



WALKING IN BELGRAVIA

A GUIDED WALK THROUGH THE HEART OF BELGRAVIA



The suggested walk through Belgravia takes about 2 hours. It offers views of typical Belgravia houses and other buildings but it is in no way comprehensive. There is much to see in Belgravia: antique shops to browse, fine buildings to admire, quiet mews to enjoy where the only obvious change is the motor car in place of the horse-drawn carriage.

BELGRAVIA A HISTORY

The Grosvenor family, headed by Gerald Grosvenor, the 6th Duke of Westminster, has owned the 80 hectares (200 acres) of Belgravia since 1677, when Sir Thomas Grosvenor married Mary Davies, heiress to part of the Manor of Ebury. At that time, the southern part of the manor bounded by

Chelsea, Hyde Park and Buckingham Palace, known as the Five Fields, was open land – a mix of swamp, pasture, orchards, a few scattered houses and much of it the haunt of highwaymen.



HOUSING BOOM

The end of the Napoleonic Wars brought a great housing boom to London. This, and the conversion of the nearby Buckingham House into a palace for George IV in 1826, was the catalyst for the development of the Five Fields as one of the most fashionable and desirable residential areas of central London. (The Grosvenors had already developed Mayfair a hundred years earlier).

AN ELEGANT ESTATE

Working to the vision of Robert, 1st Marquess of Westminster, Thomas Cundy (the Estate Surveyor) and Thomas Cubitt (master builder), oversaw the development of Belgravia into an elegant estate in the classic Regency style of squares, streets and crescents, aligned to overlook private gardens surrounded by unified palazzo façades.

Some of the larger houses have now become the headquarters of commercial businesses, institutions and embassies, while the development of large modern offices has been encouraged on the perimeter of the Estate. However, the vast majority of Cubitt's work still survives and almost the whole of Belgravia is included in a statutory Conservation Area. Today, Belgravia is recognised throughout Europe as the largest and best preserved urban Regency estate.

LOOKING FORWARD

Over the last 300 years the Grosvenor Estate (now known simply as Grosvenor) has evolved to become one of the UK's largest private property companies. Its chairman is Gerald Grosvenor, the 6th Duke of Westminster and head of the Grosvenor family. Apart from its office in Mayfair, Grosvenor has offices in 17 of the world's most dynamic cities, managing its growing portfolio of international property assets and is active in Britain & Ireland, the Americas, Continental Europe and Asia Pacific. However, Mayfair and Belgravia remain the core assets of the Grosvenor portfolio.

Grosvenor's long term aims are the pursuit and maintenance of excellence. To help meet these objectives, its estate management policies are deliberately designed to ensure the preservation of some of the UK's most important streetscapes and to promote mixed and vibrant communities for those who live and work there.

THE WALK

STARTING AT SLOANE SQUARE TUBE STATION

➊ turn right into Cliveden Place ➋ with its Regency terraces of houses, many with original fanlights above the front doors. You are now just within the south west boundary of GROSVENOR'S BELGRAVIA ESTATE, widely recognised as one of the most significant and carefully preserved urban streetscapes in Europe.

Take the first right into Bourne Street ➌ lined with what were once artisans' dwellings, past the CHURCH OF ST MARY on your left, built in 1874 with the addition of an unusual asymmetrical nonagon porch in 1928.

Turn right into Graham Terrace ➍ and take the first left into Passmore Street ➎ with the FOX AND HOUNDS PUB on the corner. Passmore Street reveals one of the

area's intriguing contrasts, with many expensive modern private homes on the left, cheek by jowl with social housing on the right which is still owned and managed by Grosvenor. Here, small artisans' cottages give way to LUMLEY FLATS built in 1875 at the instigation of the 1st

LUMLEY FLATS

DUKE OF WESTMINSTER. Lumley Flats was one of a large number of 'model dwellings' built by philanthropists to house the poor in the 19th century. The archways, open stairwells, brickwork and contrasting tiling round the entrance are all characteristic of such dwellings.



WOLFGANG
AMADEUS MOZART

At the junction with Pimlico Road ➏ turn left past elegant shops and cross to the small triangular paved area ➑ This is ORANGE SQUARE, recently improved by Grosvenor in conjunction with Westminster City Council. Under its mature London plane trees is a statue of

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART, who lived at N^o180 Ebury Street from April 1764 to July 1765 while on a grand tour of Europe with his father. There, the eight year old prodigy composed his first two symphonies. Restaurants and shops surround the Square, including the ORANGE BREWERY which started as the Orange Coffee House and Tavern in 1776 and which serves beers brewed on the premises.

Retrace your steps across Orange Square to Ebury Street ➒ and turn right, past LA POULE AU POT, a traditional French restaurant beneath another social housing block constructed in the same way as



IAN FLEMING,
CREATOR OF
JAMES BOND, LIVED
AT 22 EBURY STREET

Lumley Flats. Then take the first left into Eaton Terrace ➓ a street of elegant five and six storey terraced houses. Turn right into Chester Row ➑ with its tall stucco houses, passing the DUKE OF WELLINGTON PUB on the corner. The 'Duke of Boots' has the reputation of being the nearest thing to a country pub in the centre of London. To your left, look down cobbled Minera Mews, built originally to house the servants, carriages and horses of the rich in South Eaton Place but now converted into sought after homes. Turn right into South Eaton Place ➑ and left up Gerald Road ➑ passing N^o17, the home of actor and singer NOEL COWARD from 1930 to 1956.

Here, as in the neighbouring streets, note the well maintained houses, the careful preservation of details of 18th century streetscape in iron railings and lamp brackets. Grosvenor takes an active role in managing its Estate and residents are also expected to play their part in conserving this historical area of London.



NOEL COWARD

Cross Elizabeth Street 13 with its chic, individual shops and **head for Chester Square 14** This enclave of magnolia stucco six storey houses with pillared porches around a private garden was recently voted London's second best house address, outshone only by neighbouring Eaton Square. Chester Square was one of the three original squares conceived by THOMAS CUNDY when he originally planned the Belgravia Estate in response to the grand vision of the 1st MARQUESS OF WESTMINSTER in the 1820s. (The others were Eaton and Belgrave). Look up to see the forests of chimney pots, characteristic of a time when the only form of heating was coal. Coal was delivered to cellars through round holes set into the pavement; many of the cellar covers are still visible.

QUEEN WILHELMINA OF THE NETHERLANDS lived at N°77 Chester Square from 1940 to 1945. MATTHEW



A STUDY KNOWN AS 'TOM BROWN'S IN RUGBY SCHOOL

ARNOLD, poet and critic lived at N°2 Chester Square. In 1851 he was appointed Inspector of Schools and is credited with greatly improving the education system. His father, THOMAS ARNOLD, was Headmaster of Rugby School and became as famous for his portrayal in 'Tom Brown's School

Days' as for his efforts to reform public school education in England. The author of 'Frankenstein', MARY SHELLEY, lived at N°24 Chester Square after the death of her husband, PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY until her own death in 1851. GUY BURGESS, a Foreign Office official and secret member of the Communist Party, lived for a time in Chester Square. Burgess and Donald Maclean, another spy, defected to the USSR in 1951.

Walk back down the other side of Chester Square to ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH at the south western end of the Square, designed by THOMAS CUNDY II. Inside, the screen behind the altar is of Italian alabaster; the painting of St Martin is said to be from the studio of VAN DYCK.

Walk into Elizabeth Street again 15 and turn right, passing Eaton Mews West and Boscobel Place on your left and right 16

Straight ahead is Eaton Square 17 one of the jewels in Belgravia's crown.

Designed by THOMAS CUBITT in the Palazzo style, construction began in 1826 and wasn't completed until 1855. The grand façades with their Corinthian style column capitals overlook private gardens, part of the 6 hectares (16 acres) of gardens within Grosvenor's Belgravia and Mayfair Estates. Eaton Square was originally the beginning of the royal route (the King's Road) from St James's Palace to Hampton Court. Past occupiers of the Square include NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN, LORD JOHN RUSSELL and STANLEY BALDWIN – all ex Prime Ministers – together with VIVIEN LEIGH and LORD BOOTHBY.



THOMAS CUBITT

Continue straight on over the traffic lights into Lyall Street

18 Thomas Cubitt lived nearby at N°3 Lyall Street. Born in Norfolk in 1788, he was a ship's carpenter before setting up as a speculative builder in 1811. **Turn right into Eaton Mews North** **19** originally the home of the horses and servants for the houses in Eaton Square. Now the quiet seclusion of the cottages gives the mews a village feel in sharp contrast to the grandeur of Eaton Square.

Notice the archway decorated with Grosvenor's traditional symbol of a wheat sheaf, and the cobbled road with guttering – a reminder of when horses were stabled there.

Half way down the mews turn left through another archway, then right into Eaton

Place **20** N°93 was Thomas Cubitt's office. In 1848 CHOPIN gave his first concert at N°99 Eaton Place. LORD KELVIN, scientist, lived at N°15 and LORD AVEBURY, scientist, politician and author was born at N°29.



CHOPIN

Turn left into Belgrave Place **21** Ahead of you is Belgrave Square, planned as the centrepiece of the Belgravia Estate

22 This area was the scene of very early attempts at ballooning. Later, the grand houses in Belgrave Square were built of bricks made from clay dug from the site. The streets were raised up with spoil excavated from St. Katherine's

Dock next to the Tower of London. From the beginning, the magnificent terraces, speculatively built, were a magnet for the

aristocracy. QUEEN VICTORIA gave Belgrave Square the royal seal of approval when she rented a house (N°36) for her mother, the



QUEEN VICTORIA 1846

DUCHESS OF KENT, for £2,000 a year. By 1860, 3 dukes, 13 other peers and 13 Members of Parliament had lived in the Square.

Today, the houses are occupied mainly by embassies, institutions and offices, with only 9 remaining as private homes.



KITCHENER LIVED AT N°17 BELGRAVE SQUARE

If you dare to brave the traffic, cross the road to the gardens in the middle of the Square to read the inscription on the statue of CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS at the south west corner. The statue was a gift from Spain 'dedicated to the people of the Americas on the 500th anniversary of the encounter of the two worlds'. At the south east corner of the square you can see a bronze of SIMON BOLIVAR, the Liberator of South America, erected in 1974 to commemorate Bolivar's links with England.

Close by in the garden is a statue 'HOMAGE TO LEONARDO' The Vitruvian Man, conceived by ENZO PLAZOTTA and completed by his assistant in 1982. Notice also the statue to GENERAL JOSÉ DE SAN MARTIN, the Liberator of Argentina, Chile and Peru, opposite N°49, the residence of the Argentine Ambassador.

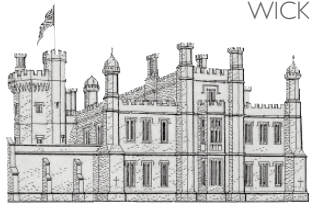
Having walked around the Square in an anti-clockwise direction, ending at N°14, bear left into Halkin Place **23** If you need a break, walk through the archway on your left into Belgrave Mews West to The STAR TAVERN, several times winner of the Pubs in Bloom competition and also former rendezvous of the GREAT TRAIN ROBBERS. Otherwise, turn right along Halkin Place to the junction with West Halkin Street **24**

Ahead of you is **The Belfry**, built in 1830 as a Presbyterian Church and now Mosimann's private club and restaurant. **25** Continue along to the end of **West Halkin Street**, turn right and immediately right again into **Motcomb Street**

26 with its range of antique shops, fashion boutiques, galleries, etc. and notice the ironwork balconies above the shops. Like Elizabeth Street in south Belgravia, this is 'the high street' for north Belgravia.

Walk along **Motcomb Street**, until you reach the **PANTECHNICON**, built in 1830 as a storage warehouse and rebuilt, complete with doric columns in 1870, after a fire. The Pantechnicon now serves as the imposing entrance to the **HALKIN ARCADE**.

Looking through the arch at the end of the Arcade, the sculpture you see is 'FOUNTAINHEAD' by **GEOFFREY WICKHAM** (1971). Both the Arcade and West Halkin Street are named after **HALKYN CASTLE**, originally a Grosvenor family property in Flintshire.



HALKYN CASTLE



MOSIMANN'S

Take the first left into **Kinnerton Street** **27** with **The TURK'S HEAD PUB** on the corner. Kinnerton Street is a small winding street and was originally the service road for Wilton Place and Wilton Crescent. In 1854 the street was occupied by a cow-keeper, a saddler, two tailors, a plumber, a wheelwright, a grocer and two sellers of asses' milk (thought to be beneficial to health and used in nearby hospitals). Today, it is home to a number of shops and small businesses

as well as private residents. Follow the street, past the **Nag's Head pub** and **The Wilton Arms**, then turn right to emerge in **Wilton Place** **28** built in 1825 to connect Belgravia with Knightsbridge. Opposite is **ST. PAUL'S CHURCH**, Knightsbridge, built in 1843.

(If you want to finish here, turn left into Wilton Place then left or right into Knightsbridge for tubes and buses.)

Otherwise, turn right down **Wilton Place**, then left into **Wilton Crescent** **29** named after the 1st **EARL OF WILTON**, father-in-law to the 1st **MARQUESS OF WESTMINSTER**. Notice the curving **Cubitt terraces** which were refaced with stone early this century. Turn left into **Wilton Row** **30** with its painted cottages and window boxes. Pause to look at the courtyard mews on the right – one of Belgravia's delightful 'hidden' places. To the right of the **GRENADIER PUB** (complete with sentry box outside) and which used to be frequented by officers from



GRENADIER PUB

the local barracks, walk through the gate in the latted fence to reach **Old Barrack Yard** **31** a narrow street of terraced cottages. This was originally the entrance to a cow pasture until a barracks for a regiment of Foot Guards was built in 1758. In 1826 the area was leased by **THOMAS PHILLIPS**, a corn merchant and publican who, in 1830, built a maze of narrow streets, cottages and stables.

At the end of the street, walk through the arch and gate in the wall on your right to **Grosvenor Crescent Mews** **32**. If the gate is locked, turn left and follow the road until you arrive in Knightsbridge. Hyde Park, probably London's most

famous park, is directly ahead of you. Turn right, and continue walking until you reach Hyde Park Corner.

THE LANESBOROUGH HOTEL, standing on the site of the former ST GEORGE'S HOSPITAL is on your right. Turn right into Grosvenor Place, then right again into Grosvenor Crescent and, finally, right again into Grosvenor Crescent Mews. From here you can resume the walk from 32 above. Grosvenor Crescent Mews was extensively restored by Grosvenor in 1996. Notice the wonderful wisteria that has graced the walls of N°27 for the best part of a century. N°32 was, until a disastrous fire, home of one of the last working stables in central London.

(If you want to finish your walk here, turn left into Grosvenor Crescent and left again into Grosvenor Place to reach buses and tubes at Hyde Park Corner).



1ST MARQUESS OF WESTMINSTER

Turn right down the sweeping curve of Grosvenor Crescent for a view of BELGRAVE SQUARE

33 from the north east. The crescent was built in the 1860s – as an afterthought – to be a formal entrance to Belgravia. To your right, at the junction of Grosvenor Crescent and Wilton Crescent, you will see a statue of the 1st MARQUESS OF

WESTMINSTER. This statue was commissioned by the present

DUKE OF WESTMINSTER to commemorate his ancestor, the man originally responsible for planning and developing the Five Fields into the Belgravia we know today. The statue was sculpted by JONATHAN WYLDER, a local sculptor with a gallery in Motcomb Street. Turn left into Halkin Street 34 then right into Montrose Place. At N°10 35 is the Slate

Wall by internationally renowned artist Andy Goldsworthy. The route now winds down through a series of delightful mews towards Victoria Station and the end of our walk.

At the end of Montrose Place, cross Chapel Street 36 and turn right, then immediately left into Groom Place 37 Follow the road to the right (noting a parish boundary mark dated 1821 on the wall of N°11) past the Horse and Groom Pub until you reach Chester Street.

Cross Chester Street 38 and walk down quiet Wilton Mews 39 passing the Grouse and Claret pub on the left, emerging in Wilton Street 40

Cross to an iron gate in the wall at the side of St Peter's Church, Eaton Square, and walk round the churchyard to the front of the building. This was the first building in Eaton Square, designed by HENRY HAKEWELL in 1824. St Peter's was badly damaged by fire in 1987, but is now fully restored. If the side gate is closed, walk

round via Upper Belgrave Street 41. From the front steps of the church, you can enjoy one of the best views of the terraces of Eaton Square. From here, either turn left and continue down towards Lower Belgrave Street 42 and, finally, turn left into Buckingham Palace Road 43 for tubes, trains and buses at Victoria, or return to Sloane Square.



ST PETER'S CHURCH

COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUES

ON GROSVENOR'S BELGRAVIA ESTATE

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-1888)

*Poet, critic and educationalist, lived at
2 CHESTER SQUARE (1858-1868)*

WALTER BAGEHOT (1826-1877)

*Writer, banker and economist, lived at
12 UPPER BELGRAVE STREET (1861-1870)*

STANLEY BALDWIN (1st EARL OF BEWDLEY) (1867-1947)

Prime Minister, lived at 93 EATON SQUARE (1913-1924)

GEORGE BENTHAM (1800-1884)

Botanist, lived at 25 WILTON PLACE (1864-1884)

SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (1836-1908)

Prime Minister, lived at 6 GROSVENOR PLACE

VISCOUNT CECIL OF CHELWOOD (1864-1958)

*Creator of the League of Nations, lived at
16 SOUTH EATON PLACE (1922-1958)*

NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN (1869-1940)

Prime Minister, lived at 37 EATON SQUARE (1923-1935)

DAME EDITH EVANS (1888-1976)

Actress, lived at 109 EBURY STREET

WILLIAM EWART (1798-1869)

*Reformer responsible for the foundation of free public libraries,
lived at 16 EATON PLACE (1830-1838)*

IAN FLEMING (1908-1964)

*Novelist and creator of James Bond, lived at
22 EBURY STREET*

HENRY GRAY (1827-1861)

Anatomist, lived at 8 WILTON STREET

LORD KELVIN (1824-1907)

Immunologist, lived at 15 EATON PLACE

VIVIEN LEIGH (1913-1967)

Actress, lived at 54 EATON SQUARE

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK (BARON AVEBURY) (1834-1913)

*MP and architect of the Bank Holidays Act was born at
29 EATON PLACE*

PRINCE METTERNICH (1773-1859)

*Austrian statesman and chancellor, lived at
44 EATON SQUARE in 1848 after fleeing revolution
in Vienna*

GEORGE MOORE (1852-1933)

*Novelist, lived and died at
121 EBURY STREET (1911-1933)*

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)

*Composer, wrote his first symphony at
180 EBURY STREET in 1764*

HAROLD NICHOLSON (1886-1968)

*and VITA SACKVILLE-WEST (1892-1962)
Writers and gardeners, lived at 182 EBURY STREET*

PHILIP NOEL-BAKER (1889-1982)

*Olympic sportsman and campaigner for peace and
disarmament, lived at 16 SOUTH EATON PLACE*

GEORGE PEABODY (1795-1869)

*American philanthropist and housing reformer, died at
80 EATON SQUARE*

LIEUTENANT GENERAL AUGUSTUS PITT-RIVERS (1827-1900)

*Anthropologist and archaeologist, lived at
4 GROSVENOR GARDENS*

FREDERICK EDWIN SMITH (EARL OF BIRKENHEAD)

*Lawyer and statesman (1872-1930), lived at
32 GROSVENOR GARDENS (1915-1930)*

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809-1892)

Poet, lived at 9 UPPER BELGRAVE STREET (1800-1881)

EDWARD WOOD, (1st EARL OF HALIFAX) (1881-1959)

*Statesman, Viceroy of India and Foreign Secretary, lived at
86 EATON SQUARE*



GROSVENOR

www.grosvenorlettings.co.uk

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