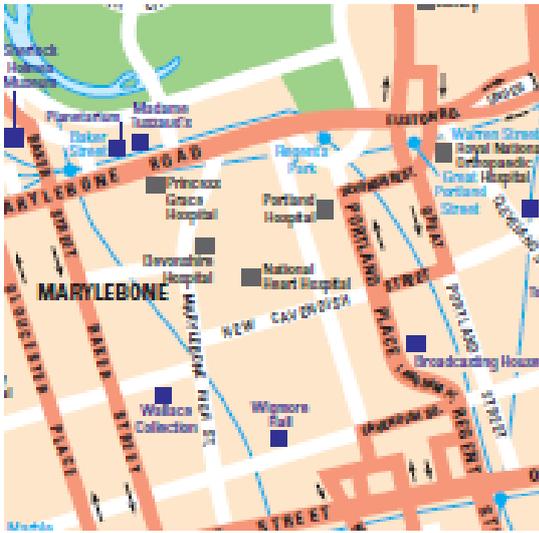


Regents Park & Marylebone.

This walk starts at Bakers Street Station and finishes at Oxford Street station



Regents Park

Known as the 'jewel in the crown', The Regent's Park covers 197 hectares, Regent's Park is the largest grass area for sports in Central London and offers a wide variety of activities, as well as an Open Air Theatre, the London Zoo and many cafes and restaurants.

Henry VIII appropriated The Regent's Park for use as a hunting ground, which he considered to be an invigorating ride from Whitehall Palace. At that time, the only boundaries were a ditch and a rampart. Were he here today, Henry would hardly recognise the stylish gardens and sports fields that now stand in its place. Marylebone

Park, as it was known, remained a royal chase until 1646. It was John Nash, architect to the crown and friend of the Prince Regent, who developed Regent's Park as we know it today.

Marylebone High Street

The High Street is an oasis of tranquillity just 500 yards north of Oxford Street. Given its secluded location, the street has been described as "the hidden wonder of the West End" and it was voted best street in London by listeners of Radio 4. The majority of the buildings in the street today date from 190, - look out for the original fishmonger and cake shop.

The Wallace Collection

The Wallace Collection is a family collection in origin. Its works of art were collected between about 1760 and 1880 by the first four Marquesses of Hertford and Sir Richard Wallace, the son of the 4th Marquess. Of these men, the Founders of the Wallace Collection, the most important collectors by far were the 4th Marquess and Sir Richard Wallace. It was bequeathed to the British nation by Sir Richard's widow, Lady Wallace, in 1897.

Displayed at Hertford House, the main London townhouse of its former owners, the Wallace Collection presents its outstanding collections in a sumptuous but approachable manner which is an essential part of its charm. In 25 galleries are unsurpassed displays of French 18th century painting, furniture and porcelain with superb Old Master paintings and a world class armory.

Wigmore Hall

Wigmore Hall was built in 1901 by the German piano firm Bechstein next to its showrooms on Wigmore Street. The Hall was intended to be both grandly impressive but intimate enough for recitals. Originally called Bechstein Hall, it opened with two gala concerts on 31 May and 1 June 1901.

The Hall was designed by the English architect Thomas Colcutt, FRIBA, (1840-1924) in Renaissance style, using alabaster and marble walls, flooring and stairway. Colcutt was one of the most distinguished architects of his day and his work embraced many worlds, including the design of the public rooms in more than a dozen P&O liners.

The outbreak of war in 1914 brought hostility to German firms in London. Even Nellie Melba was criticised for singing 'Land of Hope and Glory' accompanied on a Bechstein. In 1916, the entire business - including studios, offices, warehouses, 137 pianos and the Hall itself - was sold to Debenhams for £56,500. The Hall alone had cost £100,000 to build.

Langham Hotel

The Langham, London was built between 1863 and 1865 at a cost of £300,000. It was then the largest and most modern hotel in the city, featuring a hundred water closets, thirty six bathrooms and the first hydraulic lifts in England. The opening ceremony was performed by the Prince of Wales. After the original company was liquidated during an economic slump, new management acquired the hotel for little more than half what it had cost to build, and it soon became a commercial success.

The Langham was hard hit by the Great Depression and the owners attempted to sell the site to the BBC, but Broadcasting House was built on the other side of the road instead. During World War II, the hotel was used in part by the Army and then damaged by bombs and forced to close. After the war, it was occupied by the BBC as ancillary accommodation to Broadcasting House, and the corporation purchased it outright in 1965. The ballroom became the BBC record library and programs such as The Goon Show were recorded there. In 1986 it was sold to Ladbroke Group for £26 million, which purchased the non-US Hilton business in 1987 and eventually reopened the hotel as the Langham Hilton in 1991 after a £100 million refurbishment. New owners extended the hotel and carried out other refurbishments between 1998 and 2000.

BBC Broadcasting House, Langham Place, London

Broadcasting House was opened in 1932. The building is clad in Portland stone and its stepped appearance at the front is a concession to regulations regarding the right to light of other buildings in the area. It gives the front of the building the appearance of a ships bow.

The building is steel framed, and clad in Portland stone (of which there are 2.63 million blocks!) and some 7,500 panes of glass.

But in many ways, Broadcasting House was more than just an impressive building - it was built to have distinctive artistic merit too. The BBC's coat of arms adorns the western side of the building (and can just be seen above the 3rd floor balcony), and over the front entrance is a statue of Prospero and Ariel, by Eric Gill. Prospero, a ten-foot symbol of wisdom and benevolence, is sending the seven foot young boy, Ariel, out into the world. The boy Ariel is holding a pipe in his right hand, and is naked. This caused a little bit of a stir at the time, and the story goes that Ariel's "manhood" was thought to be rather large and Gill had to cut it back!

All Souls Church, Langham Place

Designed by John Nash, favorite architect of King George IV, the church was consecrated in 1824 by the Bishop of London. At the time, Nash was also developing Regent's Park and Regent Street, and he designed All Souls with its circular columned portico to soften the awkward corner to join the existing Portland Place. The church is built of Bath stone and the unique spire is made of seventeen concave sides encircled by Corinthian columns, making two separate sections. On the 8th December 1940, a landmine exploded, causing extensive damage. The church was closed for some ten years while repair works were carried out.