

Introduction

The Stoke Poges Heritage Walk takes visitors through part of the Estate of the Manor of Stoke Poges which covered more than 517 acres until it was broken up in the early 1900s. It contains nine listed buildings, structures and the Memorial Gardens. The curious parish name arose from the marriage of a 13th century knight Robert de Pogeys to Amicia de Stoke. Thomas Gray (1716-1771) made Stoke Poges famous when he wrote “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard”, the “Elegy” was inspired during time spent in Stoke Poges and published in February 1751. He is buried in St. Giles’ Churchyard.

In 1760, the Estate was purchased by Thomas Penn, son of William, founder of Pennsylvania and passed to his son, John, in 1775.

- Open free of charge, daily from 9am - 4.30pm in winter and 9am - 7pm in summer.

- (**P**) Free parking in the car park opposite the entrance to the Memorial Gardens

- Disabled parking and access in the Memorial Gardens and when closed via the church car park

- Please keep to paths

- () Deep water, please keep children supervised

- () Please look out for golfers

- () No dogs other than in indicated areas

- No picnics, ball games, drones or cycling

Do not leave any valuables in your car whilst parked.

A - St Giles’ Church: Grade I

As the oldest part of the village of Stoke Poges, the Domesday Book plaque is on the wall of the Tudor Hastings Chapel. The architecture of the church contains four periods – Saxon, Norman, Early Gothic and Tudor. The church tower has a ring of 8 bells.

Inside, visitors should note the double piscina, the medieval stained glass bicycle window, the painted window and a tablet to members of the Penn family buried in a vault under the church.

B - Thomas Gray’s Tomb: Grade II

This contains the remains of Thomas Gray, his aunt, Mary Antrobus who died in 1749 and his mother Dorothy Gray who died in 1753. Gray devised the inscription and asked to be buried “in the vault made by my late dear mother”. He was buried on 6th August 1771. John Penn had the Portland stone plaque acknowledging Gray’s burial installed under the Hastings Chapel window in 1799. 2016 was the 300th anniversary of the birth of Thomas Gray. For more information visit www.thomasgray2016.org

The neighbouring tomb contains the remains of Sara Duckworth, wife of the vicar of St. Giles from 1754. She died in 1780. Their son, Vice-Admiral Sir John Duckworth was in command at the battle of San Domingo which was the last great fleet battle of the Napoleonic wars.

C - Lady Juliana’s Urn

Lady Juliana, married Thomas Penn in August 1751. She was mother to John Penn who built Stoke Park’s Mansion. A moving tribute describing her many qualities is set in the Urn. She died in 1801 at the age of 79. The Urn was originally placed by John Penn in the Pleasure Ground next to the Mansion.

D - Manor House: Grade I

Now in private ownership - the Elizabethan Mansion was built in 1555 by Edward Hastings. In 1599, it was acquired by Sir Edward Coke who hosted a visit from Queen Elizabeth in 1601. Charles I was held prisoner in 1647 and William III was refused entry by Robert Gayer. The Manor House can therefore claim to have entertained one sovereign, imprisoned another and refused admittance to a third.

Lady Anne Cobham, the widow of Lord Cobham of Stowe, lived there from 1749 to 1759 during which time Lancelot “Capability” Brown and Thomas Gray were frequent visitors. In the 1790s, when John Penn built his new house, he kept just one wing of the house described in Thomas Gray’s “A Long Story”. In 1750 Lady Anne engaged Capability Brown to create a new landscape as well as the lakes we see today from a series of mediaeval fishponds.

E - Stoke Park Mansion: Grade I

In 1789 John Penn (1760-1834) received compensation for loss of lands in Pennsylvania and engaged Robert Naismith with later additions by James Wyatt to design a new house on

a prime site of rising ground in the centre of the parkland. It was completed in 1813.

His new landscape included two features commemorating Thomas Gray (**J**) and Sir Edward Coke (**G**). The Mansion remained a family residence until 1908 when Lane “Pa” Jackson bought the Stoke Park Estate and Harry Colt was commissioned to design the world famous Championship Golf course. In 1928 Sir Noel Mobbs (1878-1959) bought the Club for his family but kept and expanded the golf course. He lived there until 1957.

Stoke Park is undergoing a comprehensive upgrade to the estate, golf course and hotel to deliver an unrivalled experience for guests. This includes the conservation of the Mansion, monuments and Parkland for future generations to enjoy.

F - Repton Bridge: Grade II*

In June 1792, Humphry Repton produced his ideas for improving the park landscape created by Capability Brown with a bridge with three arches. Completed in 1798 it was rebuilt between 2003 and 2005 as part of the Stoke Park restoration project. Repton’s thoughts were recorded in his ‘Red Book’ for John Penn. It contains ‘before and after’ sketches of parts of the estate. Work has been carefully carried out over the last three decades to restore some of the fine vistas created by Repton.

G - Coke Monument – Grade II

James Wyatt designed a Doric column, completed in 1800, with the figure of Sir Edward by Charles Rossi as a suitable memorial to Coke who was responsible for The Petition of Right drawn up in 1628 to curb the power of Charles I. It is approximately 18 metres high and made of Coade stone, a weather-resistant artificial stone perfected by the successful businesswoman Eleanor Coade (1733 to 1821).

H - Memorial Gardens: Grade I

The Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens were founded by the late Sir Noel Mobbs who acquired the land in 1930 when it was under threat from housing development. The object was to preserve the beauty and tranquillity of the area. The Gardens were designed by Edward White and dedicated in 1935. In 1971 South Bucks District Council took over the management of the Gardens. The grounds cover 20 acres and contain stunning formal and informal areas. The Colonnade with its 33 fountains and water channels is the centre point of the gardens.

Please feel free to explore the Gardens. However, remember that it is a garden of remembrance and that peace and tranquillity should be maintained.

I - Church Cottage: Grade II

Dating from the 16th Century, it contains the administrative office for the Memorial Gardens and also the Penn/Gray Museum, which displays artefacts relating to the Penn Family and Thomas Gray including the ‘curfew’ bell of the Elegy.

J - Gray’s Monument: Grade II*

John Penn commissioned James Wyatt to design a suitable monument to his favourite poet, Thomas Gray. It was designed to be seen from the Stoke Park Mansion and consists of a large stone pedestal faced with Portland Stone surmounted by a stone sarcophagus. Two panels include verses from Gray’s Elegy, one a verse from ‘Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College’, and one records Gray’s life. It was erected in 1799.

K - Gray’s Field

After WWI, the Stoke Park Estate was being sold off and the Vicar, Canon Barnett, feared that the church would be surrounded by houses. He was determined to protect the land around Gray’s Monument and persuaded two villagers, Sir Bernard Oppenheimer who lived at Sefton Park and Mr Judd who lived at Holly Hill to purchase this land. In the 1920s, some 50,000 visitors a year visited the landscape made famous by the “Elegy”. Gray’s Field with Gray’s Monument was gifted to the National Trust in 1925.

To find out more:

Information on the history of the Stoke Park Estate is available at: stokepark.com

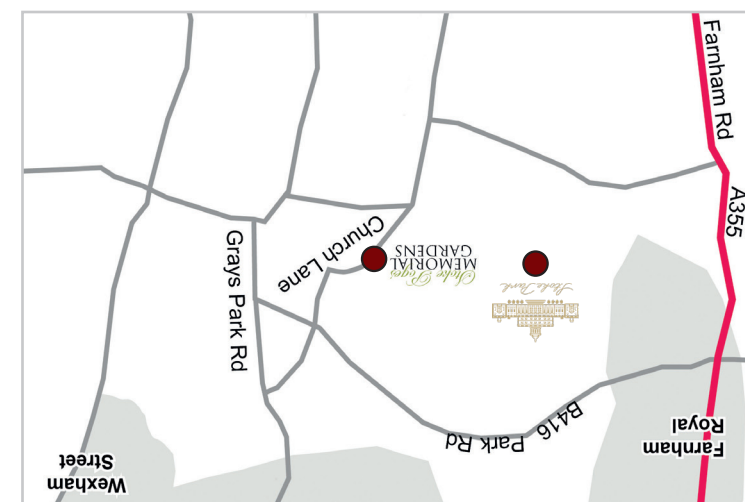
For information on other listed buildings in Stoke Poges, please visit the Parish Council website: stokepogeparishcouncil.gov.uk

St Giles’ Church - stokepogeschurch.org
Open daily: 9.30am - 4.30pm
Tel: 01753 642331

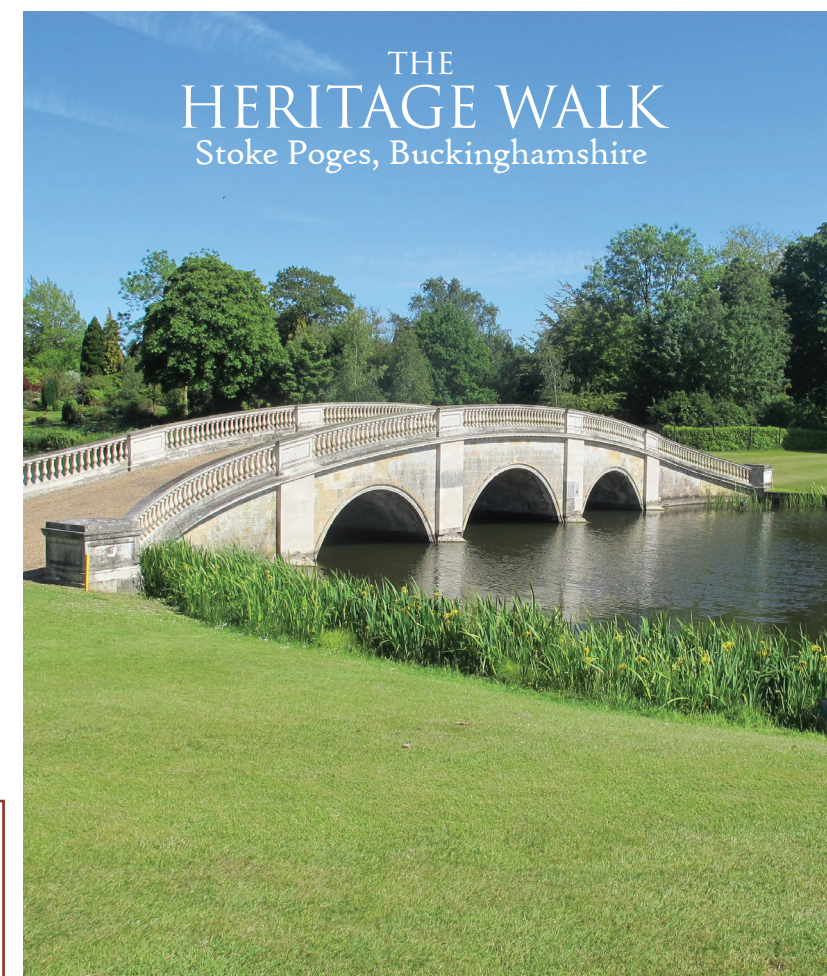
Memorial Gardens (SL2 4NZ) -
Office open: 9.30am - 4.30pm (Monday - Friday)
Tel: 01753 523744

Stoke Park (SL2 4PG) - stokepark.com
Tel: 01753 717171

The grounds are not open to the general public unless you are a hotel guest or member, except during specific events.



Further Visitor Information



Buckinghamshire
Council



Stoke Poges
MEMORIAL
GARDENS

