

## Our Trail Begins...

We started our walk along the canal at Mitre Bridge, not too far from our school. **Mitre Bridge** (1) was built in 1801 and was the last steel girder bridge to be built along the canal.

We saw lots of water birds along the canal, like ducks, canada geese and coots. Coots are black birds with white heads...not to be confused with moorhens who are dark too but with red heads!

We saw lots of colourful canal boats on our way (2).

The old canal boats were called **barges** and they used to be pulled along by strong horses along a path called the **towpath**. In the olden days whole families used to live on brightly coloured narrowboats – along with their cargo.

They didn't have much room to live in. Only a few square meters!

Nowadays people still live on canal boats, just for fun, but most of our heavy goods are transported by trains or lorries, so the canal is now a much quieter place.



### Grand Union Canal History

The Grand Union Canal is a man made waterway that links up London with Birmingham. It is made of several different canals joined up together in 'union'. This canal is 137 miles long. The part near to our school, the Paddington Arm was completed in 1801.

It was really well used in the days before the railways, when the best way to move heavy goods like fuel, food and materials (like wood and stone ) was to put them onto canal boats and float them along the canal.

Original art work and words by Ark Bentworth Primary Academy  
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# GRAND UNION CANAL

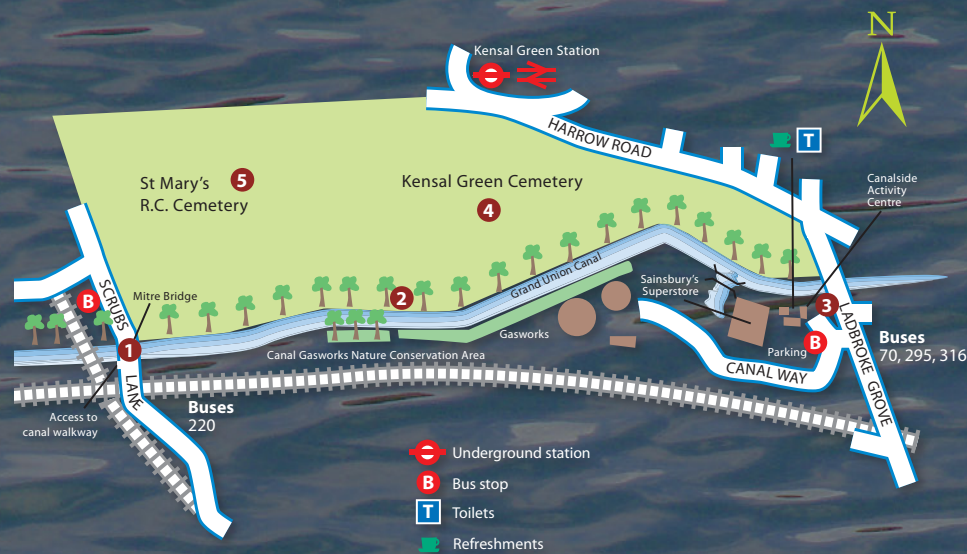
*Discovery Trail*  
Explore your  
local environment



Ark Bentworth Primary Academy with Hammersmith and Fulham Urban Studies Centre explored this part of the Grand Union Canal together to make this Discovery Trail.

Look inside, follow our trail and discover some more about the area and its wonderful history and wildlife!

There is a great place  
you can go  
Where wildlife can  
swim to and fro  
It's near Ladbroke  
Grove  
A place you will love  
Where life is lovely  
and slow!  
So get off your sofa  
and row!



Just next door to Kensal Green Cemetery is **St. Marys Catholic Cemetery (5)**. This is where **Mary Seacole** is buried, Mary was a Jamaican nurse who helped injured soldiers in the Crimean war from 1853-1856. She used traditional medicine taught to her by her mother. Mary died at home in Paddington in 1881. She has a lovely palm tree on her gravestone because there are lots of palm trees in Jamaica.



## Kensal Green Cemetery

On the other side of the canal lies Kensal Green Cemetery and we crossed the bridge near the Canal Centre (3) and called in for a visit and to talk to Robert Stephenson from the Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery (4). They help to look after the cemetery and tell people about the history.

Robert told us about some of the very famous and interesting people who are buried here, including father and son engineers **Marc Brunel and Isambard Kingdom Brunel**. They designed many buildings, ships and bridges, including Paddington station, the famous Clifton Suspension bridge and the Rotherhithe tunnel, the first built under the River Thames.

We also found the **Reformers' Memorial**, a tall pillar covered with lots of names to help us remember all the people who tried to make life better for everyone else, like Elizabeth Fry, who campaigned for better conditions in prisons. This is right next to Robert Owen's

memorial. He tried hard to improve the conditions of ordinary working people during the 19th century.

Kensal Green Cemetery is where the last person to fight a duel in England is buried. It is also where **Jean Francois Blondin** and his wife are buried. He had a very interesting job! Blondin was a famous tight rope walker who walked over Niagara Falls – a really dangerous and enormously high up waterfall between USA and Canada. Because everyone expected him to keep doing amazing things, he then crossed over again blindfolded! ...

...then in a sack

...then pushing a wheelbarrow

...then carrying his manager on his back

...then stopping to cook and eat an omelette!

You might be surprised to discover that he survived all this and died at home (called Niagara House) in Ealing!

There is a cemetery nearby  
Where people can rest when they die  
It's called Kensal Green  
A place that's serene  
Why not pop in? Don't be shy!

