nowhere in the summer of 2006 when her debut single, 'I Wish I Was a Punk Rocker (With Flowers in My Hair)', topped the UK Singles Chart. An early example of the power of social media, her '21 Nights from Tooting' was streamed from the basement of her Tooting flat. Intense media interest and a major record deal swiftly followed. Rumours abounding that it was all a slick music biz PR stunt were denied by her management. '*We had every major record company in this piss-stained basement in Tooting. If it was orchestrated we'd have done the gigs from Chelsea, not a flat two doors down from the Halal Butchers*'.

19 Continue past the Markets and the final stop on the tour is The Castle, a very popular performance venue in its time. 8 April 1970 was a momentous evening with Status Quo supporting Mott the Hoople, ditching their outfits for jeans and t-shirts and adopting a new earthy approach. Apparently the low ceiling above the stage prompted their stooped 'heads-down' performance style. Rod Stewart and The Faces, Free and Eric Clapton also performed here. Having originally rehearsed in the pigeon shed behind The Leather Bottle on Garratt Lane, The Castle was the scene of a weekly slot by a local heavy metal band called Girlschool. They supported Motorhead on their 1979 Overkill tour and shot to fame on Top of the Pops a few years later with '[Please Don't Touch](#)'. Lemmy described Girlschool's Kelly Johnson, '*as good as any guitarist I've ever seen in my life*'. They headlined the Reading Rock Festival in 1981.

FOR INFORMATION AND MORE WALKS: summerstown182.wordpress.com @summerstown182

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