



TO EARLSFIELD,  
PUTNEY, BARNES

SUMMERSTOWN

STREATHAM  
CEMETERY

LAMBETH  
CEMETERY

ST GEORGE'S  
HOSPITAL

TOOTING  
BROADWAY

50 YEARS ON FROM  
T.REX SMASHING TO THE  
TOP OF THE UK CHARTS  
AND MARC BOLAN  
BECOMING ONE OF  
BRITAIN'S BIGGEST POP  
STARS, WE ARE PUTTING  
UP A BLUE PLAQUE IN  
SUMMERSTOWN TO  
CELEBRATE HIS TIME  
IN THIS AREA!



Summerstown182  
**GREAT  
ESCAPES**

**MARC BOLAN'S  
TEENAGE DREAM  
SELF-GUIDED WALK**  
3 miles, (50-60 minutes)  
Start at **TOOTING BROADWAY  
UNDERGROUND STATION**  
(Northern line)

# MARC BOLAN'S TEENAGE DREAM (3 miles, 50-60 minutes)



Select your own local history walk with one of these downloadable maps, taking in significant features of interest in the **Tooting/Earlsfield/Wandsworth/Wimbledon** area. Summerstown182 'Great Escapes' are just the job for your lockdown exercise! There are now 26 flavours to choose from, every one a winner! **Perfect for mind, body and spirit.**

**Your chance to explore the early 60's Tooting and Summerstown area in south west London into which the Feld family moved. An insight into the world that shaped the teenage Mark Feld as he set out on a road to glamrock fame and as Marc Bolan and T.Rex, would become one of pop's most iconic and best-loved figures. Taking in the site of the old Garratt Lane nurseries, you'll be walking among the flower people in the 'Daffodil Kingdom'. Welcome everybody, to [Marc Bolan's Teenage Dream](#).**

**1 START TOOTING BROADWAY UNDERGROUND STATION** - Mark would have passed through here many times on his way 'up to town' on a visit to Carnaby Street or possibly to meet his old mates from Stoke Newington. His family were rehoused by the council on the other side of London. Uprooted from all he knew, Mark later wrote a song expressing the adolescent angst of his relocation to Summerstown, about a mile up the road called '[Over the Flats](#)'. *'The chicks I used to know, will never see me grow'...*

**2** With the station behind you, bear right up Mitcham Road. Sam's Poundstore opposite Greggs was the site of the local labour exchange where the young Mark announced in an interview that he was looking for a job as a poet. Just past Macdonalds, the [Tooting Granada](#) was a hugely popular local music venue from the 50's before converting into a bingo hall in 1976. Frank Sinatra played here in 1953 and Jerry Lee Lewis was famously jeered off stage. During the 60's the top artists of the day all performed here; The Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix, The Beach Boys, Dusty Springfield, The Who, James Brown, The Kinks, The Bee Gees, The Supremes. The Beatles, enjoying their first Number One 'From Me to You' played at The Granada on 1 June 1963 with Roy Orbison and [Gerry and The Pacemakers](#). Local word got round that the Fab Four were staying in nearby Trevelyan Road and there were a number of sightings of them in and around Nos 22-24. Mark would have been around at the time and attended the Stones concert in January 1964. Also on the bill were The Ronettes and Marty Wilde.

**3** Cross the road and doubleback to the left. On the corner of Longmead Road, Primark is on the site of another grand building. The [Central Methodist Hall](#), was a local landmark for many years, its stately presence standing out in all the old photos of this area. Built in 1910 by Joseph Rank, the bread magnate, who taught occasionally in the Sunday school, it was a huge concert and recital venue. Damaged in WW2, it was demolished and replaced by a Marks & Spencer's store in 1967.

**4** Continue to the corner and turn right into Tooting High Street. The [two indoor markets](#) date from 1930s and are worth a visit as an example of vibrant, multicultural contemporary Tooting. Opposite Aldi, cross the road and directly facing you at No24, an old pawnbrokers, was once the site of Edgar's Menswear. Mark briefly worked here after leaving school. A few doors further on was [the Vogue cinema](#), one of seven in the area at the time. A friend remembers going to see 'Summer Holiday' with Mark in 1963 when he came out saying he was going to be the next Cliff Richard. He wasn't impressed with the style of the local youth, noting that the queue of Teds outside the local cinema '[look like a contest for the worst haircut](#)'. A mile or so further up this road was Hillcroft School. Mark wasn't there very long and left the same year as John Ford who found chart success with The Strawbs and co-wrote the classic '[Part of the Union](#)'. Its now Ernest Bevin College and was attended by [Sadiq Khan](#) the Mayor of London, who was MP for Tooting for ten years and still lives locally. There were so many clothes shops and tailors in the area. John Collier next to Edgar's, Krett's, Rego and Chelsea Girl on the corner opposite the station, whose iconic sign survived for many years. Mark and a couple of Mod friends featured in Michael Heseltine's [Town magazine](#) in 1962, photographed by Donald McCullin. The shoot took place when the family were still living in Stoke Newington and by the time the magazine came out they were in Summerstown. Mark's Mum paid for him to join a model agency and he appeared in a Littlewoods catalogue and had a few jobs for John Temple menswear. There are many local memories of him in his hipster gear, guitar coolly slung over his shoulder.

**5** Continue past The Castle pub, a very popular rock venue in the 60's and 70's. Status Quo, Mott the Hoople, Rod Stewart and The Faces, Free and Eric Clapton all performed here. The Castle was the scene of a weekly slot by a local female heavy metal band called [Girlschool](#) who shot to fame duetting with Motorhead in 1980.

**6** Cross the road and sandwiched between Halifax and Wetherspoons pub at No54 was a fondly-remembered Wimpy Bar where Mark cleaned dishes and served up knickerbocker glories. This was a popular Tooting teenage hang-out, awash with rumours in 1963 that The Beatles were living around the corner. A little further along on the corner of Coverton Road, from a clothes shop called Daisys', [Charlie Harper](#), the lead singer of Britain's most enduring punk band, The UK Subs ran a hairdressers.

**7** Turn back into [Garratt Lane](#), one of the most historic routes in south London connecting Tooting with Wandsworth. On your left you pass No968 where one of the best-loved British screen actors of the late twentieth century, [George Cole](#) was born. Mark would have grown up amused by his role as 'Flash Harry' in the popular 'St Trinians' films. Across the road lived Peter Barr, known as [The Daffodil King](#).

**8** A little further along No934 Garratt Lane was the home of [Sidney Lewis](#), believed to be the youngest serving soldier in the British Army in the First World War. Sid was 12 when he joined up and at the age of 13 fought at the Somme, about the same age Mark was when he came to this area. He survived the war and came home to this house where his parents lived until after the Second World War. Sid was then a policeman working in bomb disposal. A [blue plaque](#) was placed here in 2016, unveiled by his son Colin in front of a crowd of 500 people.

**9** Just past the bend, with a flower shop on the corner, look out for Khama Road. The colonial age of the missionary was strongly identified in this area and this street bears the name of [King Khama III](#) of the Bamangwato people in Bechuanaland (now Botswana). In 1895, supported by the London Missionary Society and the Temperance Movement, he travelled to London with two other Kings, Bathoen I and Sebele to appeal to Queen Victoria to stop Cecil Rhodes driving a railway through his country. They succeeded in stopping him, a famous victory for [The Three Kings](#).

**10** You are now passing through an area once populated by nurseries and market gardens. Fountain Road was the location of Robert Parker's [Exotic Nursery](#) renowned for its orchids, azaleas and amaryllis and a regular supplier of samples to the Botanic Garden collections at Kew. A little further on Rostella Road is named after the intimate part of an orchid that so fascinated Charles Darwin.

A mention on BBC Radio 4 programme 'The Lost Women of British Jazz' led to local awareness that a pioneering musician, Louisa Marshall AKA Sadie Crawford had been born on Fountain Road. After working in domestic service, she took to the London stage, learned the saxophone, travelled the world, played with some of the early jazz greats and in Paris in 1923 is believed to be the first British female musician to feature on a jazz recording. '[First Lady Sadie](#)' is buried in Washington DC, the first woman to be recognised with a blue plaque in Tooting. She performed at Wimbledon Theatre with future husband Adolph Crawford in 1915. Marc Bolan and T.Rex played the same venue in the summer of 1976 in the '[Rollin Bolan Show](#)' supported by AC/DC.

**11** Just after Rostella Road, cross at the zebra. On the corner of Smallwood Road, opposite Streatham Cemetery was the site of Bell's Farm. In this area was grown camomile, peppermint, licorice, lavender, roses and poppies. It was common practice for Tooting children to take time out of school to harvest the camomile. Traces of the farm remained until the 1960s with horses kept in a field behind Smallwood School and carts and barrows in nearby yards.

**12** [Streatham Cemetery](#) is the lungs of Garratt Lane, a beautiful place full of birds, flowers and tranquility. Take some time to enjoy the nature and peacefulness which helped so many of us through lockdown. Until 1892, this was the site of Springfield Nursery. Marc would surely have appreciated the horticultural wizardry practised here by the likes of Peter Barr 'The Daffodil King' and the Rollissons but by the 60s, a small nursery, soon to be closed, on the corner of Smallwood Road was the last trace of the gardens which were once on both sides of Garratt Lane and filled the air with their sweet perfume. The rich alluvial soils of this stretch of the Wandle Valley were originally toiled by Huguenot market gardeners. The cemetery has many notable graves; [Corporal Edward Foster VC](#), vegan pioneer Arthur Ling, 'great train robber' Charlie Wilson, John Thomson photographer and Henri-Louis Van der Meersch, one of the six founders of the London Symphony Orchestra. Among the 383 Commonwealth War Graves are those of seven women. There are also bee hives, fruit trees and regular community events organised by The Friends of Streatham Cemetery. It is beautiful all year round but of course in the spring you will see many [historic daffodil types](#) growing amongst the graves.

**13** Continue north along Garratt Lane. After a 70s block called Copeland House, look out for the St Clement Danes almshouses across the road. If it's a wet day, you might be able to pick out the date '1848' and letters 'CD' in the brickwork of Diprose Lodge. Opposite this is the pedestrian entrance to the Aboyne Estate. Look out here for a historic plaque commemorating [Peter Barr 'The Daffodil King'](#). It indicates the entrance to his nurseries which were in a number of locations along Garratt Lane between 1863 and 1890, a period which saw a rebirth of the humble daffodil.

**14** On the corner of Aboyne Road was the salon where Mark's Mum Phyllis had her hair done. For a while she probably caught a bus from the stop opposite over to the bank near Olympia where she worked after giving up her stall at Berwick Street market. Mark's father Simeon (Sid) worked as a driver for Airfix, the toy model company whose factory was about a mile or so further down Garratt Lane. Continue along here, past clusters of little shops; butchers, bakers, sweet shops and general stores used by Mark and his family, some still hanging on. A short distance past the zebra, St Nicholas Patisserie was a bakery where he was remembered queuing up to buy buns.

**15** Crossing the zebra, the Tesco Express shop over to the right is the famous old 'Prince of Wales' pub, one of a number locally that Mark busked outside. Once run by legendary stuntman and minder to the stars, Noshor Powell, its been watering the inhabitants of Summerstown since the mid 19th century. At that time it catered for those attending Robert Sadler's '[New Copenhagen](#)' running track at the end of Burmester Road. On this building, at the heart of Summerstown, so close to where he lived, we hope to place a plaque commemorating Marc's connection to our area.

**16** Follow the Summerstown road to your right as it curls round past The Corner Pin pub. This historic route was once the main hub of the tiny riverside hamlet of Summerstown, its wooden cottages home to mill and factory workers. This stretch of Wandle Valley was liable to serious flooding and after a particularly bad one in 1958, the last of these houses were removed and replaced by prefabs. 16 scandinavian '[Sun Cottages](#)' stretched half way down the road on the left hand side. Be sure to walk through the car-park space in front of the industrial units. The precise location of No27, home to the Felds from 1961, was in the front row just before 'By the Homes' brewery with a great view looking out at the dog stadium. '[20 x 18 feet, containing a lounge, two bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom and all fixtures, fittings and furniture](#)'. Described by [Mark Paynter](#) as '[like a luxury caravan with a pointed roof](#)'. Now sharing a bedroom with [older brother Harry](#), Mark spent much time here alone while everyone was at work, reading voraciously, writing poetry, playing records and practising his guitar. His parents remained here until 1970 before relocating to the Ashburton estate in Putney where Sid worked as a caretaker. From about 1965 Mark was increasingly spending more time in the west end looking for a break. After several false starts he was back in Summerstown the following year when he fell under the wing of Simon Napier-Bell and shortly afterwards joined his first major band, [John's Children](#).

**17** On the other side of the road, the current [Wimbledon Stadium](#) redevelopment site dominates the area with 600 new homes. The greyhound stadium, home to Britain's favourite 1930s canine, [Mick the Miller](#) was also a renowned [speedway](#) venue. It was opened in 1928 by Tallulah Bankhead and closed in 2016. Its now the new home of [AFC Wimbledon](#), making a remarkable return to the area after 30 years of exile.

**18** At the end of Summerstown, turn left into Wimbledon Road. On the roundabout here were two more local pubs where Mark busked. Across the road, 'The Plough' is a tile shop and 'The White Lion' sells flooring. The tower blocks across the road on the Hazelhurst estate mark the site of a [V2 bomb on 19 November 1944](#) which killed 35 people and destroyed 100 homes. A green plaque placed in 2015 commemorates them. It was unveiled by Arthur and John Keeley, two brothers pulled from the rubble.

**19** Follow Wimbledon Road past St Mary's Church down to Garratt Lane to return to Tooting. Or continue north to Earlsfield Station. At the Primary School on Iramere Road, Marc practised in the 'youth centre' with an early band called The Cabinet. You might even wish to consider taking a 270 bus to Putney where another 378 bus from the bridge passes close to Queen's Ride (B306), Barnes and [the shrine](#) accessed from Gypsy Lane. This was the place Marc died on the night of 16 September 1977.

**FOR INFORMATION AND MORE WALKS:** [summerstown182.wordpress.com](#) @summerstown182

**If you enjoy your walk, please consider making a donation towards the proposed plaque acknowledging Marc's time in Summerstown, more details coming soon when permission has been agreed.**