



# Peckham Rye Park trail



Uncover your Southwark

Featuring ornamental gardens, flowing streams, woodland and a lake, Green Flag Award winning Peckham Rye Park and Common is an ideal location to relax and partake in a gentle stroll.



# Peckham Rye Park trail

## STOP 01 Trees

Peckham Rye Park has a long and engaging history and was recorded as being cultivated before the Norman Conquest in the 11th Century. The poet William Blake (1757-1827) inspired by the trees on Peckham Common, wrote 'A tree filled with angels, bright angelic wings bespangling every bough with stars'. Enjoy the trees now as you walk towards the entrance to Peckham Rye Park.

## STOP 02 Japanese garden

Walk to the Japanese garden and listen to the wind blowing through the leaves or the trickle of water in the stream. Look out for the classic Japanese maple tree with rich red foliage in autumn and pale leaves in spring and summer.

## STOP 03 Winter bird feed meadow

Walk to the winter bird feed meadow. In summer this grassland meadow is filled with the sound of grasshoppers and the sight of butterflies. Look out for British wildflowers like yarrow and knapweed, both flower through summer. Look closely at the knapweed leaves, can you see patterns made by leaf miners? In late summer giant sunflowers loom over a sea of seed heads in this meadow.

## STOP 04 Two trees

Return to the main path and walk towards two trees. One is an English oak, the other a common ash tree with black pointed buds and smooth greyish bark on its young twigs. Is there a bees' nest in the ash tree? Honey bees are important for plant pollination. Without them we would lose approximately a third of the foods we eat each day.

## STOP 05 Stag beetles

Walk past the arboretum until you reach a small woodland. Listen out for the different songs the birds are singing and see how many you can hear. Can you see any stag beetles or their larvae? Rotting wood provides an important home for Britain's largest insect, the stag beetle, whose larvae feed on decomposing wood over three to five years before emerging as adults for one summer. South London parks and woods are a home to many of these endangered beetles.

## STOP 06 Ginkgo biloba

Turning to your right take a short walk to the entrance of the Sexby Garden. The garden was named after Lt. Col. Sexby Chief Officer of Parks to the London County Council until 1910. Walk towards the bottom right hand corner of the garden where you will find a very old Ginkgo biloba tree with its distinctive two part leaves. Have a walk around this beautiful garden and if it's spring or summer try smelling flowers. Do they all smell sweet? If it's autumn wander among the seed heads and look closer at their shapes. How do you think they spread? Do they have winged seeds, feathery parachutes or tiny hooks?

## STOP 07 The lake

Walk to the lake. How many different water birds are there today? Look at their webbed feet and beaks. Can you see ducks with spoon shaped beaks? What do you think they eat? The floating islands give the water birds a place to nest. Female birds are often brown and grey so they can stay hidden when looking after eggs and chicks. Male birds are more brightly coloured.

## STOP 08 The rustic bridge

Walk around the lake then veer left to the rustic bridge. When this was built circa 1910 it had an arch made from a whale rib as decoration. Underneath runs the River Peck, one of London's many underground rivers, enclosed in 1823, but still visible in the park.

## STOP 09 Peckham Common

Continue along the path, past the nature garden on your right and out into the open grass of Peckham Common where sheep once grazed during world wars one and two. Enjoy the view as you walk back past the car park to the Café.



STOP 02  
Japanese maple leaves



STOP 01  
William Blake [1757-1827]



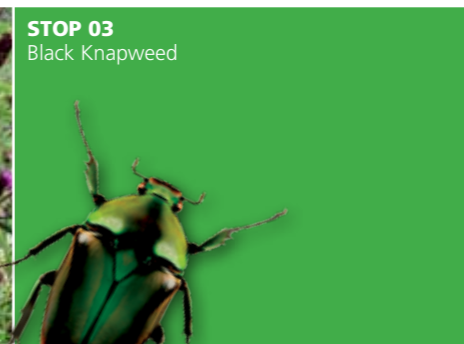
STOP 05  
Stag beetle larvae



STOP 03  
Black Knapweed



STOP 06  
Ginkgo in the sun



STOP 04  
Ash tree bud



STOP 8  
Rustic Bridge

