

Travel 4

Chiswick - Syon house - Kew garden

Travel 4 lets you discover some important and beautiful parks in west London: Chiswick, Gunnersbury, Syon and Kew/the Botanic Garden.

The tour lasts the whole day, a walk of 15 miles, that can be shortened, if you can take a taxi from time to time.

Start at Chiswick House. Take a bus or a taxi to arrive there.



The first Palladian house in UK





Chiswick was a summer house to Lord Burlington, an intellectual politician. He built it after his trip to Italy in 1700. He fell in love with the style of the Venetian villas, that Palladio was famous for, but well 200 years earlier.

When he returned, he designed self the house.

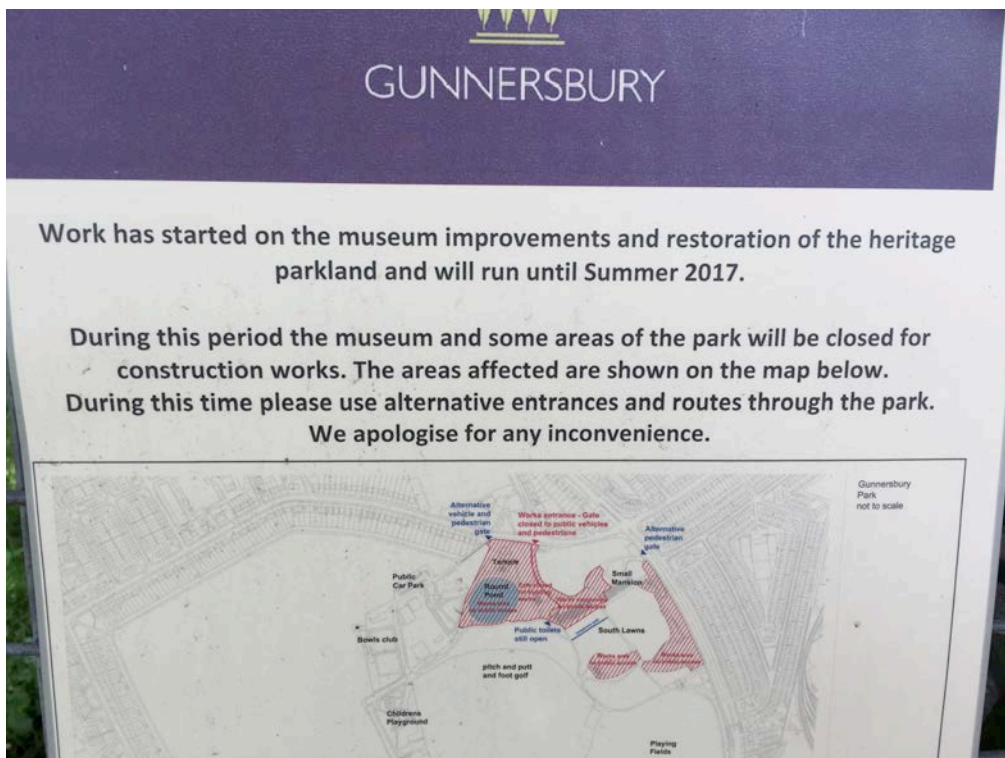
It was the first building in Palladian style in UK.

A visit inside is much recommended, because it has so many interesting things to see. It is not huge, but amazingly beautiful.

The park is very nice, one of the first parks designed in English panoramic style. It's style was inspired by the garden of the Emperor Hadrian's Villa Adriana at Tivoli in Rome, with statues and small buildings in the green. It was the start of creating a type of garden which eventually would become known internationally as the English Landscape Garden.



Then, go to the centre of Chiswick to see a new building development with lakes and cascades.



Gunnersbury Park.

Then continue toward west to see Gunnersbury Park: Probably better to take a taxi here, because it is a bit long road and the traffic is heavy here.




Fields in Gunnersbury Park

Gunnersbury Park

The Gothic Tower and Potomac

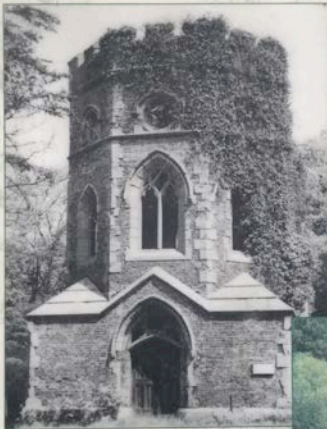
*Lionel Nathan Rothschild
1838 - 1879*



The Gothic Tower and Potomac Pond
These are to be found in an area which was added to Gunnersbury Park in 1861. The Tower was originally a tile kiln and the pond is a former clay pit.

Extending the Rothschild's Estate
Baron Lionel de Rothschild extended Gunnersbury Park by 331 acres which he bought from the Bishop of London. This area of Brentford had good clay which was dug out to make chimney pots, tiles, drain pipes, fishing net weights and flower pots. This left pits which filled with water; later some of them were built on and gave their name to the Clayponds Estate.

A new Boating Pond
This newly-acquired land had a huge clay pit called Cole's Hole. This was landscaped to provide a picturesque boating pond which he called the Potomac Pond. It is not clear why the lake was named the Potomac, one theory is that it was named after the River Potomac in America. Following a period of cease-fire during the American Civil War, "All quiet on the Potomac," became a popular saying across England.



Gothic Tower built in the early 1860s

The tile kiln next to it was transformed into a Tower which served as a boathouse.

The work was done by J W Pulham, a member of a family of gardeners and architects. He had developed a kind of artificial stone which he patented as "Pulhamite". You can see it around the arched boat inlet and the island at the bottom of the Tower.

The Gothic Tower
The Tower's three floors are linked by a spiral staircase. The room at the top was a light and spacious one with leaded glass windows. From here visitors could look out across the park.

Outside the Tower was rendered with cement or "stucco" to look like stone.



The Potomac Lake

A short story of the park, built by Lionel Nathan Rothschild



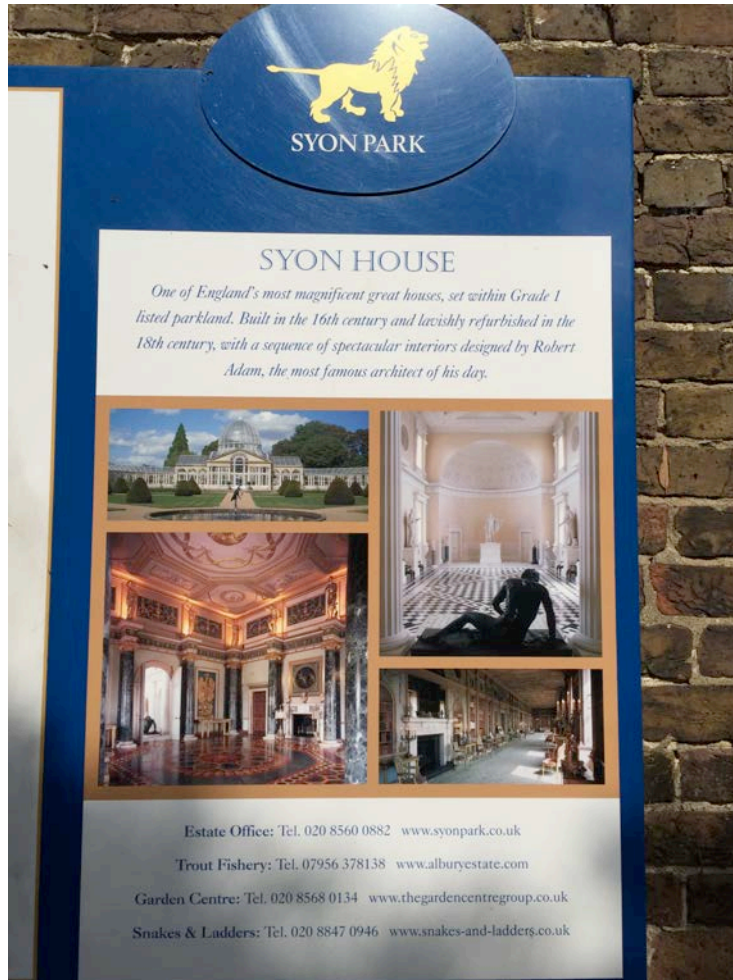
Gunnersbury Park

Gunnersbury Park is a classical London park, with secular trees, meadows, lake and sport fields. Lot of people with their dogs inside.

Not a pretentious park but very original and very pleasant.

A major project to modernize Gunnersbury park is under way. Then better to visit it now, because architects, as usually, will start to plan everything, also sidewalks for birds. We can only expect the destruction of its naturalness.

After Gunnersbury, walk or take a taxi to Syon House.



Syon House, entrance



Syon House.

An historical house, with park, of first class.

After Syon House go to Kew Garden/the renowned Botanical Garden of London with many important species.



Kew Garden / London's Botanic Garden

After Kew Gardens, in the proximity, 288 Kew Route, you will find a beautiful, very famous, tea house, called the Original Maids of Honour. A lovely little place. Feels like time travel.



The Original Maids of Honour, 288 Kew Road

And then the tour is finished.