



City of Westminster

Hyde Park



I HYDE PARK CORNER

This classical style gateway was designed in 1825 for King George IV as a grand royal entrance to Hyde Park. The architect was Decimus Burton, who was just 25 at the time. It is made of Portland stone and decorated with copies of the Elgin Marbles sculptures that were originally on the Parthenon in Athens.

Burton also designed a grand triumphal arch, now in the middle of the roundabout opposite Hyde Park. It was a grand entrance into central London from the west and commemorated Britain's victories in the Napoleonic Wars. A statue of the Duke of Wellington stood on top of the arch for nearly 40 years but it was later moved to Aldershot and the present sculpture of the



2 ROSE GARDEN

This collection of roses, shrubs and herbaceous plants has colour all year round but the scents are particularly strong in June. Look out for the Boy and Dolphin statue on your left as you enter the garden. This was designed in the 19th century by Alexander Munro, a friend of the Alice in Wonderland author, Lewis Carroll. There is an interpretation panel explaining its history. Also on the left is the bronze figure of the Greek goddess, Artemis, shooting an arrow. The fountain was installed here in 1906 and the designer was Countess Feodora Gleichen, the first woman member of the Royal society of British Sculptors.



3 HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL GARDEN

This garden of four boulders set in gravel was the first public memorial in Britain to victims of the Holocaust. It was constructed in 1983 and paid for by the Board of Deputies of British Jews. The largest boulder has an inscription of text from the Book of Lamentations: "For thee I weep / streams of tears flow / from my eyes / because of the destruction / of my people".



4 THE SERPENTINE AND QUEEN CAROLINE

The stone urn is a memorial to Queen Caroline (wife of King George II) who created the Serpentine in Hyde Park and the Long Water in Kensington Gardens from 1726-1730. Her gardeners joined together six existing fish ponds and dammed the Westbourne Stream which flowed through the park. The Serpentine was used for a mock sea battle during celebrations in 1814 to mark 100 years of the Brunswick royal family. In 1826, Henry Hunt drove his company's coach and horses across the frozen lake and won a bet of 100 guineas. Today the lake is used for boating and swimming and is a good place to watch water birds.



5 ROYAL ROUTE

Rotten Row is the remains of a royal carriage route from Kensington to Westminster. It was built in the 1690s for King William II, who lived at Kensington Palace because the air in what was then the edge of London was better for his asthma than the smoke of Westminster. The road had 300 oil lamps and was the first road in Britain to be artificially lit. Its original name was the French Route du Roi but this became corrupted to Rotten Row. The sandy track alongside is a horse ride and is used by the Household Cavalry based at Hyde Park Barracks in Knightsbridge.



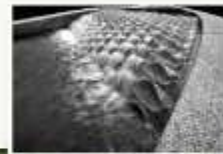
6 THE LIDO

People have swum in the Serpentine for more than 250 years. The Serpentine Swimming Club, formed in 1864, is the oldest in Britain. The creator of Peter Pan, James Barrie, established the Peter Pan Cup in 1904 for the winner of a 100 yard swim on Christmas Day. The race is still held and club members continue to swim all year round. When the lake is frozen they break a hole in the ice. (Public swimming is from June to September.) The Lido with its columns and clock tower was built in 1930 as a changing room and is now a restaurant.



7 DIANA, PRINCESS OF WALES MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN

This unique fountain was opened by Her Majesty The Queen in July 2004. From a distance, it looks like a necklace of moving water. The design, by Kathryn Gustafson and Neil Porter, reflects Diana's life. Water flows from the highest point in two directions, cascading and swirling until it meets in a calm pool at the bottom. Diana's quality of openness is symbolised by three bridges where you can cross the water and enter the heart of the fountain. The memorial contains 550 pieces of Cornish granite shaped by traditional hand skills and computer-generated technology. Please feel free to sit on the edge and dip your feet in the water but we ask you not to walk on the Memorial.



8 SERPENTINE BRIDGE

The bridge has good views to the right over the Serpentine, Hyde Park and beyond to the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey. To the left, you look over the Long Water and Kensington Gardens. The level of the Long Water was originally higher than the Serpentine and water poured in a great cascade into the lower lake. When the bridge was built in the 1820s, the level of both lakes was equalised. The designers of the bridge were John and George Rennie, sons of John Rennie, who built Southwark, Waterloo and London bridges.



9 BOATING & PETER PAN

People have sailed boats on the Serpentine throughout its history. The Ordnance Survey map of 1894 has a pier near the boat houses. The second boat house was built in 1903 by the Royal Humane Society, which rescued people who fell in the lake by accident or deliberately tried to kill themselves.

The island in the lake beyond the boat house, although made from sludge dredged out of the lake in the 1860s, has a romantic tale attached to it. In the Peter Pan story, this is Bird Island where Peter Pan lived after he flew from home one night as a baby. He later sailed from the island in a boat made from a thrush's nest and landed in Kensington Gardens.



10**LOOKING AFTER THE PARKS**

The Old Police House is the headquarters of The Royal Parks, which looks after all eight parks, and the parks police. From a distance it looks like a country house of the late 17th century but it was actually built in 1900.

The site was once a military barracks and the current building, as the name suggests, was once police accommodation. There are still cells inside but they are no longer used.



Hyde Park - Park of pleasure

Hyde Park was created to satisfy a royal passion for hunting. But over the years it became a place where people have pursued many other pleasures.



Around the time of the Domesday Book, about 900 years ago, the area that became Hyde Park was part of the Manor of Eia and belonged to monks from Westminster Abbey. There were meadows dotted with trees. You would have seen roaming deer, boar and wild bulls. The Westbourne Stream, which now flows underground, crossed the area on its way between Hampstead and the Thames.

In 1536, King Henry VIII seized the manor from the monks. He sold some of the land but turned the rest into a vast hunting park that stretched from Kensington to Westminster.

Henry put a fence round his new park and dammed the Westbourne Stream to make drinking ponds for the deer. He organised royal hunts to entertain ambassadors and dignitaries. Visitors watched from grandstands then enjoyed great feasts in temporary banqueting houses. The hunting tradition continued with Queen Elizabeth I. She also reviewed her troops in Hyde Park on the parade ground - a flat area next to Park Lane.

The appearance of the park remained very much the same until 1625 when Charles I became king. He created a circular track called the Ring where members of the royal court could drive their carriages. The park was opened to the public in 1637 and it soon became a fashionable place to visit, particularly on May Day.



During the civil war (1642-9), parliamentary troops built forts in the park. They dug defensive earthworks on the east side to help defend the city of Westminster from royalist attacks. And you can see evidence of the earthworks today in the raised bank next to Park Lane.

With the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, Hyde became a royal park again and the new King Charles II replaced the wooden fence with a brick wall. He restocked the park with deer and organised great carriage parades.

Bigger changes happened when William and Mary became king and queen in 1689. They bought Nottingham House on the western edge of the park. They renamed it Kensington Palace and made it their main home in London. To get from Kensington to Westminster, they created a processional route through Hyde Park. It was lit by 300 oil lamps and was the first

road in England to be lit at night. The road was called route de roi or King's Road but the name became corrupted to Rotten Row.

Many of the striking features you see today in Hyde Park were created in the 18th century by a keen royal gardener, Queen Caroline. In 1728, she took almost 300 acres from Hyde Park to form Kensington Gardens and she separated the two parks with a long ditch or ha-ha. She also established a new landscape fashion. Queen Caroline made a large lake called the Serpentine by damming the Westbourne Stream. At that time, artificial lakes were usually long and straight. The Serpentine was one of the first created lakes in England that was designed to look natural. It was soon copied in parks and gardens all over the country. And it was the centrepiece of celebrations in 1814 for the British victory at the sea battle of Trafalgar.



Hyde Park remained the same for almost 100 years until the 1820s when King George IV ordered a makeover. He employed Decimus Burton to create a monumental entrance at Hyde Park Corner. It comprised the Triumphal Screen you can still see today and the Wellington Arch, which was later moved to the middle of roundabout at Hyde Park Corner. Burton also replaced the park's walls with railings and designed several new lodges and gates. At around the same time, John Rennie built a bridge across the

Serpentine and Hyde Park was formally split from Kensington Gardens by a new road called West Carriage Drive.

Another upheaval came in 1851 when Joseph Paxton built his Crystal Palace alongside Rotten Row to house the Great Exhibition. But this time the change was temporary. The palace was moved piece by piece to Sydenham in south London when the exhibition closed. Some of Burton's lodges were later demolished and roads on the south edge were widened. More recently, in 2004, the memorial fountain to Diana, Princess of Wales, was built in the park. Apart from these changes, what you see in Hyde Park is largely how Decimus Burton left it.



A celebration of rural beauty in an urban landscape

Patrick Gwynne's iconic building on the eastern edge of the Serpentine in Hyde Park houses the Serpentine bar & kitchen. Inspired by English country living the restaurant aims to be a retreat for both Londoners and visitors alike.

An all day dining menu, much of it cooked in a wood-fired oven, represents the best of seasonal food inspired from its garden setting. Wild mushroom and artichoke risotto, sea trout with purple broccoli & the classic 'Waldorf Salad' all feature on our mouthwatering spring menu! See the full menu [here](#).



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