



From local communities to City corporates: a Saturday walk in the Square Mile and Bankside

Map 4

2.5km or 2km, from Tower Hill to either Bankside or St Paul's

Recommended by Garden Co-Ordinator Marion Blair

Starting at Tower Hill, walk west along Byward Street towards the church of All Hallows by the Tower, a historic church and rare survivor of the Great Fire. In the lee of the church walls lies **Nic's Secret Garden and Plant Rescue Nursery (Saturday and Sunday 11am-4pm)**. Nic is a passionate gardener with an encyclopaedic knowledge of plants; as well as working full time for the City of London, Nic – with his team of volunteers – rescues plants, nurtures them and then donates them to schools and other local projects. The garden is an exemplar of biodiversity and you can ask Nic about any of your gardening dilemmas.

Return to Byward Street, cross over Lower Thames Street and continue west up Great Tower Street onto Eastcheap. Divert if you wish to the left up St Dunstan's Hill, to visit the beautiful garden of St Dunstan's in the East – one the City of London Open Spaces. This is a sublime merging of Sir Christopher Wren architecture with lush shady foliage planting. Carry on north along Eastcheap, passing the iconic Monument on your left commemorating the Great Fire of London in 1666. Continue straight on along Cannon Street; once you see Mansion House tube station you have a choice to make. Either cross the river and visit two gardens on the Southbank, or head towards St Paul's Cathedral to see the two rooftop gardens.

If you decide on the river route, turn left at Mansion House station along Queen Victoria Street, past the Corporation of London's Cleary Garden on your left with its Roman history. This pretty garden was first created from a World War II bombsite by one of the earliest urban guerrilla gardeners, Joseph Brandis. Further down Queen Victoria Street on the left lies the Millennium Bridge; cross the bridge, and once on the southern riverbank walk towards the Tate. Tucked away to the left of the gallery is the delightful **Community Garden at Tate Modern (Saturday 10.30am-5pm)**. This treasure of a garden, enthusiastically tended by volunteers, has beautiful planting – certainly a place to dwell.

Exit along the riverside towards the Globe. Search for the very narrow Cardinal Cap Alley on your right; this is allegedly the oldest public highway, dating from the Elizabethan area. Visit the intriguing courtyard garden **49 Bankside (Saturday 10am-5pm)** via the alleyway, through a garden gate on your left.

If you decided at Mansion House to explore the two City rooftop gardens, carry on along Cannon Street with the Cathedral in your sights. When you see New Change on your right, you have reached the Reflection Garden of **25 Cannon Street (Saturday 10am-2.30pm)** stunningly designed and planted by Tom Stuart Smith. There will certainly be a queue here to go up to the roof, so – whilst waiting – enjoy the exuberant planting, skilfully echoed on the rooftop. The view is stunning and the wait is certainly worth it!

Leaving this garden behind head north to Cheapside through the shopping mall of 1 New Change. Look for Wood Street across the road, and you will find the **Eversheds Sutherland Rooftop Garden (Saturday 10am-5pm and Sunday 10am-4pm)** at no. 1. This award-winning garden, created and maintained by members of staff, is a total contrast to our last rooftop visit. Here you will find fruit trees and vegetables growing in containers, encircled by a vast green roof extensively planted with a rich variety of flowers encouraging wildlife – and, surprisingly, a few beehives. Surrounded by a panoramic view, this unexpected and charming garden has a great story from its creation pre-COVID to its revitalisation following the pandemic.

Walk back to the Cathedral to St Pauls tube station to finish your walk. Our Saturday walk in the City is one of contrasts. These gardens certainly illustrate the huge variety of green spaces within the Square Mile and celebrate the importance of our urban greening for both visitors and workers.