

# Victoria Park Memoryscape Trail

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### 1. Introduction

This trail will help you explore the hidden history of Victoria Park, as local people share their memories and bring the past vividly to life. The trail begins by the Pavilion Café, just inside Crown Gate West, where you will hear how people power led to the creation of the Park. As you walk around, please feel free to explore parts of the Park not mentioned on the trail.

### 2. The Dogs of Alcibiades

Track 2 reveals the origin of the Dogs of Alcibiades, and the local legends that have grown up around them. Nearby you will find the Glade and the Sunken Garden, pleasant spots in which to rest and enjoy the Park's horticulture.



### 4. The Pavilion Café and the Boating Lake

Track 4 brings us back to the Pavilion Café. Here you can sit and enjoy the old Boating Lake, which once teemed with rowers making their way slowly around the island, as local people fondly remember.



### 3. The Canal Path

Two canals border Victoria Park. They predate the Park itself and connect Paddington in the West, the River Lee in the East, and the Thames to the South. The Canals were once vital for commercial traffic, but today they are largely used for leisure. Listen to hear how the Canal has acted as bath, playground, and home for the people of Victoria Park.



### 5. The Lido Site

Track 5 begins on the other side of Grove Road. Make your way safely across the road and enter through Crown Gate East before starting the track, which uncovers the story of Victoria Park's very own Lido.

### 6. The Bandstand

Victoria Park has a long association with music and public gatherings, from the preachers of the 19th century to the Rock Against Racism concert held in 1978. The Bandstand you see today is a relatively recent addition, but provides a fitting spot to hear about the legacy of events held in the Park.



### 8. The Old Bathing Lakes

As you walk past the old bathing lakes, now used mainly for fishing, it may be hard to imagine the thousands who once came here to wash and bathe. Follow the trail to hear how men, women and children would crowd into the lakes, so crucial to hygiene in this area of London.



### 10. St Augustine's Church Stone

The silhouette of St Augustine's Church, bombed during the blitz, can be found in the trees in this area of Victoria Park. This was far from the only impact the War had on the Park, as local people remember here.



### 7. The Burdett-Coutts Fountain

Angela Burdett-Coutts was one of the wealthiest women in Victorian England and a great philanthropist. The Victoria Park drinking fountain that bears her name stands as testament to this charitable nature, which effected lives across London's East End.



### 9. The Sports Pavilion

The eastern side of Victoria Park has a long association with sport. In 1900 32 cricket pitches, 37 tennis courts and a bowling green were listed among the Park features. Here, local people explain what the open spaces of the Park meant for them growing up in the East End.



### 11. The Alcoves

The Alcoves that line the eastern side of Victoria Park are remnants of one of London's great bridges. Listen to the track to find out how they made their way to the Park, and how one famous local resident used Victoria Park as a setting for one of the greatest plays of the 19th Century.



## Getting Started

You can listen to the Victoria Park Memoryscape Trail in the following ways:

1. Visit the Victoria Park section of the Tower Hamlets website and download the whole trail or individual tracks to your personal music device.
2. From summer 2012 you will be able to visit the Hub building in the Eastern side of the Park and pick up an MP3 player with the trail pre-loaded\*.

This map provides a suggested route for the trail, beginning at Crown Gate West and finishing at the Alcoves. This route takes around 1½ hours to complete, but if you'd prefer you can listen to individual tracks or make your own route.

Please be aware of cyclists and pedestrians as you walk around, especially when on the canal towpath and crossing Grove Road.

\* requires deposit

Images courtesy: East London History Society/Ted Lewis/Simone Rason/Terry Willetts

