Which path can we lead you down today?

Leave the New Inn visitor centre behind you and take your time to stroll down Bell Gate Drive, as visitors to Stowe have done for nearly 300 years. You can pick from one of our three paths, created in the eighteenth century by Lord Cobham. Though these aren’t loops of the garden, they were intentionally created this way to illustrate Lord Cobham’s political and social beliefs. Or feel free to explore and create your own path through the gardens.

The Path of Vice
Easy going walk - 1 mile, 25 minutes*

Let us tempt you along the Path of Vice. Turn left as you enter the garden to be led through life’s indulgences. The temples in this area are associated with lust and illicit love; the Hermitage story links into sexual jealousy and melancholy whilst the Temple of Venus is dedicated to the unfaithfulness of women. Some say to truly appreciate virtue you must first dabble in vice. We couldn’t comment.

The Path of Virtue
Steady stroll – 1.2 miles, 25-30 minutes (slight gradient)*

If you are not feeling quite so naughty today, perhaps you’d rather follow the Path of Virtue? Head left as you enter the garden but don’t stray too far down the Path of Vice; take a right turn passing the Cascade towards the Elysian Fields. Along this path you’ll meet those the family held in high esteem; the Ancient Greeks, Queen Charlotte (wife of George III, for whom Queen’s Temple was named) and those honoured as Great British Worthies.

The Path of Liberty
Vigorous ramble - 1.3 miles, 30-35 minutes (slight gradient)*

This was the final path created through the garden, themed around the origin of English political liberty. Wonder at the Temple of Concord and Victory, the first Greek revival building in England, the imposing Gothic Temple and the breath-taking views over large open spaces across to the parkland beyond the Ha-ha.

* all times are approx. Bell Gate Drive is approx 0.3 miles/480m long

* From 12 Apr - 30 Oct

Please note this map is intended as a guide only and is not drawn to scale
**Getting around**

A short shuttle service is available from New Inn to Bell Gate. Between April and October you will be able to hop on a buggy, stopping in three locations including the House and Capability Found exhibition. This service runs from 10.15am picking up at Bell Gate every half an hour. Alternatively speak to our welcome team about hiring a four seater buggy to explore at your own pace. We ask for a £30 donation when you hire a buggy, which helps us cover the cost of providing this service.

**Restoring Stowe – The landscape programme**

An ambitious programme of restoration is underway and this year you’ll see the return of lost statues. From 12 April to 30 October, make your way to the Temple of Venus to discover Stowe’s heroic statues, statues and statins, in our temporary exhibition ‘No more heroes?’

**Capability Found**

2016 marks the 300th anniversary of Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown’s birth, one of the most influential landscape gardeners. As his first and only employed role as Head Gardener, Stowe is where he learnt his trade and built up contacts before he moved onto other gardens across the county. From 12 April to 30 October drop in at the Temple of Concord and Victory for the exhibition to discover more about Brown, installations by the Embroiders’ Guild and relax over tea and cake. Check our website for more events and details.

**Stowe**

In taking on the management of the gardens at Stowe in 1989, the National Trust took possession of a garden in decay.

A family history of ambition and rapaciousness had led to bankruptcy, sale and in the second decade of the twentieth century the house was transformed from a home to a boarding school.

The significance, understanding and appreciation of the gardens at Stowe were lost to the more fashionable appeal of the country house in preceding decades. By the 1980s the gardens were overgrown, subtleties in planting and paths were lost and Stowe was unrecognisable from its eighteenth century splendour.

Since 1989 the Trust has worked carefully to restore large portions of the 250 acres of Grade I listed gardens. Stowe is a landscape that has influenced gardening all over the Western World for a quarter of a millennium and as we approach the thirtieth anniversary of Trust management, restoration continues apace.

**Time for tea?**

The café at the New Inn visitor centre is open from 10am to 6pm March to October and closes at 4pm over the winter months.

- Between 12 April and 30 October 2016, pause at our exhibition café at the Temple of Concord and Victory for tea, coffee and cake. Open daily between 11am and 5pm.
- Picnics welcome anywhere.

**Discovery**

- Pick up a guide book from the shop to reveal the stories behind the gardens and temples.
- Visit the Welcome and Discovery Centre and take tours of Stowe House.
- Pick up a leaflet at New Inn or visit www.stowehouse.org

**Paw patrols**

- Dogs are welcome throughout the gardens and parkland.
- Please keep them on short leads and use the bins provided.
- Livestock are present in the gardens and are indicated on the map.
- Dog waste bags are available at reception.

**Nature calls**

- Toilet facilities are available at New Inn.
- As Stowe is a Grade I listed garden, we don’t have plumbing in the gardens but we do have discreetly sited portaloos marked on the map.

**House**

Stowe House is managed by Stowe House Preservation Trust and is home to Stowe School.

**Visitor information**

- Telephone 01280 817156.
- Email: stowe@nationaltrust.org.uk
- www.stowehouse.org.uk