



Royal  
Geographical  
Society  
with IBG

## Tyranny and Treason

A self guided walk through Westminster's role in the English Civil War



Explore one of the most dramatic periods in English history  
Find out why the country went to war and briefly became a republic  
Visit where parliament was disbanded and the king was executed  
Discover how the Civil War shaped London's landscape

[www.discoveringbritain.org](http://www.discoveringbritain.org)

the stories of our landscapes  
discovered through walks



-----

-----



This booklet is to be used alongside the audio commentary for this walk

## Contents

Introduction	4
Route overview	5
Practical information	6
Detailed route maps	8
Directions	10
Credits	13
Further information	14

© The Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers, London, 2012

Discovering Britain is a project of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)

The digital and print maps used for Discovering Britain are licensed to the RGS-IBG from Ordnance Survey

---

# Tyranny and treason

## Re-live the drama of the English Civil War in the heart of London

### Introduction

Westminster is the heart of Britain's capital and the hub of the nation's three most powerful institutions – the Monarchy, the Government and the Church.

In the 1630s and 1640s, the king and parliament were in major disagreement about religion. It was one of the most dramatic periods in our island's history when parliament was disbanded, the country went to war, the monarch was executed for treason, and England briefly became a republic.



Statue of King Charles I on horseback (1633)  
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

On this walk you will stand face to face with the two main characters in the English Civil War – King Charles I and Oliver Cromwell – and see the very buildings and locations where dramatic events unfolded. It's a story of politics and power, rebellion and riot, armies and battles, treason and trial, beheadings and hangings. You can also see how history is influenced by geography and geography is influenced by history.



<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmb.2023.107900>



---

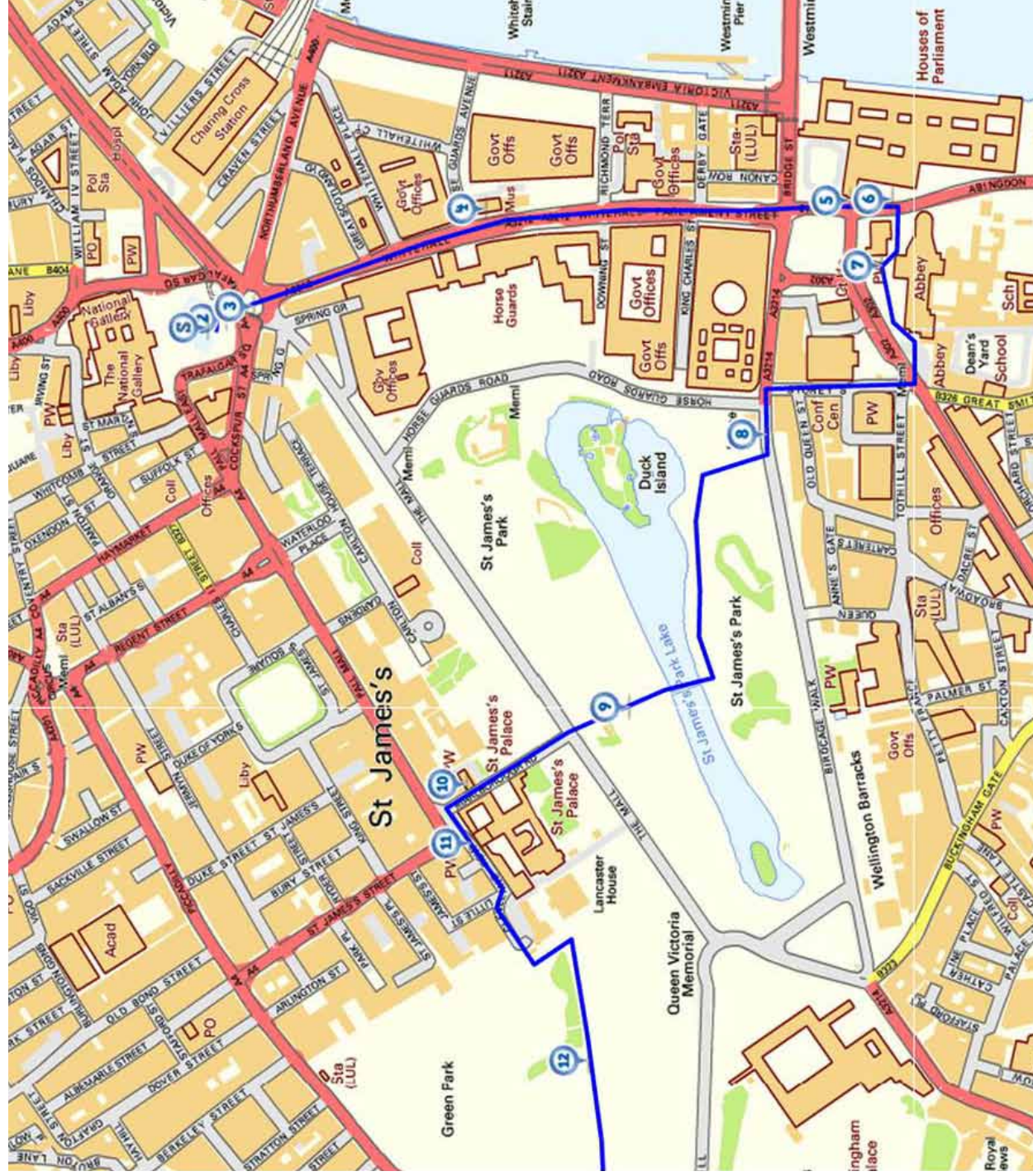
## Practical information

<b>Location</b>	Westminster, Central London
<b>Getting there</b>	<p><b>Underground</b> - The nearest stations to the start of the route are Charing Cross and Embankment</p> <p><b>Train</b> - The nearest mainline station is Charing Cross</p> <p><b>Bus</b> - Served by dozens of different bus routes</p> <p><b>Bicycle</b> - Plenty of London Cycle hire docking stations on the route</p>
<b>Start point</b>	Trafalgar Square
<b>Postcode</b>	WC2N 5EA
<b>Directions from railway station to start</b>	<p><i>From Charing Cross</i> - leave the station and turn left onto the Strand. Continue to the end of the Strand then use the pedestrian crossings to enter Trafalgar Square.</p> <p><i>From Embankment</i> - leave the station using the Strand / Villiers Street exit (opposite to the riverbank). Continue to the end of Villiers Street then turn left onto the Strand.</p>
<b>Finish point</b>	Marble Arch, W1K 7AN
<b>Onward journey</b>	To return to Charing Cross or Embankment stations use Marble Arch underground station. Alternatively Hyde Park, Oxford Street, Buckingham Palace and other attractions are all easily accessible by public transport or on foot.
<b>Distance</b>	3 miles
<b>Level</b>	Gentle – A flat route on pavements and through city parks



<b>Conditions</b>	The route is in a very busy area of Central London. Look after valuables and take care crossing roads - always use pedestrian crossings.
<b>Suitable for</b>	<b>Families</b> – Plenty of sights and sounds for children to enjoy. The flat route is ideal for pushchairs and wheelchairs.
<b>Refreshments</b>	Plenty of cafes and restaurants near the start and end of the walk but expect London prices. There are also cafes and kiosks in the parks. The parks make ideal picnic spots.
<b>Facilities</b>	Public toilets are available in St James's Park, Green Park and Hyde Park
<b>Other info</b>	<p><b>Banqueting House</b> is usually open 10am-5pm, Mon-Sun except Bank Holidays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adult tickets £5, concs £4, under 16s free</li> <li>- Early closing at 1pm for private evening events, so check opening times before visiting (Tel: 0203 166 6154/5)</li> </ul> <p><b>Westminster Abbey</b> open Mon-Sat from 9.30am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sundays for private worship only, no tourists</li> <li>- Closing times: 2.30pm Sats, 7pm Weds, 4.30pm other weekdays</li> <li>- Adult tickets £16, concs £13, children aged 11-18 £6</li> <li>- Free entry for children under 11 and wheelchair users</li> <li>- again check opening times before visiting (Tel: 020 7222 5152)</li> </ul> <p><b>St James's Palace</b> is not open to the public</p>
<b>Tourist information</b>	Tourist information available at Westminster Abbey. Nearest dedicated facility is the London Information Centre at Leicester Square, open 8am-midnight (Tel: 020 729 22 333)

## Detail of first part of the route



### Stopping points

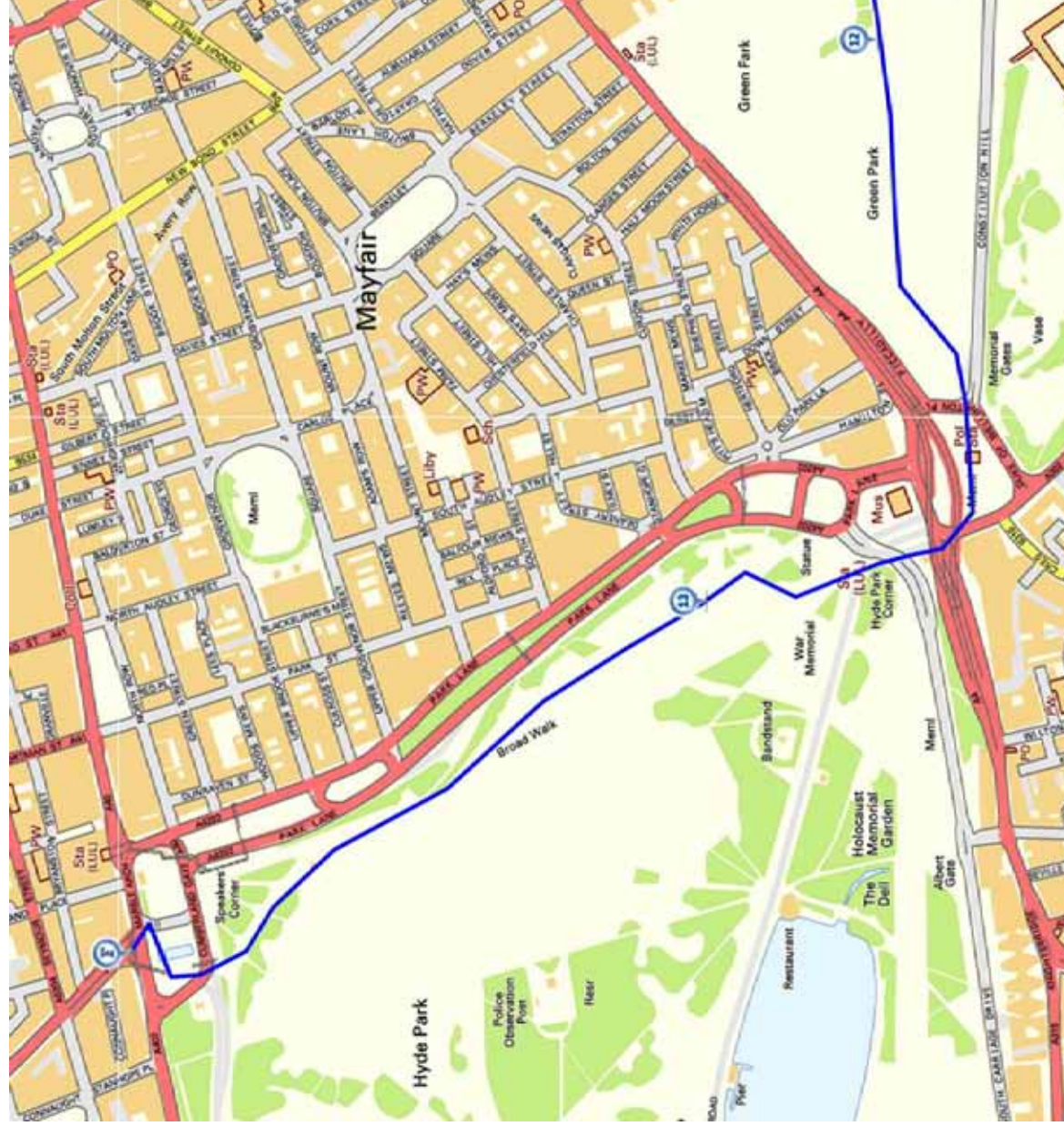
1. Trafalgar Square
2. Trafalgar Square
3. Statue of Charles I at the top of Whitehall
4. Banqueting House, Whitehall
5. Palace of Westminster, east side of Parliament Square
6. Statue of Oliver Cromwell, outside Houses of Parliament
7. St Margaret's Church, south side of Parliament Square
8. Birdcage Walk
9. St James's Park
10. The Queen's Chapel, Marlborough Road
11. St James's Palace, junction of Pall Mall, St James's Street and Cleveland Row
12. Green Park



## Detail of second part of the route

### Stopping points

12. Green Park
13. Hyde Park
14. Pedestrian island at bottom of Edgware Road



---

## Directions

These directions are for use with the London Civil War walk audio commentary. Listen to each track then read the directions below to get to the next stop.

### 1. History unfolded

#### Trafalgar Square

##### Directions 1

Stay in Trafalgar Square and listen to Track 2.

### 2. The heart of the action

#### Trafalgar Square

##### Directions 2

From Trafalgar Square use the pedestrian crossings to cross to the traffic island at the top of Whitehall where there is a statue of King Charles I on horseback. Stop by the statue and listen to Track 3.

### 3. A good man but a bad king

#### Statue of Charles I at the top of Whitehall

##### Directions 3

Use the pedestrian crossing to cross to the left side of Whitehall. Walk down Whitehall in the direction of the Houses of Parliament. Immediately after crossing Horse Guards Avenue the Banqueting Hall is on the left. Stop outside and listen to Track 4.

### 4. Traitor or martyr?

#### Banqueting House, Whitehall

##### Directions 4

Continue along the left side of Whitehall. When you reach Parliament Square, use the pedestrian crossing to go straight across to the front of the Houses of Parliament. Stop near the first vehicle gates, known as the Carriage Gates, where there are usually some police on guard and listen to Track 5.

---

## 5. 'I see the birds have flown'

### Palace of Westminster from Parliament Square

#### Directions 5

Continue a short way further with the Houses of Parliament on your left. Stop beside the statue of Oliver Cromwell and listen to Track 6.

## 6. Tyrant or hero?

### Statue of Oliver Cromwell outside the Houses of Parliament

#### Directions 6

Cross St Margaret Street and go through the passageway between Westminster Abbey and St Margaret's Chapel. Stop just to the left of the main door of St Margaret's Church and listen to Track 7.

## 7. Not a final resting place

### Westminster Abbey & St Margaret's Church

#### Directions 7

Continue through the Abbey grounds towards the front entrance of Westminster Abbey. From the plaza in front of Westminster Abbey use the pedestrian crossing to cross Victoria Street. Pass in front of the Methodist Central Hall and continue along Storey's Gate. At the end, turn left into Birdcage Walk. Cross over to the entrance of St James's Park. Stop near the entrance to the park and listen to Track 8.

## 8. Royal menagerie

### Birdcage Walk

#### Directions 8

Follow the main path through St James's Park to the lake. Cross the lake using the Blue Bridge and follow the path straight ahead. Stop after a short distance and listen to Track 9.

## 9. The longest walk

### St James's Park

#### Directions 9

Continue up the path towards the ornamental gates. Cross over The Mall via the pedestrian crossing and walk up Marlborough Road towards St James's Palace. The courtyard of St James's Palace is on the left side and the Queen's Chapel is on the opposite. Stop outside the chapel and listen to Track 10.



---

## 10. A Catholic Queen

### The Queen's Chapel, Marlborough Road

#### Directions 10

Continue to the top of Marlborough Road and turn left into Pall Mall. Stop outside the main entrance to St James's Palace and listen to Track 11.

## 11. Royal births

### St James's Palace entrance, Pall Mall

#### Directions 11

Continue straight along Cleveland Row. At the end of Cleveland Row are a few steps down into Green Park. Turn left down the wide path and then the first right along the wide path that crosses the whole park. Stop part way along this path and listen to Track 12.

## 12. How a king kept his cool

### Green Park

#### Directions 12

Continue walking through Green Park towards Hyde Park Corner. Use the pedestrian crossing then go through Wellington Arch. Follow the pathway to the other side and use the pedestrian crossing to reach the archway into Hyde Park to the left of Apsley House. Cross South Carriage Drive and head towards the Statue of Achilles. From there follow the path towards the London Bombings memorial. After passing this memorial look on the right for a series of grassy mounds and embankments. Stop near these embankments and listen to Track 13.

## 13. To dig like moles

### Hyde Park east side parallel to Park Lane

#### Directions 13

Continue through Hyde Park towards Marble Arch. At Marble Arch, use the pedestrian crossings or subways to cross to the bottom of Edgware Road. Cross to the traffic island at the bottom of Edgware Road. Stop by the circular stone tablet in the ground and listen to Track 14.

---

## 14. Posthumus Revenge

### Pedestrian island at bottom of Edgware Road

#### Directions 13

To return to Trafalgar Square use Marble Arch Underground station. Alternatively you may like to go to the West End by following Oxford Street or enjoy exploring the Parks.

---

## Credits

The RGS-IBG would like to thank the following people and organisations for their assistance in producing this Discovering Britain walk:

- **David Flinham** for creating the walk
- **Jenny Lunn** for editing the walk materials
- **Rory Walsh** for taking photographs
- **Caroline Millar** for editing the audio commentary
- **Florence Lee, Nick Stanworth, Alex Ricketts and Sam Carlsson** for additional assistance with compiling walk resources
- **Laura Shawyer** for testing the walk and providing additional photographs

---

## Further information

Find out more about the walk story and places of interest along the route:

### **A Tale of Two Forts – London’s Hyde Park and St George’s Fields Forts**

by David Flinham (*Fort*, Volume 38, 2010, pages 3-8)

### **Banqueting House**

[www.hrp.org.uk/banquetinghouse](http://www.hrp.org.uk/banquetinghouse)

### **The British Civil Wars and Commonwealth**

[www.british-civil-wars.co.uk](http://www.british-civil-wars.co.uk)

### **Civil War and Revolution - BBC History**

[www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/civil\\_war\\_revolution](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/civil_war_revolution)

### **The Royal Parks**

<http://www.royalparks.org.uk/parks>

### **St Margaret’s Church**

[www.westminster-abbey.org/st-margarets](http://www.westminster-abbey.org/st-margarets)

### **Westminster Abbey**

[www.westminster-abbey.org](http://www.westminster-abbey.org)



-----

-----



**Britain's landscapes are wonderful.**

**There is a tremendous variety within our shores – whether in the countryside, in towns and cities or at the seaside. And every landscape has a story to tell about our past and present.**

**Discovering Britain is an exciting series of geographically-themed walks that aim to bring these stories alive and inspire everyone to explore and learn more about Britain. Each walk looks at a particular landscape, finding out about how forces of nature, people, events and the economy have created what you see today.**

**The self-guided walks are fun, informative and inspiring. Prepare to discover something new, to be surprised and to find the unexpected.**

**Visit [www.discoveringbritain.org](http://www.discoveringbritain.org) to**

**Send your review of this walk**

**Search for other walks**

**Suggest a new walk**