

## Top tips and healthy hints

Walking is one of nature's best anti-depressants. An Essex University research team has shown that so-called 'green exercise' – walking in a natural environment – reduces stress levels, and enhances mood and self-esteem. Taking a walk in the open air also gives you time to clear your head and think through any projects, ideas and challenges. So take the chance to walk in your local parks and green spaces whenever you can. Keep your senses alert and tune into what's around you. There's plenty to look out for.

**"Walk and be happy, walk and be healthy. The best way to lengthen out our days is to walk steadily, and with a purpose."**

Charles Dickens



## Step-by-Step

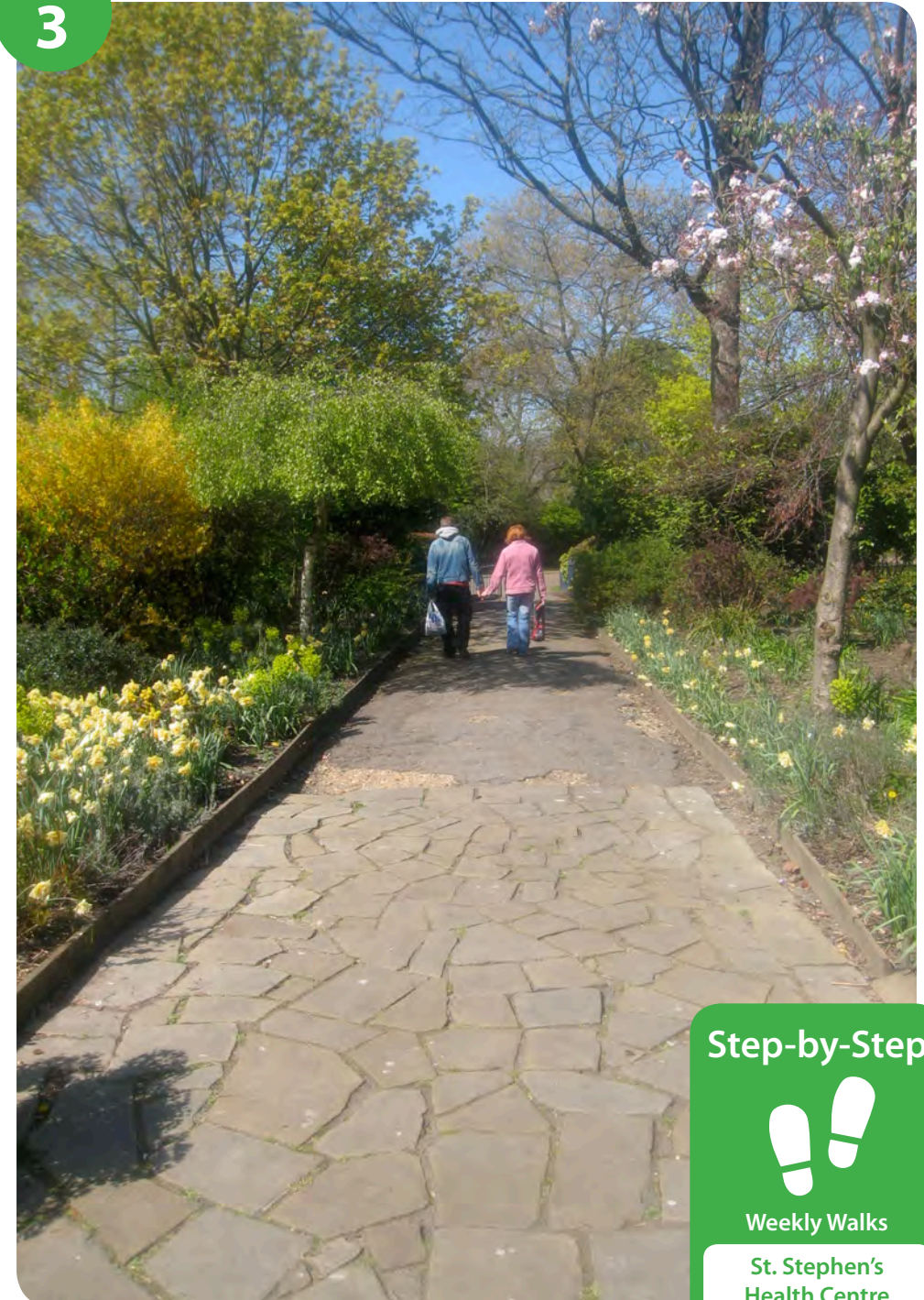


Weekly Walks

St. Stephen's  
Health Centre

The Step-by-Step programme is a 10-week walking action plan designed in conjunction with St Stephen's Health Centre in William Place, just off Roman Road. As you walk, you'll be taking steps towards actively managing your health and wellbeing. And you'll discover more about your local area too.

For more information, contact Zahra Aden at St Stephen's on [zahra.aden@nhs.net](mailto:zahra.aden@nhs.net) or 020 8980 1760.



## Step-by-Step



Weekly Walks

St. Stephen's  
Health Centre

## Exploring Victoria Park

Opened in 1850, Victoria Park was London's first public 'park for the people'. It remains a popular place for walking, cycling and recreation. With tree-lined avenues, lakes, monuments, flower gardens and playgrounds, it offers plenty for walkers to enjoy. Follow this suggested route, or devise your own walk along the many paths and roadways.



- 1 Leaving St Stephen's Health Centre, head to Roman Road. Turn left and at the wide metal arch turn right along St Stephen's Road. Continue on, past St Paul's Church and Old Ford Primary School, to Old Ford Road.
- 2 Cross Old Ford Road at the crossing and veer slightly to the right to go along Gunmakers Lane. At the end, cross over the canal bridge to enter Victoria Park at Gunmakers Gate.
- 3 At the first path crossroads, take the main roadway to the left, with a row of sturdy London Plane trees on your right, and distant views of the Burdett-Coutts drinking fountain beyond.
- 4 At the end, veer left to briefly leave the park through the Crown Gates East. Walk to the right and use the zebra crossing to cross Grove Road, before heading back into the park through the Crown Gates West, beside the small brick lodge.

(continued on page 7)

- 5 Back inside the park, continue straight ahead. Keep West Lake on your right-hand side and follow the main roadway as it curves round to the right.
- 6 Before you reach the next gates (and before the right turning marked 'The Glade'), take the right-hand tarmac path to continue skirting around the lake.
- 7 After passing a rockery and before a round shelter, fork onto the right-hand path. You soon get glimpses of the lake again, with the café beyond. At the wide roadway turn left, away from the café, and head past the children's play area to leave the park by the Royal Gates West.
- 8 Cross Grove Road by the zebra crossing, and head back into the park through the Royal Gates East. Take the first tarmac path forking off to the right and head to the Burdett-Coutts drinking fountain.
- 9 Circle around the fountain and continue along the path diagonally opposite to the path you approached on. At the end junction, turn right and then left to skirt around East Lake. Keep the lake on your right-hand side, and at the end your path reaches a roadway.
- 10 Turn left and keep on the roadway. At the end of the blue railings and shrubs on your right, turn right through a pair of low gates to enter the flower garden. Head along the central 'crazy paving' path, through a circular hedge and veer left to exit.
- 11 Facing the children's adventure playground, turn left and then right to the boating lake. Walk left, all the way round the waterside. By the adventure playground gate, go left over the grassy mound to join a tarmac path.
- 12 Follow the path to the right, back to Gunmakers Gate. Then re-trace your steps over the canal, along Gunmakers Lane and St Stephen's Road and back to St Stephen's Health Centre.

## Look out for these...



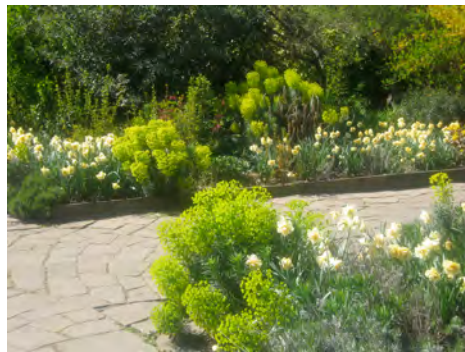
Pop into the Pavilion Café for a coffee, or just enjoy the lakeside view.



Look out for coots, with white foreheads and huge feet.



Investigate the cherubs and gothic monograms of the Burdett-Coutts drinking fountain.



Pause for a moment in the peaceful flower gardens.



Explore the adventure playground, with climbing rocks, slides and water pools.



Watch dogs of all shapes and sizes enjoy themselves by the boating lake.

## Along the way...



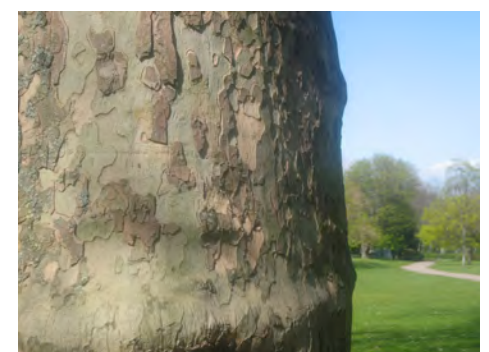
Spot the mathematical metalwork at Old Ford Primary School.



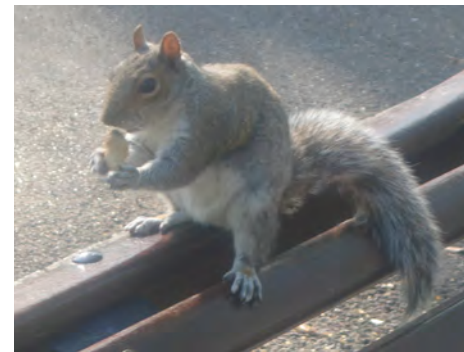
Cross the Hertford Union Canal using Three Colts Bridge.



Stroll amongst some of the 4,500 trees that live in the park.



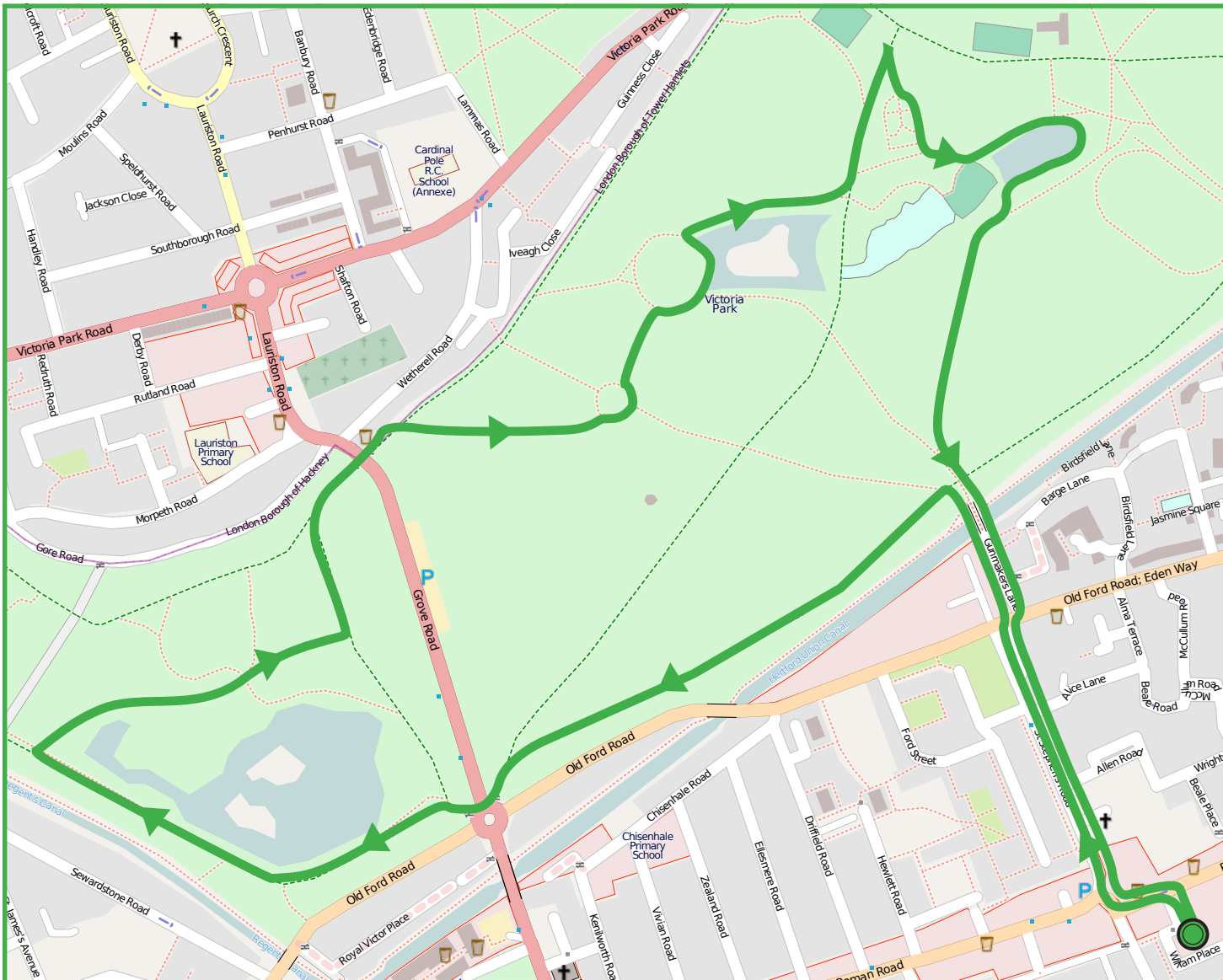
Look out for London Plane trees, with their flaking 'marbled' bark.



Meet squirrels, birds and beetles as you walk.



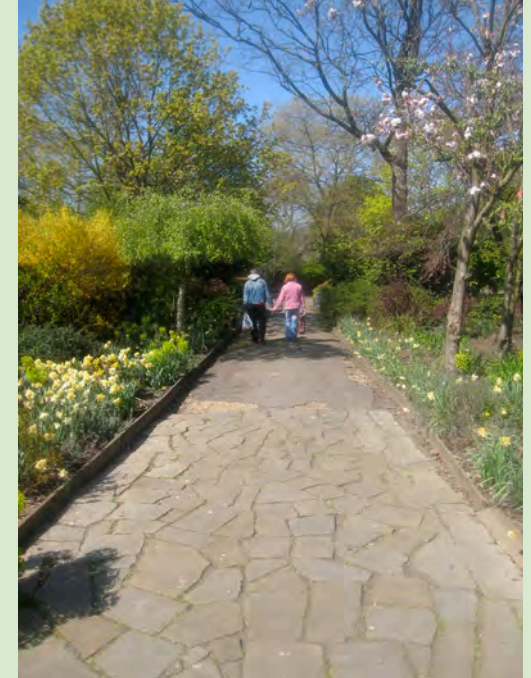
Peer up to the crowned lanterns as you pass through Crown Gates.



**WALK**  
**3**

**Exploring Victoria Park**

- Starts:** St Stephen's Health Centre
- Ends:** St Stephen's Health Centre
- Distance:** approx 2.5 miles
- Allow:** 60 minutes



**Spend a moment:** pause for a rest on one of the benches and watch the world go by – walkers, cyclists, joggers, dog-walkers and playful children.

**Spend a penny:** there are public toilets by the Pavilion Café and just beyond the boating lake.

**Spend an afternoon:** take a picnic or drop into the Pavilion Café for refreshments, take photographs or a sketch pad, sunbathe, play football or frisbee, or just enjoy some peace and quiet.