

Area Focus: Exhibition Road, SW7

By Jo Caird and David G. Taylor

WHY? Running between glorious Hyde Park and bustling South Kensington, **Exhibition Road** is the home to three of London's top museums and boasts a wide range of food, drink and entertainment options nearby.

WHEN? Visit during the day for shopping, museums and lazy strolls in the adjacent parks. After dark, take advantage of the area's fantastic restaurants, or pop into one of the monthly late-night museum events.



1 EXHIBITION ROAD SHOW

From **28 Jul-5 Aug**, the area will be transformed by the **Exhibition Road Show**, a one-off celebration of art, music, science, literature and acrobatics. During the week, free events will be taking place in the evenings, while at the weekends there will be plenty to do all day long. Look out for

The Exhibitionists (**from 28 Jul**), a troupe of 30 circus performers with new work to show-off throughout the festival, don't miss *The Olympianist* (**30 Jul**), pianist and cyclist Anthony Hewitt, who cycled from Land's End to John O'Groats earlier this year with his piano in a van behind him, playing a gig at the end of each day, plus listen out for a performance by the phenomenal British singer-songwriter *Patrick Wolf* (**4 Aug**). exhibitionroadshow.co.uk

5 HYDE PARKS

Take time out with a wander through Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens. Explore lush lawns, ornate gardens and the peaceful Serpentine lake.

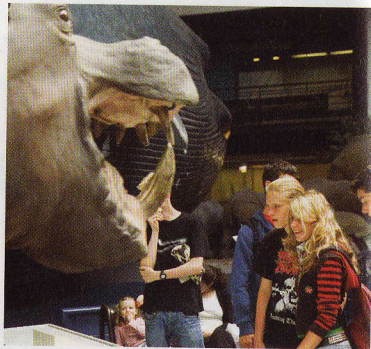
5 VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

The V&A's extensive collections range from rare prints and priceless jewellery, to Victorian furniture and much more besides. Its current exhibition is *British Design 1948-2012* (**until 12 Aug**, p. 89), which celebrates the best art and design to come out of Britain since the 'Austerity Games' of 1948.



2 ROYAL ALBERT HALL

Book tickets to see an internationally-renowned artists, take a tour of this magnificent 1871 building, or grab a bite to eat at Café Consort during a free lunchtime concert (most Fridays; p. 66). The **BBC Proms** runs **until 8 Sep** and is widely regarded as the greatest festival of classical music in the world. Enjoy performances from highly-acclaimed choirs and orchestras, as well as light-hearted delights such as children's show *The Wallace & Gromit Prom: Musical Marvels* (**29 Jul**, p. 112).



4 NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

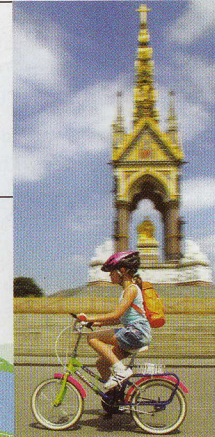
Most famous for its dinosaur skeletons and a life-size model of a blue whale, the enormous museum hosts amazing temporary exhibitions too. Don't miss *Animal Inside Out*, which uses a preservation technique called 'plastination' to show you how the insides of animals work (**until 16 Sep**, p. 89).

6 BROMPTON CROSS

The area linking Brompton Road with Sloane Avenue has been a fashionable shopping area since the 19th century and is now home to a cluster of designer fashion and homeware stores. Great dining options include Sir Terence Conran's famous **Bibendum Restaurant And Oyster Bar** (81 Fulham Road, SW3, 020 7581 5817. bibendum.co.uk) and nearby are Middle Eastern restaurant **Mamounia Lounge** (p. 125) and Indian eatery **Khan's of Kensington**.

7 ALBERT MEMORIAL

This gleaming neo-gothic memorial was commissioned by Queen Victoria in memory of her husband Prince Albert, who died of typhoid at the age of 42. To learn more, join the **Royal Parks'** monthly tour, which meets in front of the memorial at 14.00 on **5 Aug** (tickets £6, child £5).



8 BROMPTON ORATORY

This ornate Roman Catholic church is famous for its choir, which you can hear singing Mass in Latin every Sunday and on all holy days throughout the year (Brompton Road, SW7. ☎ 020 7808 0900. bromptonoratory.com).



10 SCIENCE MUSEUM

The Science Museum's (pictured, p. 89) varied displays cover topics from space exploration to the age of steam. Kids will love 'Launchpad', which explores the world of physics with over 50 interactive exhibits, while adults will be fascinated to learn how electronic music went from avant-garde experiment to musical mainstream in *Oramics To Electronica: Revealing Histories Of Electronic Music* (**until 1 Dec**).



9 SERPENTINE GALLERY

Each year the Serpentine Gallery (p. 84) commissions a different international architect to design a pavilion to showcase contemporary architecture. This year's (pictured) is by Chinese artist Ai Weiwei and Herzog & De Meuron, the team behind Beijing's 'Bird's Nest' stadium (**until 14 Oct**). Inside the gallery itself, you'll find a quirky exhibition by Yoko Ono, the late John Lennon's wife, entitled *To The Light* (**until 9 Sep**).

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