

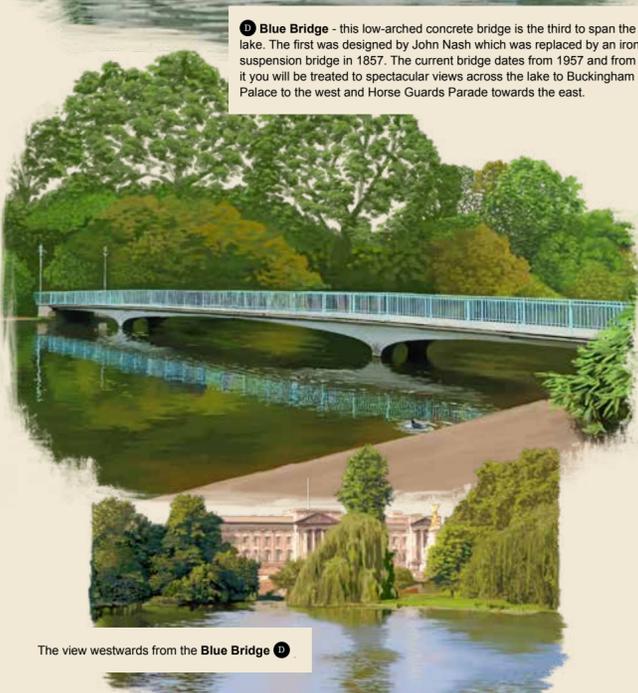
**A Horse Guards Parade** - the park's ceremonial parade ground and the scene of Trooping the Colour on the Queen's official birthday in June. Horse Guards is the building with a clock tower over an archway, and remains the official entrance to St James's and Buckingham Palace.



**B The Churchill War Rooms** - dedicated to Winston Churchill, the 'greatest Briton'. These secret underground headquarters were the nerve centre of Britain's war effort.



**C Pelican Rock** - pelicans have a long history in St James's Park; they first arrived in 1664, when they were gifted to King Charles II by the Russian ambassador. Since then, the pelicans have become long-term, much loved residents of the park, with new generations of birds added over the years. You can often see them resting on Pelican Rock and they are fed daily between 2.30pm - 3.30pm.



**D Blue Bridge** - this low-arched concrete bridge is the third to span the lake. The first was designed by John Nash which was replaced by an iron suspension bridge in 1857. The current bridge dates from 1957 and from it you will be treated to spectacular views across the lake to Buckingham Palace to the west and Horse Guards Parade towards the east.

The view westwards from the Blue Bridge **E**

KEY: **A** Heritage features of interest

# St James's Park Tree Walk



Shaped like a five pointed star, London Plane **leaves** are tough, glossy and turn a rich orange-yellow before falling in autumn. Hairs on the surface help to trap pollution particles.

## London Plane

trees were extensively planted during the Victorian era when London was black with soot from the Industrial Revolution. They were one of the few trees that could thrive in such polluted air.

Today this species makes up 4% of the inner London tree population but accounts for 9% of the total leaf area.

**F The Mall** is the iconic London Plane lined road leading from Trafalgar Square to Buckingham Palace. It has seen innumerable historic Royal processions including coronations and openings of Parliament. The Mall plays an important part in ceremonies such as Changing the Guard and Trooping the Colour.



**Roots** tolerate small spaces with soil compaction, making them ideal for roadsides and other urban areas where space is limited.

Khaki camouflage-patterned **bark** regularly sheds and replaces itself, to prevent the tree becoming stifled under sooty layers.

A distinctive characteristic is the spiky brown **seed** ball which hang together on a single stalk and remain throughout winter. From March to May seeds are released causing issues for hay fever and allergy sufferers.



The **avenue of London Plane** trees has been a feature of The Mall for many years as shown in this map from the 1800's.



A striking black and white bird, the **Great Spotted Woodpecker** can be seen in St James's Park clinging to tree trunks and branches. It has a very distinctive bouncing flight and feeds mainly on insects, using its powerful beak to peck away at tree bark to retrieve hidden prey with its long tongue.

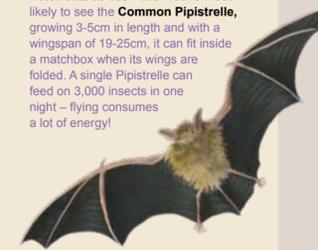


**Queen Victoria** reigned from 1837 until her death in 1901. The outer rows of London Planes along The Mall are thought to be around 120 years old meaning they were in situ when Queen Victoria was alive! The **Queen Victoria Memorial** is located in front of Buckingham Palace. As well as Victoria, there are statues representing courage, constancy, victory, charity, truth and motherhood.

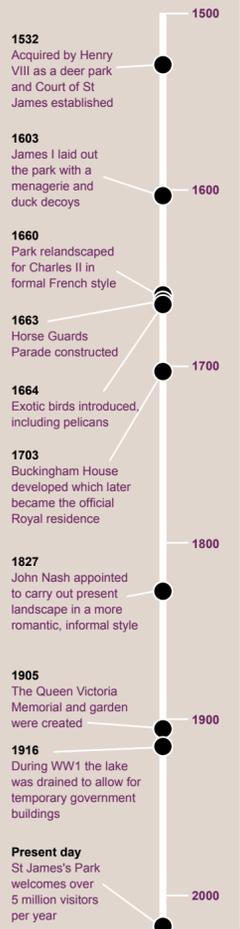


**G Nelson Mandela** planted a London Plane tree on his visit to the park in July 1996. The tree was officially named **'The Mandela Tree'** and the Chairman of the Prince of Wales' Tree Appeal said at the time "It's special in a world of pollution. It thrives, it's strong, and it's dependable. It will live for a very long time. It is a Mandela tree".

St James's Park is a great place to watch bats as dusk falls. You're most likely to see the **Common Pipistrelle**, growing 3-5cm in length and with a wingspan of 19-25cm, it can fit inside a matchbox when its wings are folded. A single Pipistrelle can feed on 3,000 insects in one night - flying consumes a lot of energy!



## Brief history of St James's Park



WHO DO I CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?

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**Indian Bean Tree**  
*Catalpa bignonioides*

**01** It doesn't come from India and it doesn't produce beans, but this tree is a favourite for its character and decorative appeal. Originally from the United States, the tree produces very distinctive long, slim, cylindrical seed pods that look rather like beans. White blossom, with yellow and purple flecks, adorns the tree in July.

The leaves are large and heart shaped, being 20-30 cm long and 15-20 cm broad. Can you locate the largest leaf on the tree?

While St James's Park is famed for its planting beds, these change every year, the Victorians saw many of the same trees that we see today, this also adds an irreplaceable continuity and link to the past, present and future.

**Weeping Beech**  
*Fagus sylvatica 'pendula'*

**15** Irregularly shaped in its younger life, this drooping tree develops a more stately weeping form as it matures. The original weeping beech was brought from France to Surrey in the 1830's, and this tree very likely originates from this era. Beech foliage is eaten by the caterpillars of a number of moths and the seeds are eaten by mice, voles, squirrels and birds.



**Black Mulberry**  
*Morus nigra*

**14** This tree commemorates the failed attempt by King James I in the 16th century to establish an English silk industry. He ordered people to plant Black Mulberry and even had a four-acre mulberry garden near Buckingham Palace, tended by the King's Mulberry Men. Unfortunately, it's the White Mulberry that are the preferred plant of silk moth larvae. Mulberry age quickly, and at about 25 years can develop twisted branches and gnarly bark.

Mulberry fruit was a prized delicacy saved only for Royals at the time. Thieves were caught out when stealing the over ripened red fruit as it left notable stains on their hands, leading to the well-known phrase 'caught red handed'!

**Tibetan Cherry**  
*Prunus serrula*



**02** A distinctive and prized ornamental tree due to its eye catching shiny, mahogany coloured bark, which peels as the tree matures. The horizontal bands running across the trunk are known as 'lenticels' - these allow gas to exchange between the air and the internal tissues of the tree. They appear on all trees but are pronounced in Cherry species.

Royal Parks apprentices were once said to be told to polish the bark to make it shine!



**Swamp Cypress**  
*Taxodium distichum*



**03** Originally from the mangrove swamps of the Florida Everglades, this tree is often found planted near rivers and lakes. Unlike most other conifers, this tree drops its foliage in winter living up to its nickname, 'the bald cypress'. The needles turn a stunning fiery red in colour just before they fall. The timber is very resistant to water meaning it's great for making barrels and window frames.

See if you can spot the unusual, knobby roots around the base of the tree. These are called pneumatophores. They are thought to stabilise the tree and act like snorkels to help it 'breathe' in waterlogged soil.



**Silver Birch**  
*Betula pendula*



**04** This British tree is recognised by the white, papery bark, 'drooping' branches and triangular leaves with jagged teeth that grow from hairless leaf stalks. It's a favourite of insects, providing food and habitat for more than 300 species. In spring, the male catkins (or 'lamb's tails') turn yellow and shed their pollen, which is carried by the wind to the short, green, female catkins that appear on the same tree.

**Ginkgo**  
*Ginkgo biloba*



**05** Also known as the Maidenhair tree the Ginkgo is the world's oldest tree species and can be traced back 270 million years, when dinosaurs walked the planet. It is a hardy, long-lived tree, ideal for the modern environment. In China, the tree is believed to have healing properties; this is also where the oldest living tree is found, thought to be over 3,000 years old.



**London Plane**  
*Platanus x hispanica*



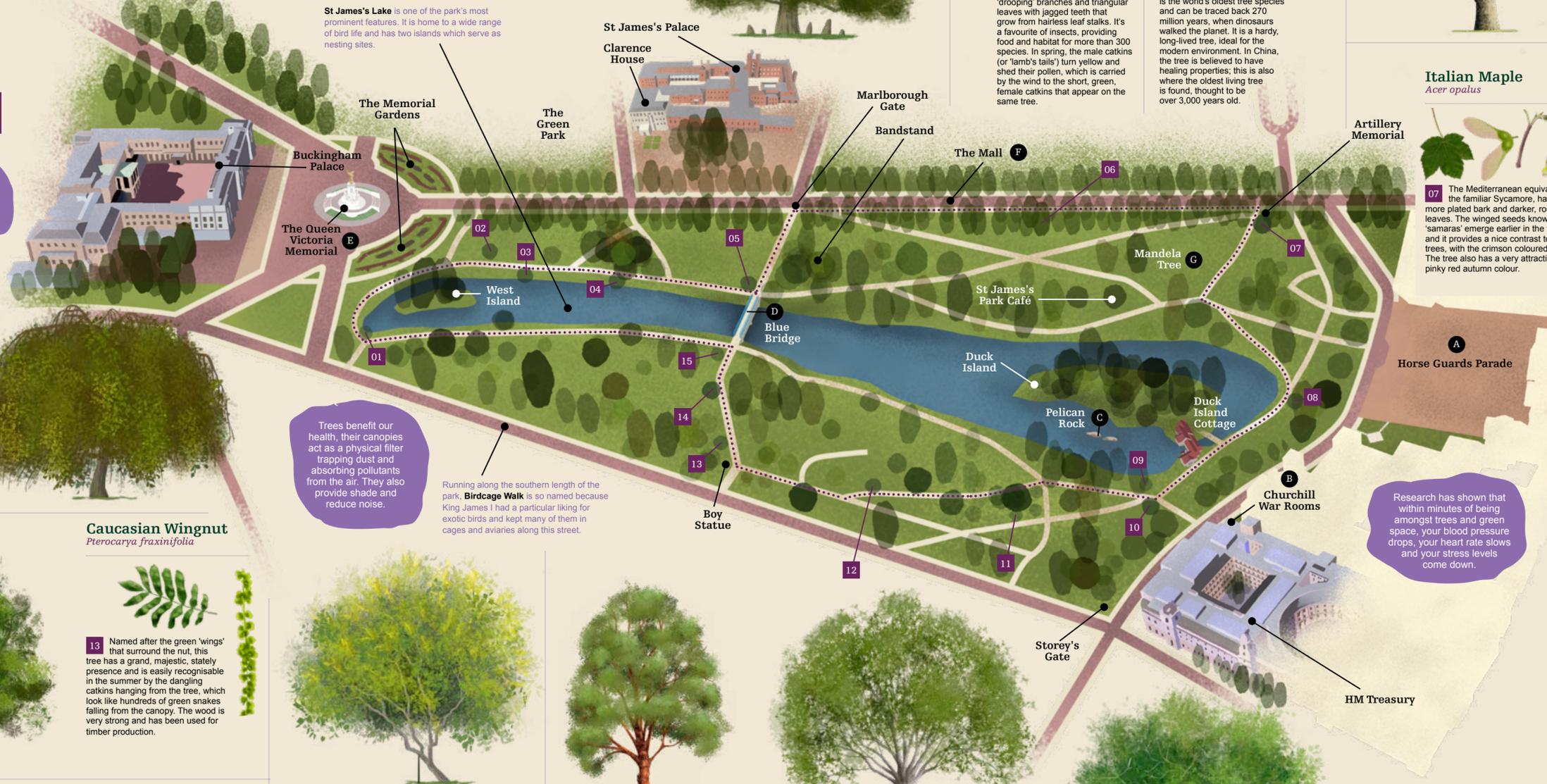
**06** As you walk down The Mall you will notice it is flanked by rows of London Planes. These large deciduous trees provide visual interest in winter and shade in summer. A crossbreed of American Sycamore and Oriental Plane, it can withstand the rigours of urban life and is widely considered to be one of the world's more reliable city trees.

There are over 500 London Plane trees in St James's Park and they make up 49% of the parks tree population. You can find out more about this true 'Londoner' overleaf and what makes it such a brilliant urban tree.

**Italian Maple**  
*Acer opalus*



**07** The Mediterranean equivalent of the familiar Sycamore, having a more plated bark and darker, rounder leaves. The winged seeds know as 'samaras' emerge earlier in the year and it provides a nice contrast to other trees, with the crimson coloured seeds. The tree also has a very attractive pinky red autumn colour.



Trees benefit our health, their canopies act as a physical filter trapping dust and absorbing pollutants from the air. They also provide shade and reduce noise.

Running along the southern length of the park, Birdcage Walk is so named because King James I had a particular liking for exotic birds and kept many of them in cages and aviaries along this street.

Research has shown that within minutes of being amongst trees and green space, your blood pressure drops, your heart rate slows and your stress levels come down.

**Caucasian Wingnut**  
*Pterocarya fraxinifolia*



**13** Named after the green 'wings' that surround the nut, this tree has a grand, majestic, stately presence and is easily recognisable in the summer by the dangling catkins hanging from the tree, which look like hundreds of green snakes falling from the canopy. The wood is very strong and has been used for timber production.

**Pride of India**  
*Koeleruteria paniculata*



**12** Despite its common name, this ornamental tree is native to Eastern Asia. It is noted for its summer displays of bright yellow flowers, followed by paper thin, Chinese lantern like seed pods which have historically been used to make necklaces in China. The seeds are edible once roasted but are not commonly eaten. Known also as the 'Golden Rain Tree' this species is hardy and thrives in tough urban environments.

This tree has a distinctive lean. Can you think why this might be?

**Paper Bark Maple**  
*Acer griseum*



**11** Native to China, this tree was introduced to Europe in 1901 by collector EH Wilson. It is a decorative tree with cinnamon coloured unusual bark - the older, dead layers of bark form thin, papery strips that peel off or wear away. Unusually for a Maple, it has a tri-lobate leaf which is three separate leaflets from one central stalk. The leaves are dark green in summer, red in autumn.

Walk up to the tree and take a look at its interesting bark, but please don't peel it!

**Indian Horse Chestnut**  
*Aesculus indica*



**10** Introduced to Britain from the Himalayas in 1851, it bears pyramidal clusters of pink flowers in the summer, whilst its leaves are purple when young, turning dark green in spring, then orange and yellow in autumn. They do not produce the same conkers of the more familiar Horse Chestnut, but are known to be more resistant to disease than their cousin making them an increasingly popular urban tree.

**Fig**  
*Ficus carica*



**09** This Fig is thought to be one of the biggest in Britain, seemingly enjoying London's climate and its location next to the lake. They do not produce blossom on branches, but inside the fruit, which is in season from August to October. Fig leaves have long been used to cover human modesty in painting and sculpture, an example being the Achilles statue in Hyde Park.

How many figs can you count on the tree? Can you spot any birds feasting on the delicious fruit?

**Medlar**  
*Mespilus germanica*



**08** With attractive spring blossom, golden brown autumnal colour and edible winter fruit, the Medlar has been a prized ornamental tree since before the days of the Roman Empire. The fruit is not edible until it is over-ripened, the process of which is called 'bletting'. This tree has been propped to support its weight. You'll also notice concrete in the trunk, which was used in the past to fill in cracks and cavities. This Medlar is over 60 years old.

**St James's Park Tree walk**

Route: 1.30 miles  
Approximate time: 35 minutes\*

You can join this circular walking route at any point. \*based on a relaxed walking speed of 2.5mph

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