

# Stowe Gardens Map

Routes, Highlights & Essential Info

by Human Hand



## Stowe Gardens Parkland



National  
Trust

### Free to roam

Make time to explore Stowe's vast 750 acres of parkland. It's free, and offers wonderful walks, bridleways, wildlife watching and general exploring. We've picked out a few highlights to encourage your wanderings...

#### A. Bourbon Tower

The old gamekeeper's house stands at the park's highpoint, with sweeping views.

#### B. Boycott Pavilions

West Boycott Pavilion was once home to Lancelot 'Capability' Brown himself.

#### C. Conduit House

Beautiful octagonal building, restored in 2002.

#### D. Haymanger Pond

Look out for grebes, buzzards and sunbathing grass snakes.

#### E. Home Farm

Once the heart of the working estate, housing bailiffs and farm labourers.

#### F. Oxford Water & Bridge

Stunning classical bridge. The decorative urns once stood in Sleeping Wood.

#### G. Stowe Castle

Don't be fooled. It's not a real castle, just a facade to catch the eye.

#### H. Wolfe's Obelisk

Commemorates Major-General James Wolfe, who died capturing Quebec from the French.

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www.nationaltrust.org.uk/stowe  
Search 'national trust stowe' on the socials

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### Park essentials. Please...

- Visit the toilet before you explore
- Wear walking boots or wellies
- Keep your dog on a short lead
- Take your litter home with you
- Stay within park boundaries

# 'Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.'

~ W H Murray



#### 1. Corinthian Arch

Built as the grandiose main entrance to Stowe. Designed to convince visitors they were entering one of the very best estates in the country.

#### 2. Farmhouse Garden



#### 3. New Inn & Parlour Rooms

#### 4. Bell Gate



#### 5. Temple of Friendship

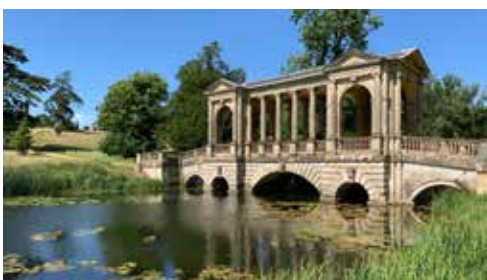
This is where Cobham's social and political clique gathered - an all-male safe space for drinking, holding forth and partying. It was severely damaged by fire in the 1840s.



#### 6. Chinese House

A fascinating structure attributed to architect and designer William Kent and the earliest surviving Chinese-style garden pavilion in Britain.

#### 7. Brown's Cascade



#### 8. Palladian Bridge

Designed to allow carriages to cross. Originally higher over the water, but Octagon Lake has risen over the centuries. Stunning views.



#### 9. Temple of British Worthies

A must see. This is Cobham's monument to the best of British. Some here are shoo-ins: Shakespeare, Isaac Newton, John Milton, Elizabeth I, for example. Others seem a little obscure, reflecting the politics of the time. It is no accident that amongst the most worthy is Signor Fido, Cobham's dog.



#### 10. Gothic Temple

Book a short stay or holiday at the Gothic Temple through The Landmark Trust. Stunning 360 degree balcony views.



#### 11. Stowe House

One of England's grandest Ducal Palaces - even Queen Victoria was bewildered by its extravagant exteriors. Run by the Stowe House Preservation Trust, opening times may differ from Stowe Gardens. Visitors are very welcome but please check details at stowe.co.uk/house.



#### 12. Lord Cobham's Pillar

Lady Cobham's memorial to her husband is the tallest of Stowe's monuments at 104 feet. The original statue was destroyed by lightning in 1957. Take a breather here for the excellent views to the Temple of Concord and Victory and across the parkland.



#### 13. Queen's Temple

Lord Cobham built this for his wife to directly face his own Temple of Friendship where he and his friends would meet. Lady Cobham and her companions spent their summer afternoons enjoying the southerly aspect over Hawkwell Field and the temples at the bottom end of the garden.

- 14. Samson & the Philistine
- 15. Fane of Pastoral Poetry
- 16. Circle of the Dancing Faun
- 17. Gladiator
- 18. Hercules & Antaeus



#### 19. Temple of Concord & Victory

Offering breathtaking views over the Grecian Valley, the Grecian Temple was rededicated as the Temple of Concord and Victory in the 1760s in honour of both the British victory over the French in the Seven Years' War and political harmony at home.

- 20. Grotto
- 21. Four Seasons Fountain
- 22. Captain Cook's Monument
- 23. Shell Bridge
- 24. Wooden Bridge
- 25. The Congreve Monument
- 26. Lord Chatham's Urn
- 27. Pebble Alcove
- 28. Eastern Lake Pavilion
- 29. Western Lake Pavilion
- 30. Cascade & Artificial Ruins
- 31. Sleeping Wood
- 32. Doric Arch

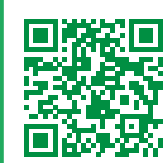


#### 33. Temple of Venus

William Kent's first creation at Stowe, dedicated to Veneri Hortensi - the Venus of the garden. The building is full of mystery and intrigue. During a 1991 excavation, underground chambers were discovered. Their purpose is unknown.

### Scan here

Visit our website for more information, seasonal updates, and special events.



- 34. Captain Grenville's Column
- 35. Gothic Cross
- 36. St Mary's Church
- 37. Statue of King George II
- 38. The Saxon Deities
- 39. Dido's Cave
- 40. Rotunda
- 41. Hermitage
- 42. Eleven Acre Cascade
- 43. Statue of Queen Caroline



#### 44. Temple of Ancient Virtue

Cobham's cenotaph to Socrates, Homer, Lycurgus and Epaminondas: the four ancient Greeks he believed embodied the virtues sadly lacking in the public figures of his own day.



#### 45. Elysian Fields

Based on the myth of an Elysian paradise for the heroes of the Greek gods, the fields explore high and low morals and the paths we take through life. Designed mainly by William Kent, the area reflects Lord Cobham's political, historical and literary allegiances.



#### 46. The Sort of Secret, Best View at Stowe

Hiding in plain sight is a spot that many visitors walk past in their eagerness to see the next thing. It offers you incredible views across the lakes, and is a perfect example of how carefully crafted Stowe's landscape really is.



#### 47. Grecian Valley

This setting for the Temple of Concord & Victory was the last section of garden to be completed. Under the direction of Capability Brown & Lord Cobham, 500 men created the valley using only hand tools.



#### 48. Octagon Lake

Originally designed in a traditional formal style with eight structured sides. The lake was later 'naturalised' by Earl Temple. The surrounding area is generally level, but with grassy banks rolling down to the water.

- 49. Orchard
- 50. Grecian Urn
- 51. Muse of Pastoral Poetry
- 52. Marquess Urn
- 53. Roman Wrestlers
- 54. Skittle Alley & Swing

## Stowe Gardens is what you make it.

Stowe Gardens has inspired poets, artists, the great, the good, and sometimes the naughty, for three centuries. Now, it's yours, however it calls you.

## Stowe Gardens | by Human Hand

## For everyone, for ever

Stowe is the creation of many 18th-century landscape designers, architects and craftsmen, and showcases some of Capability Brown's finest work. It's a towering achievement that still influences garden design today.

After early contributions from Sir John Vanbrugh and William Kent, Stowe's first garden designer, Charles Bridgeman, kickstarted the radical transformation away from formality. Lord Cobham funded huge development to create a grand canvas of idealised nature. Grassland, trees, lakes, temples and monuments: all are meticulously constructed to shape perfect views. By the mid-19th century, Richard Temple, 2nd Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, ultimately aimed to impress Queen Victoria and outdo the neighbouring Claydon estate. This showmanship and rivalry ultimately contributed to bankruptcy.

### 'Where are the flowers?'

Visitors often ask this, but Stowe isn't that kind of garden. It's a rambling landscaped walk built around nature, designed to be exquisite but somehow wild. It may look like rolling English countryside but everything at Stowe was created by human hand.

### How you can help Stowe

We're constantly restoring the historic landscape and monuments. Our work is funded by your donations and visits. Every penny you spend here goes back into looking after this special place.

- Scan your National Trust card as you enter. Stowe receives funding for every scan. It really makes a difference
- Make a donation
- Become a volunteer
- Remember us in your will
- Treat yourself in our gift shop
- Visit our second-hand book shop

### Visiting Stowe House

Stowe House and its famous school are separate from National Trust Stowe Gardens. Stowe House Preservation Trust welcomes the public at various times of the year. To book a visit, call 01280 818 002 or visit: www.stowe.co.uk/house NT members get concessions on entry.

### Spend an hour, a day, a week

Delve into its history, explore its nooks and crannies, get healthy here. Whoever you are, however you enjoy Stowe, you're always welcome.

### Have a picnic

Unpack your wicker basket, lay out that blanket and have a classic English picnic. There are numerous spots to rest awhile, enjoy the view and relax. We've marked a few of our favourites on the map. Pimm's anyone?



### Accessibility

Stowe Gardens, by its nature, can be challenging. Most pathways are gravel or hoggin. Mown grass paths can be slippery when wet. There are steep slopes and uneven 18th-century steps in places. Please follow the suggested paths based on your level of mobility. That said, we aim to make Stowe as accessible as possible to all who come...

#### Free Accessible Map

A map showing distances, location of benches, toilets, and quiet spaces etc, is available on request.

#### Free Access Equipment

Please call in advance to book manual wheelchairs, mobility vehicles or trollies for transporting heavy bags or picnics. Using your own mobility vehicle? Please ensure it's fully charged before setting off.

#### Car Park & Entry

There's accessible parking at the New Inn. The entrance to the garden is about 800m from the car park. Need support getting to the entrance? We'll be happy to help.

#### Cafe, Shops & Monuments

There's level access from the car park to the main visitor facilities at New Inn, including the café and shop. The New Inn Parlour Rooms and the second-hand bookshop have steps, as do most of the temples and monuments.

### Walk the dog

Dogs welcome. Livestock roam the grounds, especially at Hawkwell Fields and Mead, so please keep a short lead. And scoop that poop.

### Run wild

Expect varied terrain, conditions & challenges, on and off-path. Please be mindful of others.

### Get creative

Paint, draw & take photographs. Please note, commercial photoshoots need our written permission and will incur a location fee.



Free & paid

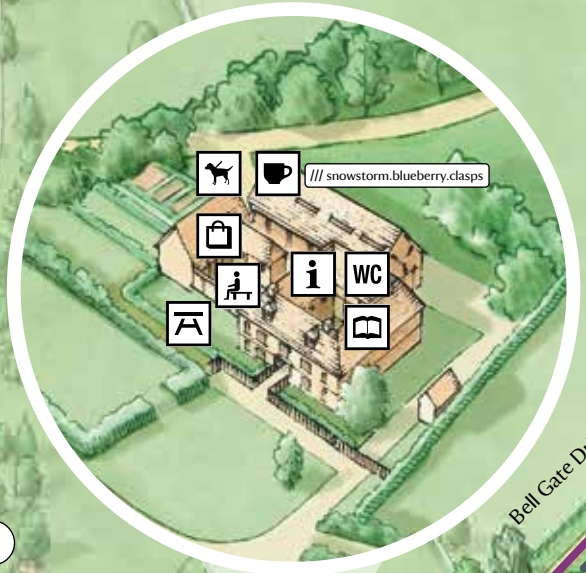
- Free to access
- Pay for entry



100 m

Distances from Bell Gate (in metres)

8. Palladian Bridge	→ 460 m
11. Stowe House	→ 910 m
13. Queen's Temple	→ 1110 m
16. Circle of the Dancing Faun	→ 1530 m
19. Temple of Concord & Victory	→ 1130 m
33. Temple of Venus	→ 490 m



The Parkland

Stowe is huge. 245 acres of historic landscaped gardens and 700 acres of surrounding parkland. Access to the parkland (shaded in lighter green) is FREE!

Please note

It's roughly 800m walk from the car park to the entrance gate. A shuttle service is available on request. Please speak to a member of the team for assistance.

# Explore Stowe Gardens

## The Classics

### The Path of Vice

The Paths of Vice and Virtue follow the Greek god, Hercules' personal struggle. Vice winds through the garden of love (designed believe it or not, by then head gardener, Mr Love!). The temples here tell stories of seductive women, sordid goings-on and excessive partying.

### The Path of Virtue

If Vice leaves you all aflutter, you need Virtue. The gardens represent heaven on earth. The monuments promote high values. Don't miss the Temple of British Worthies, an eclectic ensemble of national heroes. Living a good life isn't easy, so expect many bridges to cross.

### The Path of Liberty

Freedom is hard won, so this is the toughest of the three classics. Cobham's politics are apparent everywhere: the Temple of Concord and Victory celebrates Britain's triumphant Seven Years' War while Lord Cobham's Pillar shows the estate owner as a mighty Roman warrior.

## The Moderns

### The Path of the Brave (5k loop)

Get fit in beautiful surroundings. We've mapped out a 5k run or walk that takes in just about every noteworthy spot on the map. We hope it will challenge and inspire you. But remember, take a break and spend some time to just stand and stare a while. Healthy body and healthy mind.

### The Path of Contentment

Stowe attracts all sorts of people for all sorts of reasons. Many of you come here for wellbeing. Walking here, and resting there, induces calm and serenity. Following this path, with recommended picnic and beauty spots, should instill in you a deep sense of ease.

### The Royal Route - Classic Route

### The Royal Route - Extended Route

Created in Spring 2022 to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee of HM Queen Elizabeth II. Journey around the gardens to explore Stowe's royal links, visits, and monuments. Take the classic route (4k) for a gentler walk and introduction to our royal highlights. Choose the extended route (6k) for the full experience.

by Human Hand

## Legend

- Circular walk
- ..... Footpath
- - - Bridleway

- Information point
- Shop
- Car park
- Coach parking
- Accessible car park
- Café
- Toilets
- Dog waste bin
- Bookshop
- Picnic area
- Wildflower meadow
- Seating
- Heated, outdoor café seating in the New Inn Farmyard
- what3words.com

## Refresh

There are toilets at New Inn, and portaloos at the garden entrance, including accessible toilets.

## Refuel

After all that exercise and fresh air, you'll have earned a cream tea. The café at New Inn is open 10am-5pm, but closes at 4pm in winter. Savouries, cakes, fresh coffee, teas and hot chocolate always available. Check the boards for daily specials.

## Remember

Visit our gift shop next to the café for a wide range of Stowe and National Trust books, pictures, ornaments, gifts and more. All profit is ploughed back into conservation.

## Emergencies

Need assistance? Call 07990 771 841 to contact the Duty Manager.

## Shuttle service

If you need help reaching the entrance to the gardens, please speak to a member of our team on arrival and ask about our 'on demand' shuttle service.