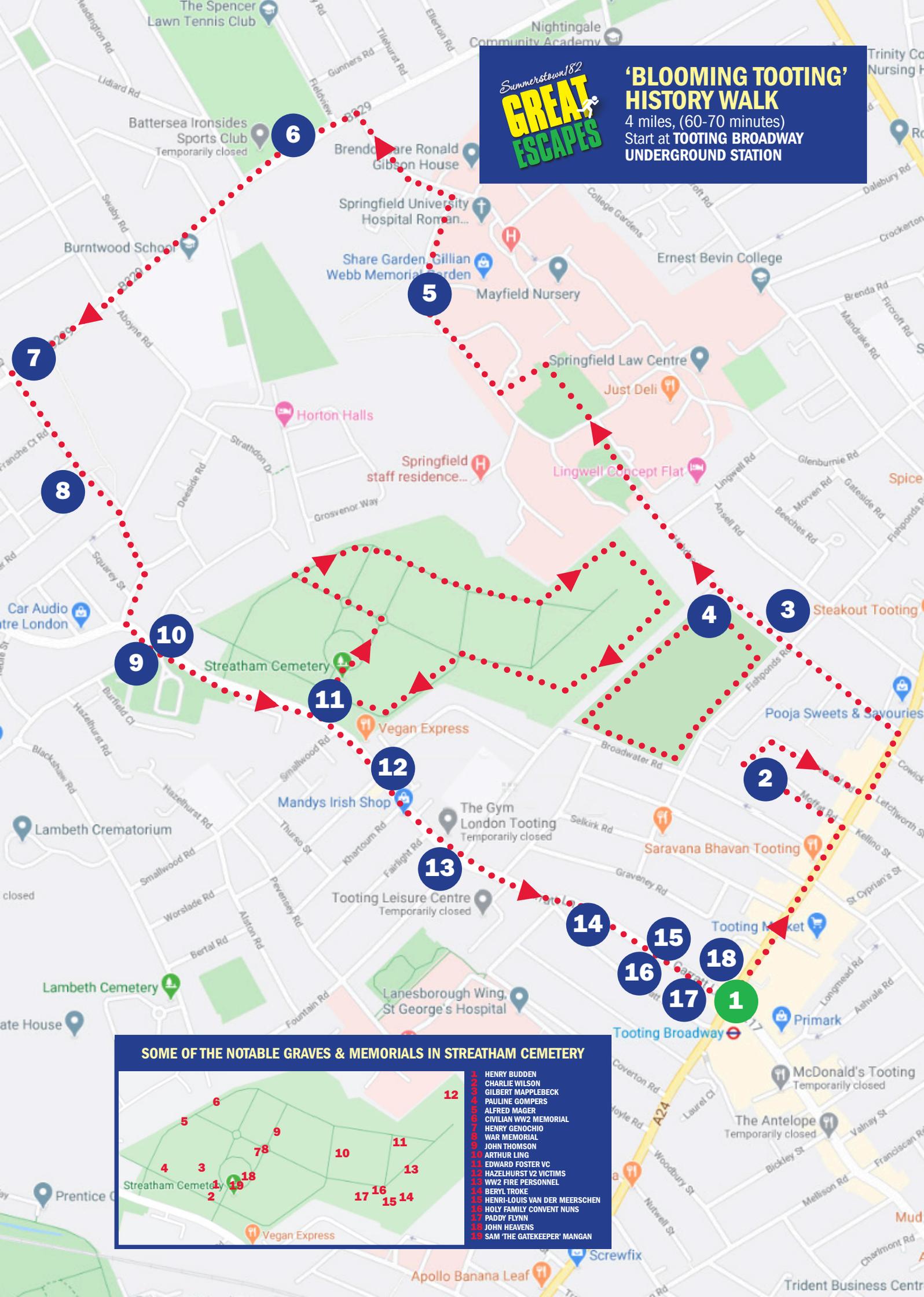




'BLOOMING TOOTING' HISTORY WALK
 4 miles, (60-70 minutes)
 Start at **TOOTING BROADWAY UNDERGROUND STATION**



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

BLOOMING TOOTING (4 miles, 60-70 minutes)

Originally devised to help everybody through the lockdown, these downloadable maps take in significant features of historical interest for you to enjoy on walks 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...**



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. There is now almost no trace of their work and the current 'Blooming Tooting' initiative, inspired by a blue plaque last year celebrating Peter Barr 'The Daffodil King' is a first step in getting this significant history more widely known.

1 START TOOTING BROADWAY TUBE STATION - King Edward VII's statue in front of Tooting Broadway is a reminder of a golden age at the start of the twentieth century when the population of Tooting multiplied by seven over about 15 years and many great public buildings were constructed. 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'*.

2 Walk down Tooting High Street as if heading towards the markets. Take the fourth turn on the left into Moffat Road and loop round into Hereward Road. These streets are built on the site of the great glasshouses, the crown jewels of William Rollisson's Tooting Nursery. This was located here for almost one hundred years. All sorts of [groundbreaking hybridisation](#) and horticultural wizardry took place here, most notably the growing of orchids, heathers and tropical ferns. It was one of the most famous nurseries in England, sourcing plants from all around the world and supplying many of this country's grandest houses and gardens.

3 A little further on, just past the ongoing '[RACS Building](#)' development, turn left into Hebdon Road. Before its time as a nursery this was the grounds of one of the great Tooting manor houses, one of which was visited by Queen Elizabeth the First in 1600. A number of water features associated with these are believed to be medieval moats. They are remembered today in the name of 'Fishponds Road'.

4 The site of the largest pond is now [Fishponds Playing Field](#). Wandsworth Council has just agreed to open this underused space for the duration of the summer, from 8am-6pm. Take the opportunity to do a circuit of this unique area, once part of the Tooting Nursery and dominated by 'a large pond of nearly an acre for growing aquatic plants. Adjacent to it a good breadth of marshy land grew osiers which were made into baskets crates and hampers used for dispatching orders'. In more recent times Transition Town Tooting held their splendid 'Trashcatchers Carnival' here. Fingers crossed the new opening becomes permanent.

5 Follow Hebdon Road up the hill where a new housing development leads you into the Springfield Hospital site. This beautiful, highly evocative and atmospheric space opened in 1841 as the [Surrey County Pauper Lunatic Asylum](#). It has an extraordinary [pioneering history](#) in mental health care. The home of South West London & St George's Mental Health Trust, it is presently undergoing extensive redevelopment but is still perfect for a quiet walk. A major part of this involves the construction of [London's first new public park](#) since the 2012 Olympics, due to open in 2022. Veering to the left, follow the path past the main building and the walled garden which is home to the [Share Community Nursery](#).

6 Continuing to veer left, exit the hospital site onto Burntwood Lane and turn left, passing the Magdalen, Fieldview and Openview estates on the right hand side of the road. One of a number of sizeable mansions on this site was [Burntwood Grange](#). Built in 1832 and there for over a century it was noted in a book by Edward Kemp for its magnificent gardens and conservatory 'recently redesigned and replanted by the established Tooting nursery of Messrs Rollisson'. A little further on is [Burntwood School](#) awarded the prestigious Stirling Architecture Prize in 2015. It was originally built in the 50's on the site of Springfield Farm which served the hospital and its patients. One of its outstanding surviving features is a Grade II listed ice house.

7 Cross Aboyne Road and enter Garratt Green from the footpath on the left. Garratt Green is a much-loved and historic public space associated with public meetings and carnivals, most notably '[The Mayor of Garratt](#)' event of the late 18th century. This involved a procession, a mock election and pageant which attracted tens of thousands of revellers. It was halted at the time of the French Revolution but was occasionally resumed.

8 Opposite a playground, along the boundary of Garratt Green on the site of a recent housing development was the location of a Victorian running track owned by local entrepreneur [Robert Sadler](#). A site of great significance in the development of athletics in this country, where some of the finest runners of the time, then known as 'pedestrians' competed in front of huge crowds.

9 Veer left and follow Aboyne Road into Garratt Lane and turn left. Just past a roundabout you will see 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. A stone tablet commemorates a visit by The Queen Mother in 1954.

10 Directly opposite this and facing the zebra crossing, 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. Prior to coming here, Barr lived in Islington and is buried in [St Pancras and Islington Cemetery](#) in East Finchley where his grave has been recently visited.

11 Continue left down Garratt Lane to the magnificent [Streatham Cemetery](#) on the left hand side. Before it opened for burials in 1892 this was the site of Springfield Nursery. The cemetery has many notable burials; 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. A leisurely circuit of the cemetery takes about 20 minutes. A very poignant section is that where many of those 'killed by enemy action' in Hazelhurst Road are buried. Probably the most unusual grave is that of Henry Budden. Opposite the main entrance is Smallwood Road. A small nursery here which closed in the sixties was the last one in the area. This was also the location of Bell's Farm, associated with the Barr family, Robert Parker and Samuel Martin, who in 1854 sold some of its land to create [Lambeth Cemetery](#). Both sides of Garratt Lane from this point were cultivated by nurserymen and market gardeners.

12 Cross Garratt Lane at the zebra crossing and a little further on, look out for Rostella Road, named after a delicate part of an orchid, crucial to reproduction and something that fascinated [Charles Darwin](#).

13 Between Khartoum and Fountain Road, stretching all the way down to Alston Road was Robert Parker's 'Exotic Nursery' renowned for its orchids. Clearly indicated on maps of the 1870s, it employed '20 men and two boys' in 1881. Its sale in the South London Press in 1883 suggested the area was 'ripe for building'. The houses in this area date from shortly after then. The 'Fairlight' area was known for its poverty and deprivation but many of the 'poorly-constructed' houses condemned as slums by the 1930s are still standing today. For 70 years, and a lifeline in pre-NHS days, it was served by a massive social care facility on Fairlight Road called [Fairlight Hall](#), founded by Leonard Shepherd and the Shaftesbury Society.

14 Don't miss No934 Garratt Lane, the home of [Sidney Lewis](#) who is believed to be the youngest serving soldier in the British Army in the First World War. Sid was 12 when he joined up and at the age of 13 was operating a machine gun at the Battle of the Somme. He survived the war and came home to this house where his parents lived until after the Second World War. A [blue plaque](#) was placed here in 2016, unveiled by [Sid's son Colin](#) in front of a crowd of 500 people.

15 On the other side of the road a little further on, are a number of grand three storey houses dating from the 1850s. [Peter Barr](#) and his family including seven children lived in at least two of these properties when he first established his nursery in Tooting. It was here that he experimented with new types of daffodil and embarked on his travels to collect species not grown in this country for 200 years. As a result of this work, culminating in a great 'Daffodil Conference' of 1884, the humble daffodil was transformed into one of this country's favourite flowers.

16 Almost directly opposite one of Mr Barr's residences, one of Britain's best-loved stars of stage and screen, the actor [George Cole](#) was born to a single mother in 1925. He was adopted and lived for the first five years of his life in nearby Coverton Road. He died in 2015.

17 A little further on from this is a sparse car-park fronted by a low wall. For about 25 years this area was the site of Drouet's [Children's Pauper Asylum](#), housing up to 1,400 orphans and 'pauper children' in very poor conditions. Tragically up to 180 of them died of a cholera epidemic in 1849. Many are buried in St Nicholas Church, commemorated by a tablet in the churchyard. Charles Dickens visited the institution and described it as '*brutally conducted, vilely kept, preposterously inspected, dishonestly defended, a disgrace to a Christian community, and a stain upon a civilised land*'.

18 On the corner is Carphone Warehouse. For a long time this building was the site of [Peter Jung's German bakery](#). The family were known for their great kindnesses to the poorest families in the area. During the First World War it was the scene of a number of violent anti-German demonstrations which resulted in extensive damage. In spite of this the shop always re-opened.

A great reference for the nurseries in 'Blooming Tooting' are the back issues of the Gardener's Chronicle on the [Biodiversity Heritage Library](#) website. Between 1863 and 1900 you will find mentions of Peter Barr, 'Tooting Nursery', 'Springfield Nursery', the Rollissons etc and there are some beautifully illustrated advertisements. Simply google 'Gardeners Chronicle and the year, the example here is 1864.

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