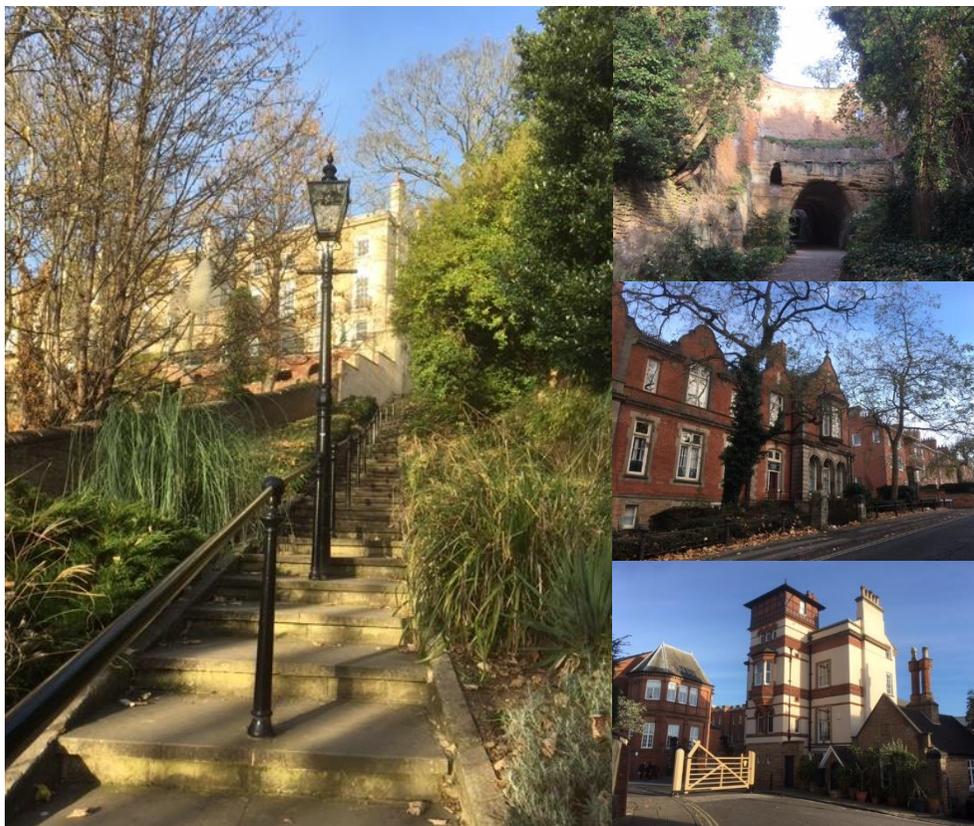


# The Park Steps and Tunnel Walk



**Circular walk exploring the General Cemetery and The Park Estate to find a hidden tunnel, the Park Steps, and peaceful oases just minutes from the city centre**

**Walk No 12**

## DESCRIPTION

Circular walk exploring the General Cemetery and The Park Estate to discover a hidden tunnel, the Park Steps and peaceful oases just minutes from the city centre

## THE FACTS

<b>Area</b>	Nottingham City and The Park Estate
<b>Distance</b>	C 4km/ 2.5 miles
<b>Duration</b>	2 hours
<b>Maps</b>	As leaflet, street map or OS Explorer 1:25000 Map 260
<b>Travel Information</b>	Public transport bus and tram services on Waverley Street and Derby Road (see <a href="http://www.nctx.co.uk">www.nctx.co.uk</a> and <a href="http://www.traveleastmidlands.co.uk">www.traveleastmidlands.co.uk</a> )
<b>Terrain</b>	Mainly walkways, pavements, and surfaced paths. Steps are unsuitable for wheelchairs, mobility scooters and prams.
<b>Start/ Finish</b>	Entrance Gate to General Cemetery (open daily 9am – 3pm in winter / 6pm in Summer) on the corner of Waverley Street/ Clarendon Street
<b>Refreshments/ Facilities</b>	Café in Arboretum opposite General Cemetery entrance; shops and cafés in city centre easily accessible from Waverley Street & Derby Road; bar and restaurant in Nottingham Playhouse.
<b>Alternative route</b>	When the General Cemetery is not open, from the entrance gate walk a little way up Waverley Street, then turn left to walk up Cromwell Street to Alfreton Road, then left to rejoin the walk at Canning Circus

**Cover images:** clockwise from left: Park Steps, Park Tunnel, Clarendon Chambers, Tower House

## THE ROUTE

- A. Access the **General Cemetery** through the gate on **Waverley Street/Corner of Clarendon Street** (opposite Nottingham Art College) and proceed to the War Memorial. Follow the path to the left of the memorial up the hill, keeping to the right, maybe stopping to admire gravestones and trees. At the top, climb steep steps and walk through the arch between alms houses to **Canning Circus**.
- B. Turn left. Use pedestrian lights to cross Alfreton Road, then Derby Road and turn right, stopping to look back at the impressive entry to the cemetery. Walk along Derby Road a short way, crossing the Rope Walk and noting the Grade II listed **Regency House East** on the corner of this road. At the next road turn left by a barred wooden gate into **The Park Estate**.
- C. Keep left to stroll along **Newcastle Terrace**. On your left are the rear of the impressive houses of the **Ropewalk** – and to your right marvellous views over **The Park Estate**, Trent Valley and beyond. At the end of Newcastle Terrace, bear slightly right, passing **Newcastle House** and continue along Park Terrace. At the end note the magnificent **Tower House** begun by William Patterson and P.F. Robinson with later additions by Watson Fothergill and TC Hine, and behind this the former **Nottingham General Hospital**.
- D. To the right the **Park Steps** tumble down. How many are there? This is the continuation of one of the oldest tracks crossing the city. Descend these steps. At the bottom turn right to walk along Park Valley. Follow round to the left as the road becomes Clare Valley. At the end, turn right onto **Tattershall Drive** (facing the squash club). Continue past the Park Tennis Club.
- E. At the junction with **Tunnel Road** turn right and cross this road to the Castle Tennis Club fence. About 20 metres from the junction and less than 1/2metre from the ground check the **Circular Memorial** which records an unusual event. Proceed across the junction with Tennis Drive and continue ahead through Tennis Mews on the wide, brick-paved pathway to discover one of Nottingham's hidden gems.
- F. Before you is the first arch of the **Park Tunnel**. It is an extraordinary sight – even more so looking up to the sky before entering the second arch. Ignore steps to your right (which take you to the Rope Walk). There's evidence of caves above. Stay a while and soak up the atmosphere then head for the right

hand steps at the end of the tunnel bringing you suddenly into a yard. To the left is a modern apartment block, to the right an imposing building – the Old Catholic School – and beyond **The Catholic Cathedral** and the tower of **The Albert Hall**. Walk straight ahead reaching **Derby Road** and turn right to the Cathedral.

- G. A short detour on North Circus Street will take you to the **Albert Hall** and **Nottingham Playhouse**. Cross Derby Road at the pedestrian lights by the Cathedral and head up Vernon Street, between the Strathdon Hotel and a car park. At the end of Vernon Street, cross Wollaton Street at the lights and continue up Clarendon Street. Then cross Talbot Street at lights.
- H. Continue ahead, walking down **Clarendon Street**. There are many interesting buildings on both sides. All the 1850's Town Houses have now been converted to offices or apartments. On the left side is **The Society of Friends Meeting House**. The garden here backs on to the General Cemetery. Opposite, on the right side, after Chaucer Street, is the elegant **Clarendon Chambers**. Continue down, with the wrought iron and brick wall and views of the cemetery on your left, to reach Waverley Street.
- I. You have returned to the start but, before finishing, cross Waverley Street at the lights to visit the impressive **Waverley Building**, on the corner with Peel Street, which still houses several departments of the Nottingham Art College, now part of Trent University.

## POINTS OF INTEREST

**The General Cemetery:** *One of the first gatherings of people into a Nottingham community is thought to be in this area which later became sand quarries, essential to the development of a thriving City. The General Cemetery originated in 1836 when Royal assent was given to a bill authorising its establishment. Originally 14 acres, a further 4 acres were added by the Nottingham Inclosure Act 1845. An "early garden cemetery", it is Grade II listed. The first burial took place in 1837 for the wife of the landlord of "The Strugglers" an ale house in the vicinity of what is now The Albert Hall. By 1923 150,000 bodies were buried there. The cemetery was closed to further internments (except in existing family graves) after 1925. There are 336 Commonwealth graves (over 100 of the first world war graves are in a war graves plot where an adjoining screen wall lists their names).*

**Canning Circus:** *The Cemetery Gate, Archway and Alms Houses were designed by the architect Samuel Sutton Rawlinson and built 1837-1840*

**The Park Estate:** *Nottingham Castle was built in 1087 and the land to the west became a Royal Park with deer, fish ponds and rabbits until the Civil War when the castle was vandalised beyond repair. William Cavendish, the first Duke of Newcastle purchased the estate in 1663 and began re-stocking the park with deer. However, by the 1720s the area had been given over to cattle grazing. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with industrialisation, the Park became a popular open space for local people and there was much opposition when the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Newcastle commenced major development in 1822. He engaged the architect John Jephson and later Peter Frederick to oversee the plans and by 1832 around 50 houses had been built. In 1851, following the death of his father, the 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Newcastle employed Thomas Chambers Hine to design and manage the building of 200 more dwellings. All additional properties were approved by Hine until his death in 1891. By 1918 the Park, including 355 dwellings, was largely completed. In 1938 the 8<sup>th</sup> Duke of Newcastle sold the estate to the Nuffield Trust who sold it to Oxford University. In 1969 the Park was designated a protected area. By 1986 property freeholds had been sold to the owners and ownership of the Estate was transferred from Oxford University to The Nottingham Park Estate Limited.*

**Circular Memorial:** *This ring near the tennis court marks the spot where 65-year old Prime Minister William Gladstone felled a tree with an axe on May 11, 1875, one of his favourite pastimes. The previous day he had met the Mayor of Nottingham, the Vicar of St Mary's and the architect TC Hine to discuss the restoration of Nottingham Castle. According to contemporary reports, the tree had a circumference of five-and-a-half-feet and was felled within 50 minutes.*

**The Park Tunnel:** *was built in 1855 by the 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Newcastle to allow horse drawn carriages access between the Park Estate and Derby Road. The original requirement was for a maximum gradient of 1 in 14, but the actual gradient of 1 in 12 is too great for horse-drawn carriages so it was never used as originally intended. The tunnel cuts through Castle Rock sandstone, part of the Sherwood Sandstone Group, that hosts the many caves and tunnels the city is famous for. The rock was laid down 250 million years ago by a huge river flowing from*

*Northern France over a hot desert like landscape. This created cross bedding structures which can be seen in the tunnel.*

**Nottingham Cathedral (the Cathedral Church of St Barnabas)** *was designed by the architect A.W.N. Pugin. When it opened in 1844 it was the largest Catholic church in England to have been built since the reformation.*

**Albert Hall** *was designed by A.E. Lambert in the style of an Edwardian Theatre or Music Hall. Grade II listed, it replaced an earlier building designed by Watson Fothergill, which was destroyed by fire in 1906. It was officially opened in 1910 by Lady Boot as the new Albert Hall Methodist Mission and remained a Methodist Mission until 1984. Nottingham City Council purchased it in 1987. Following major refurbishment, it operates as a commercial conference and entertainment centre.*

**Nottingham Playhouse** *was originally in the premises of the old Goldsmith Street Picture House. The new Playhouse, designed by German Architect Peter Moro who had worked on London's Royal Festival Hall, opened in 1963 and incorporates European influences. Anish Kapoor's Sky Light sculpture creates an intriguing external spectacle.*

**Clarendon Street** *is described by Elaine Hardwick in the Nottingham Pevsner as "an oasis of 1850's town houses". Most are now offices. On the left side is the Society of Friends Meeting House which boasted a laminated timber dome until it was replaced by a double pitched roof in 2007. On the opposite side, towards Waverley Street, is a superb terrace of chambers built in 1852/53 by Aitken & Capes for the Royal Midland Institute for The Blind. Note the detail above the arched entrance doors. Also look out for the stained glass windows.*

**Nottingham Art College/ Waverley Building:** *Nottingham School of Art & Design is one of the oldest in the UK outside London. Opened in 1843 it had a number of locations before the building in Waverley Street opened in 1865. The Waverley Building is Grade II listed and its solid architectural style deserves closer inspection, particularly the carved tributes to great artists. How many can you spot? The school was initially established to encourage textile and clothing design and received support from many local manufacturers. It is now part of Nottingham Trent University and operates from several sites.*



— The Walk

