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## NEIGHBOURHOODS

### top picks

- **Tower of London** (p119)  
Historic fortress and home to the Crown Jewels.
- **St Paul's Cathedral** (p109)  
Wren's masterpiece soars with its incredible dome.
- **Westminster Abbey** (p99)  
Impressive and iconic, with a fascinating royal history.
- **Tate Modern** (p129)  
Join the crowds digesting this fantastic collection.
- **National Gallery** (p75)  
Superb national art collection that's one of Europe's best.
- **British Museum** (p89)  
A truly great (and controversial) museum collection.
- **Shakespeare's Globe** (p130)  
See the bard performed as the Elizabethans saw it.
- **Hampton Court Palace** (p211)  
The capital's greatest Tudor palace opens its doors daily.
- **British Airways London Eye** (p125)  
Take a 'flight' on the iconic Eye for unbeatable city views.
- **Hampstead Heath** (p170)  
Escape to hills with wonderful open spaces and great views.

# NEIGHBOURHOODS

London is a tough city to divide, with its multitudinous villages, divergent councils, ancient parishes and haphazard postcodes, none of which take into account the borders of any of the others.

The centre of the city is the commercial West End, with its kernel Soho and Covent Garden surrounded by academic Bloomsbury, bohemian Fitzrovia, chic Marylebone, superrich Mayfair, royal St James's and the political village of Westminster. Here you'll find much of the best shopping, eating and entertainment options in London, as well as most of the other visitors to the city.

The South Bank, facing the West End and the City across the Thames, serves up theatre, art, film and music, and features two of London's most iconic modern sights, Tate Modern and the London Eye, as well as the wonderful Borough Market.

The wealthy stretch of neighbourhoods from Hyde Park to Chelsea includes superexclusive Belgravia, shopping mecca Knightsbridge, the various guises of exceptionally posh Kensington and the large village of Chelsea, famed for the King's Rd. No visit to London is complete without checking out South Ken's museums, visiting Harrods and Harvey Nicks in Knightsbridge, or wandering the magnificent open spaces of Hyde Park.

To the east of the West End lie both the City (once the ancient Roman walled city, now the financial hub of London) and the once shabby neighbourhoods of Clerkenwell, Shoreditch and Spitalfields, now London's most creative and exciting districts. Here you'll find supercool Hoxton Sq with its clubs and bars, Spitalfields Market and fantastic Brick Lane, longtime curry hub of Banglatown and now one of the best clothes-shopping areas in London.

Further east lie the East End and Docklands: the East End is 'real' London, a multiethnic yet strangely traditional stretch of the city that's home of the famous cockney. The East End looks set to be transformed in the coming years as the London 2012 Olympics will be held in the valley of the River Lea in and around Stratford at the East End's furthest edge. Docklands is another, albeit government- and financial sector-driven, example of urban renewal – now seriously rivalling the City as the home of the capital's money men and London's tallest skyscrapers. The future belongs to the east due not only to the Olympics, but also to the Thames Gateway, a huge development of the Thames estuary.

North London is a hilly collection of charming villages, which often seem to exist as worlds within themselves, such as old money Hampstead and Highgate, celebrity-filled Primrose Hill, fashionable Islington, hippy Stoke Newington and well-healed Crouch End. In between are urban centres such as Finchley Rd, Camden Town, Holloway and Finsbury Park.

West London is grand, moneyed and home to some of London's most traditional must-sees including Buckingham Palace and the Houses of Parliament and gems such as Kensington Palace. West London, too, has its cooler side in Notting Hill and Portobello Rd, with its great street market, superb shopping and many of the city's better pubs and bars.

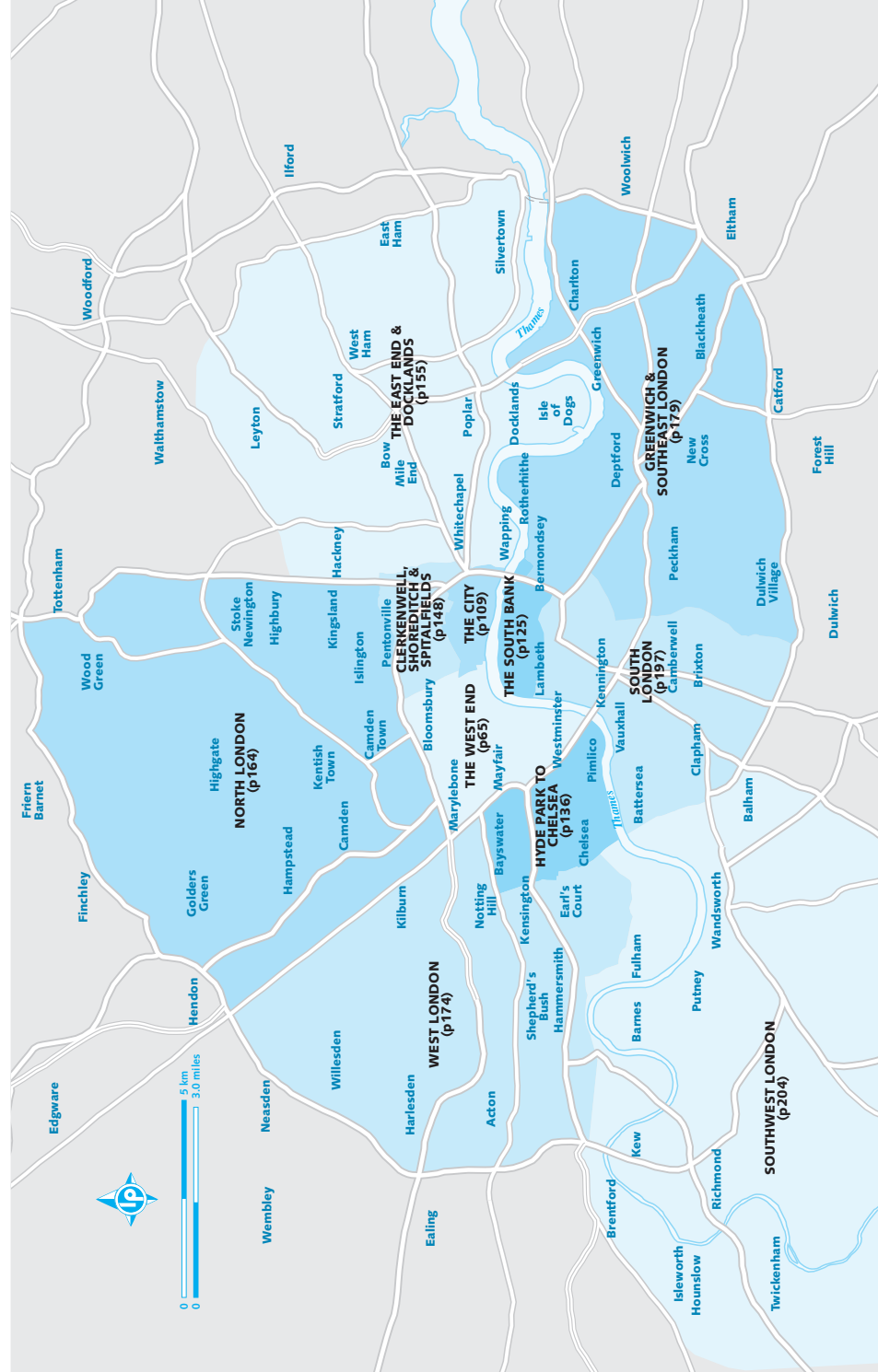
South of the river, Greenwich enchants with its huge historic importance as a centre of maritime activity, and, of course, time. Neighbouring Southeast London areas of Deptford, New Cross and Woolwich are showing signs of becoming South London's long-awaited answer to Shoreditch.

Vast, residential South London has multiple flavours, from the leafy Blackheath, Clapham, Putney and Richmond to the edgier, rougher likes of Brixton, Kennington and Vauxhall.

Southwest London includes such well-known urban villages as Putney, Barnes, Richmond, Wimbledon and Kew that between them attract huge visitor numbers for the wonderful botanical gardens, the tennis and the almost perfectly preserved tudor palace of Henry VIII at Hampton Court.

London takes years to get to know and even Londoners never entirely agree on what to call certain areas – so take things easily and always have a good map to hand – although much of London's charm rests in what you'll discover when you leave the beaten track and explore on your own.

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# ITINERARY BUILDER

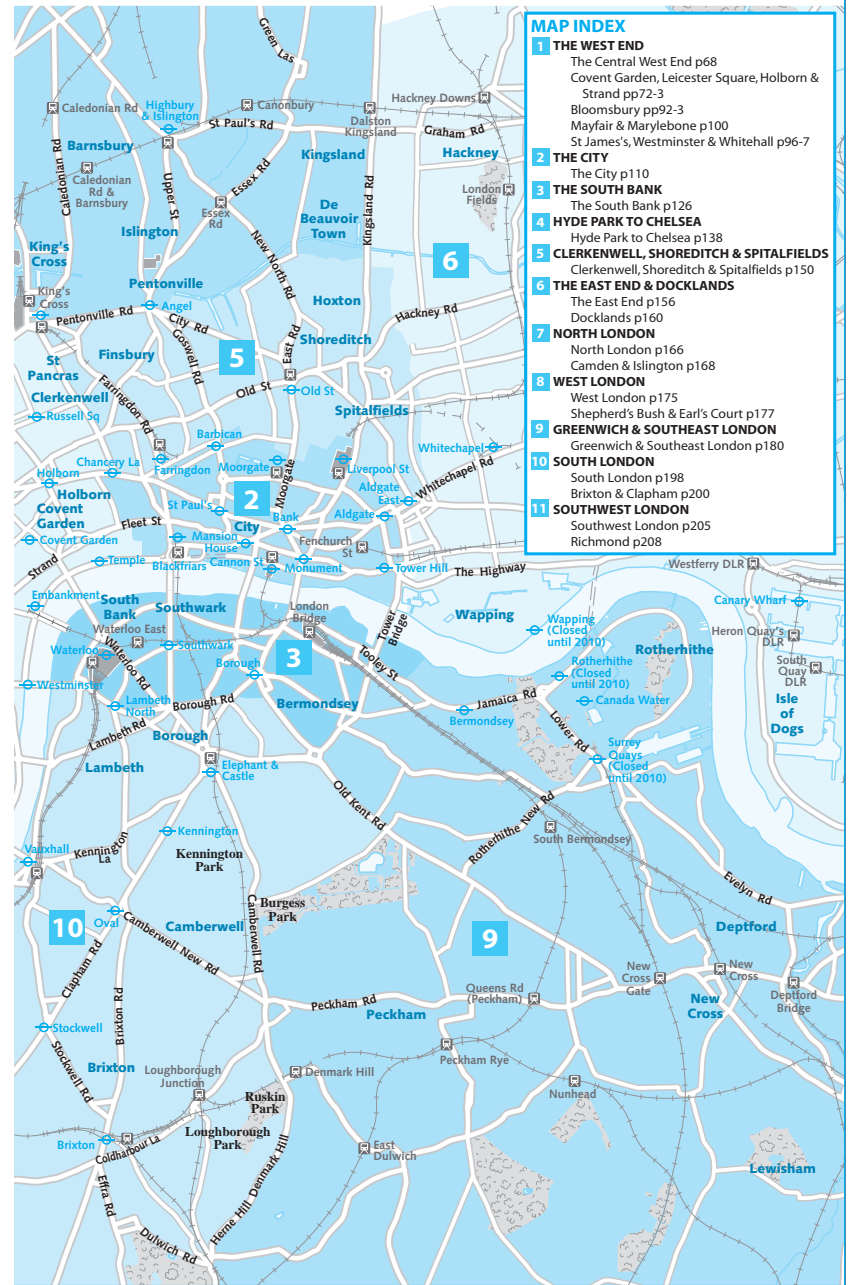
London is best approached in small, easy-to-digest chunks – its sheer size and variety of things to see and do (not to mention eat, drink and buy) may result in heart failure or at the very least severe exhaustion. For the purposes of our Itinerary Builder, West London includes our Hyde Park to Chelsea and West London neighbourhoods. South London includes the Greenwich & Southeast London, South London and Southwest London neighbourhoods.

# HOW TO USE THIS TABLE

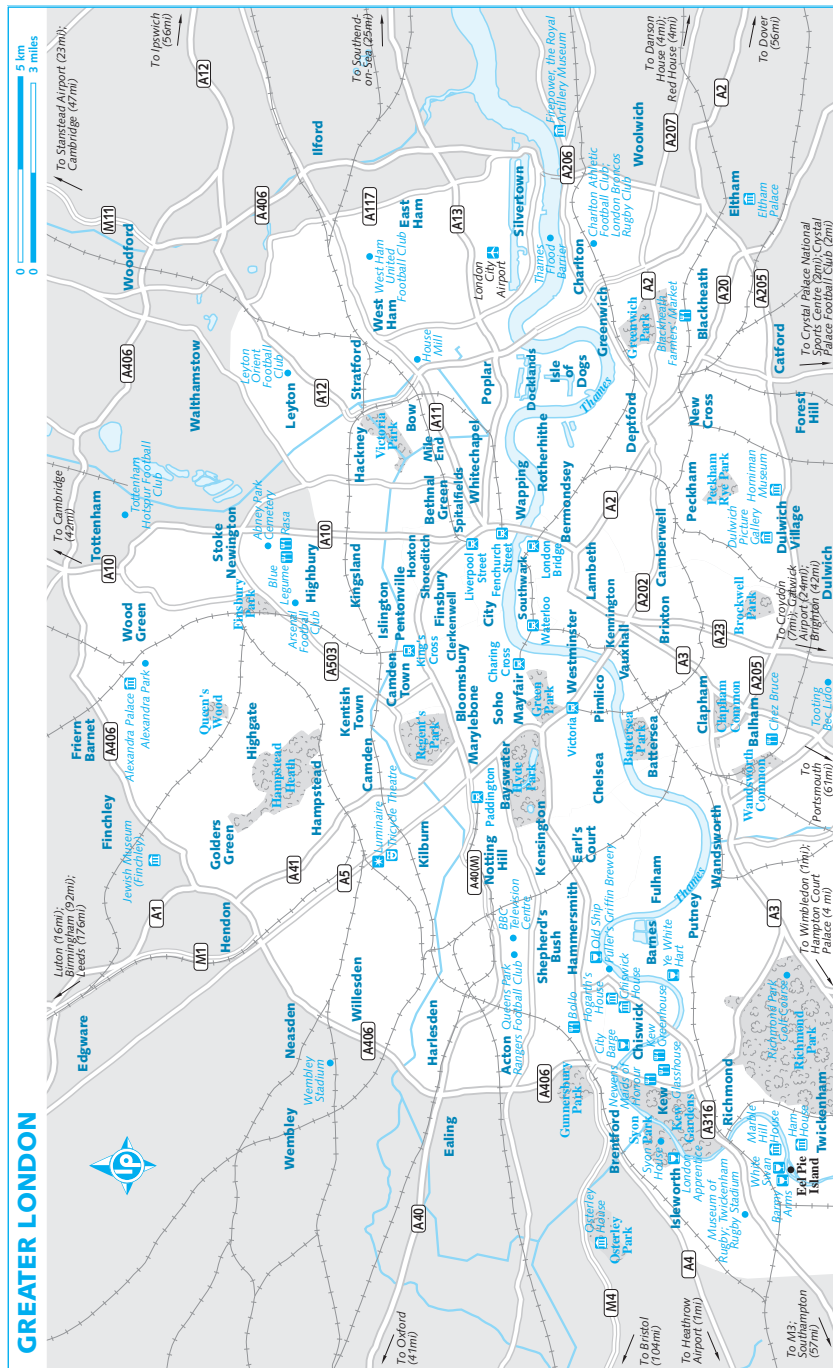
The table below allows you to plan a day's worth of activities in any area of the city. Simply select which area you wish to explore, and then mix and match from the corresponding listings to build your day. The first item in each cell represents a well-known highlight of the area, while the other items are more off-the-beaten-track gems.

AREA	ACTIVITIES	Sights	Eating	Drinking	Shopping	Entertainment	Nightlife
West End	National Gallery (p75)	Gay Hussar (p239)	Gordon's Wine Bar (p280)	Selfridges (p220)	Royal Opera House (p316)	End (p300)	
	National Portrait Gallery (p76)	Busaba Eathai (p245)	French House (p278)	Liberty (p220)	Curzon Soho (p315)	Madame Jo Jo's (p301)	
	Sir John Soane's Museum (p87)	Portrait (p240)	Seven Stars (p280)	Habitat (p223)	Donmar Warehouse (p319)	Bar Rumba (p299)	
The City	Tower of London (p119)	Paternoster Chop House (p248)	Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese (p282)	Leadenhall Market (p233)	Barbican (p312)		
	St Paul's Cathedral (p109)	Place Below (p249)	Dickens Inn (p288)		Rhythm Factory (p309)		
	Temple Church (p113)	Sweeting's (p248)	Jamaica Wine House (p282)				
Clerkenwell, Shoreditch & Spitalfields	Geffrye Museum (p151)	St John (p255)	Foundry (p285)	Hoxton Boutique (p227)	Sadler's Wells (p314)	Fabric (p300)	
	Dennis Severs' House (p152)	Moro (p255)	George & Dragon (p286)	Tatty Devine (p229)	93 Feet East (p298)	333 (p298)	
		Bacchus (p257)	Jerusalem Tavern (p285)	Labour & Wait (p228)			
The South Bank	Tate Modern (p129)	Skylon (p249)	George Inn (p283)	Konditioner & Cook (p226)	BFI Southbank (p314)	Ministry of Sound (p302)	
	British Airways London Eye (p125)	Anchor & Hope (p249)	King's Arms (p283)	Cockfighter of Bermondsey (p225)	National Theatre (p317)		
	Southwark Cathedral (p131)	Blue Print Café (p250)	Baltic (p282)	Black + Blum (p226)			
West London	Victoria & Albert Museum (p139)	Tom Aikens (p252)	Windsor Castle (p292)	Harvey Nichols (p226)	Royal Albert Hall (p312)	Neighbourhood (p302)	
	Kensington Place (p267)	Daquise (p253)	Earl of Lonsdale (p292)	Portobello Road market (p232)	Electric Cinema (p315)	Pacha (p302)	
	Leighton House (p176)	Olivo (p254)		Fortnum & Mason (p219)	Notting Hill Coronet (p315)	Notting Hill Arts Club (p302)	
North London	London Zoo (p165)	Manna (p262)	Hollybush (p289)	Camden Market (p232)	Hampstead Heath Ponds (p325)	Cross (p300)	
	Hampstead Heath (p170)	Duke of Cambridge (p264)	Elk in the Woods (p290)	Housmans (p229)	Everyman Hampstead (p315)	Egg (p300)	
	Highgate Cemetery (p170)	La Gaffe (p264)	Edinboro Castle (p289)	Camden Passage (p233)	Almeida Theatre (p319)	Koko (p301)	
East London	V&A Museum of Childhood (p158)	Café Spice Namaste (p260)	Bistrotheque (p287)	Broadway Market (p229)	Arcola Theatre (p319)	Bethnal Green Working Men's Club (p299)	
	Museum in Docklands (p161)	Wapping Food (p261)	Prospect of Whitby (p288)	Fabrications (p229)	Whitechapel Art Gallery (p155)	Rhythm Factory (p309)	
	Ragged School Museum (p159)		Grapes (p288)	Burberry Factory Shop (p229)		Joiners Arms (p335)	
South London	Royal Observatory (p181)	Inside (p270)	Trafalgar Tavern (p293)	Emporium (p234)	Ritz (p316)	Fridge (p301)	
	Hampton Court Palace (p211)	Glasshouse (p274)	Barmy Arms (p296)	Flying Duck Enterprises (p234)	Battersea Arts Centre (p319)	Carling Academy Brixton (p308)	
	Imperial War Museum (p197)	Lobster Pot (p272)	So.uk (p294)	Joy (p234)	Clapham Picture House (p314)	Dogstar (p300)	

# CENTRAL LONDON







## THE WEST END

Eating [p237](#); Drinking [p278](#); Shopping [p216](#); Sleeping [p342](#)

London has always turned people on. Samuel Johnson raved about the city's 'wonderful immensity', and Henry James famously claimed that for him the British capital offered 'the most possible form of life'. Much of the complexity, chaos and vivacity that they found so enticing is centred on the West End, London's physical, cultural and social heart and where, whether you are a first-time visitor, regular or resident, you'll be gawping, rushing or strolling much of the time. The West End is a vague term (any Londoner you meet will give you their own take on which neighbourhoods it does and doesn't include), and its component areas are often startlingly unlike one another. Londoners may complain about the notorious crowds in the West End, but most find it irresistible. It's monumental and majestic, packed with sights and splattered with a gritty urbanity.

At its centre is Soho ([below](#)), famed for its history and loved for its rampant nightlife and excellent restaurants and bars. The nearby leafy area of Bloomsbury hides the British Museum ([p89](#)) and counters Soho's sauciness with its high-brow reputation – this is where university campuses abound and where Virginia Woolf and her posse lived and loved. Shoppers and tourists flock to Covent Garden ([p71](#)) for its street performers, boutiques and busy theatres. Aromatic Chinatown ([p67](#)) oozes authentic culture but its restaurants need careful choosing, while cinema-central and tourist-trap Leicester Sq ([p86](#)) clogs up with tourists, weekend inebriates and discount-ticket touts. Holborn & The Strand is where London's legal business gets sorted out and the city starts to dip its toes into the River Thames.

Piccadilly Circus ([p67](#)) flashes its illuminated adverts and even though it's busy with traffic, shoppers and tourists, most Londoners can't help but love it. Magnificent Trafalgar Sq ([p74](#)) is home to celebrations, protests and the city's best galleries, while Westminster ([p99](#)), Britain's political heart, is where many important decisions are made before breakfast, yet Westminster Abbey offers a calming influence. Soothing St James's Park ([p95](#)) leads to Buckingham Palace ([p94](#)), a place that needs no introduction, though it's safe to say that you won't find many Londoners gawping through its gates. If you fancy seeing an area of the West End that isn't heaving with human and vehicle traffic, stroll around the aristocratic neighbourhoods of Mayfair and St James's ([p93](#)), or try Marylebone ([p105](#)), a real London 'village' with a quaint High Street that's stacked with independent shops and small (but posh) eateries.

The best way to get to know the West End, and indeed the whole of London, is on foot. Most sights are within walking distance from one another, though if it gets too much, you're best resting your feet on a bus. While the tube will take you to most sights, sometimes the distances between two areas (eg Covent Garden and Leicester Sq or Piccadilly) are faster walked. Do arm yourself with an Oyster card (see [p390](#)) if you intend to use public transport at all, otherwise you may have to come up with a small fortune to cover the cost of a couple of tube rides.

## SOHO & CHINATOWN

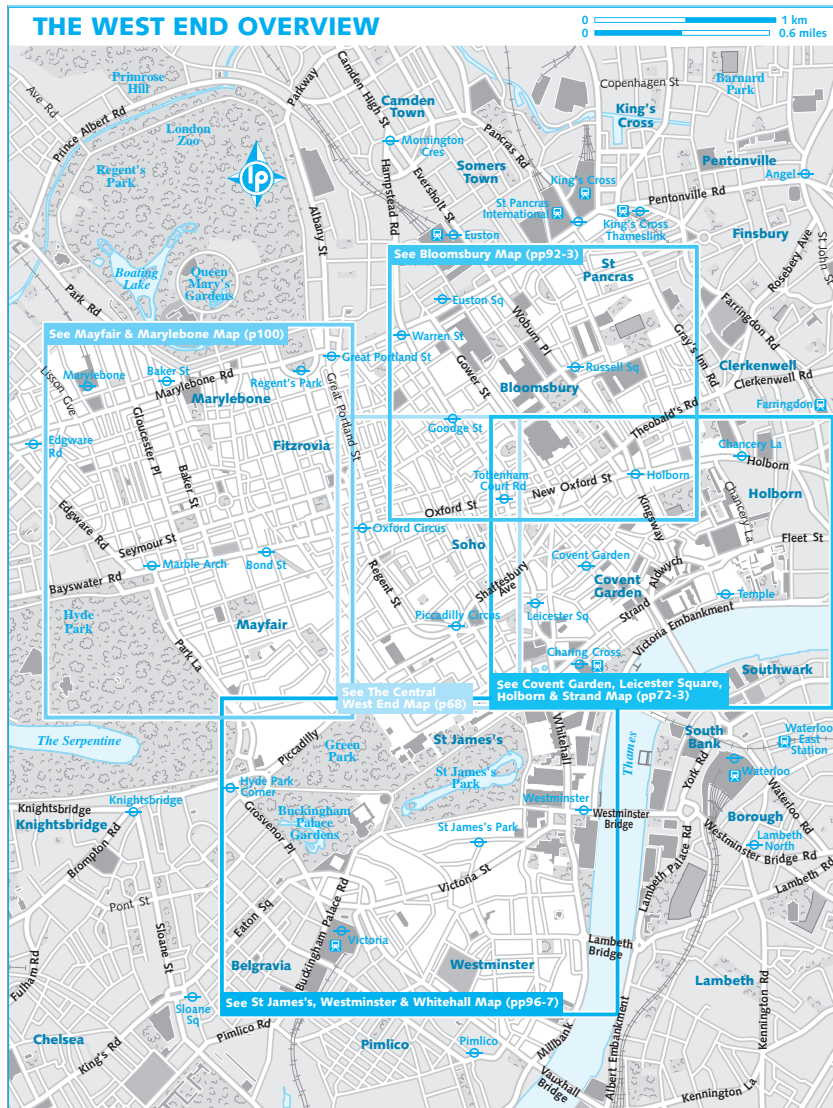
Even though Soho doesn't have a single 'proper' sight, it's still one of London's most popular hangouts thanks to the contagious energy it exudes. Soho's name is a hunting cry from Tudor times: the neighbourhood was the aristocratic hunting ground during the reign of Henry VIII. Its privileged status was knocked down considerably when the home-

## top picks

### THE WEST END

- British Museum ([p89](#))
- National Gallery ([p75](#))
- National Portrait Gallery ([p76](#))
- Somerset House ([p86](#))
- Trafalgar Square ([p74](#))

less victims of the Great Fire moved here, followed by many waves of immigrants, which gave Soho its infamous anarchic, bad-boy image that it still retains (though in a much diluted form). It's home to a 5000-strong community, the traditional heart of London's gay scene, numerous media companies, a red-light district, shops, restaurants, theatres, boozers, nightclubs and, of course, tourists, who can easily take part in the action.



Soho is besieged by the four Circuses – Oxford, Piccadilly, Cambridge and St Giles's. Wardour St divides Soho neatly in two halves; high Soho to the east, and low or West Soho opposite. Old Compton St is the de facto main High Street and the gayest street in London. The West End's only fruit 'n' veg market is on atmospheric Berkeley St. The epicentre of 1960s fashion, Carnaby and Newburgh Sts, have recovered from a decade of tourist tack

shops and are home to some of Soho's hippest shopping once again.

### SOHO SQUARE & AROUND Map p68

At Soho's northern end, leafy Soho Sq is the area's back garden. This is where people come to laze in the sun on spring and summer days, and where office workers have their lunch or gather for a picnic. It was laid out in 1681, and originally named King's Sq,

which is why the statue of Charles II stands in the northern part of the square. In the centre is a tiny mock-Tudor-style house – the gardener's shed – whose lift was a passage to underground shelters. Apart from being a relaxing green space, Soho Sq (along with the rest of Soho) is media central: 20th Century Fox and the British Board of Film Classification have their offices here.

Heading south of Soho Sq, down **Dean Street**, you'll come upon number 28, the place where Karl Marx and his family lived from 1851 to 1856. Marx, his wife Jenny and their four children lived in extreme poverty, without a toilet or running water, and three of their children died of pneumonia in this flat. While the father of communism spent his days researching *Das Kapital* in the British Museum, his main sources of income were money from writing articles for newspapers and financial help from his friend and colleague Friedrich Engels. The Marx family were eventually saved by a huge inheritance left to them by Mrs Marx' family, after which they upped sticks and moved to the more salubrious surroundings of Primrose Hill. Today it's a lively street lined with shops, bars and many other consumer outlets that no doubt would have given Marx indigestion.

Seducer and heart-breaker Casanova and opium-addicted writer Thomas de Quincey lived on **Greek Street**, whereas the parallel **Frith Street** (number 20) housed Mozart for a year from 1764.

### CHINATOWN Map p68

Immediately north of Leicester Sq – but a world away in atmosphere – are Lisle and Gerrard Sts, the focal point for London's Chinese community. Although not as big as Chinatowns in many other cities – it's just two streets really – this is a lively quarter with fake oriental gates, Chinese street signs, red lanterns, many, many restaurants and great Asian supermarkets. London's original Chinatown was further east, near Limehouse, but it was moved here after heavy bombardments in WWII. To see it at its effervescent best, time your visit with Chinese New Year in late January/early February (see p191). Do be aware that the quality of food here varies enormously – it pays to get recommendations as many places are mediocre establishments aimed squarely at the tourist market. Try Jen Café (p243) or New World (p239).

### PICCADILLY CIRCUS Map p68

#### † Piccadilly Circus

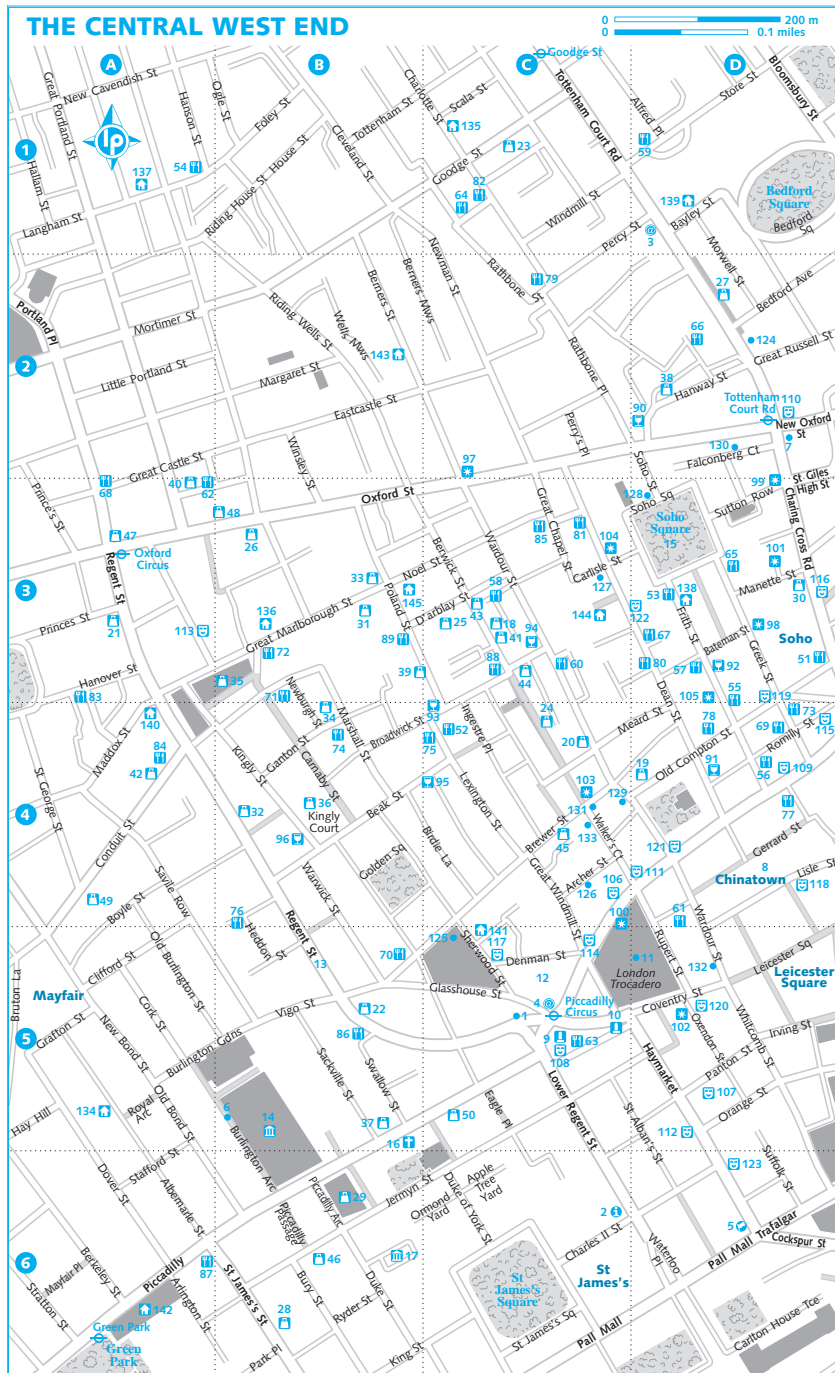
Together with Big Ben and Trafalgar Sq, this is postcard London. And despite the stifling crowds and racing midday traffic, the flashing ads and buzzing liveliness of Piccadilly Circus always make it exciting to be in London. The circus looks its best at night, when the flashing advertisement panels really shine against the dark sky.

Designed by John Nash in the 1820s, the hub was named after the street Piccadilly, which earned its name in the 17th century from the stiff collars (picadils) that were the sartorial staple of the time (and were the making of a nearby tailor's fortune). At the centre of the circus is the famous lead statue, the Angel of Christian Charity, dedicated to the philanthropist and child-labour abolitionist Lord Shaftesbury, and decided when unveiled in 1893, sending the sculptor into early retirement. The sculpture was at first cast in gold, but it was later replaced by the present-day one. Down the years the angel has been mistaken for **Eros**, the God of Love, and the misnomer has stuck (you'll even see signs for 'Eros' from the Underground). It's a handy meeting place for tourists, though if you don't like the crowds, meet at the charging **Horses of Helios** statue at the edge of Piccadilly and Haymarket – apparently a much cooler place to converse.

John Nash had originally designed Regent St and Piccadilly to be the two most elegant streets in town (see Regent Street, p70), but curbed by city planners, Nash couldn't realise his dream to the full. In the many years since his noble plans, Piccadilly Circus has become swamped with tourists, with streets such as Coventry St flogging astronomically priced cheap tat at unsuspecting visitors. Coventry St leads to Leicester Sq, while Shaftesbury Ave takes you to the heart of the West End's theatre land. Piccadilly itself goes to the sanctuary of Green Park. On Haymarket, check out New Zealand House (built in 1959 on the site of the Carlton Hotel, bombed during the war), where the Vietnamese revolutionary leader Ho Chi Minh (1890–1969) worked as a waiter in 1913. Have a look down Lower Regent St for a glimpse of glorious Westminster.

Just east of the circus is **London Trocadero** (Map p68; 0906 888 1100; www.troc.co.uk; 1 Piccadilly Circus W1; admission free; 11–10am–1am), a huge and soulless indoor amusement arcade





## THE CENTRAL WEST END

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### DRINKING

Amused Moose Soho.....	98	D3
Astoria.....	99	D3
Bar Rumba.....	100	C4

### DRINKING

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that has six levels of hi-tech, high-cost fun for youngsters, along with cinemas, US-themed restaurants and bowling alleys. But the drabness of Trocadero has perked up a bit with the introduction of **Amora – The Academy of Sex & Relationships** (☎ 7734 2529; www.amoralondon.com; 13 Coventry St W1; 11am-midnight; admission before 5pm £12, after 5pm £15). Amora calls itself an 'amusement park' and consists of several rooms that explore, well, sex

and relationships. The idea is that you take a tour around and come out enlightened and miles better at the stuff between the sheets, but it's had mixed reviews from Londoners, particularly from those who take their sex seriously. The silly themes, such as encouraging punters to 'find out how to kiss' (in the Sensorium) and a lesson aimed at improving foreplay skills (at the Sexplorium) don't help matters much.

## SEX & DRUGS & ROCK'N'ROLL – THE HISTORY OF SOHO

Soho's character was formed by the many waves of immigration, and residential development started in the 17th century, after the Great Fire had levelled much of the city. An influx of Greek and Huguenot refugees and, later, the 18th-century influx of Italian, Chinese and other artisans and radicals into Soho replaced the bourgeois residents, who moved out of the area and into Mayfair. The following century saw Soho as no more than a slum, with cholera frequently attacking the impoverished residents. But despite its difficulties, the cosmopolitan vibe attracted writers and artists, and the overcrowded area became a centre for entertainment, with restaurants, taverns and coffee houses springing up.

The 20th century was even more raucous, when a fresh wave of European immigrants settled in, making Soho a bona fide bohemian enclave for two decades after WWII. Ronnie Scott's famous club, originally on Gerrard St, provided Soho's jazz soundtrack from the 1950s, while the likes of Jimi Hendrix, the Rolling Stones and Pink Floyd did their early gigs at the legendary Marquee club, which used to be on Wardour St. Soho had long been known for its seediness but when the hundreds of prostitutes who served the Square Mile were forced off the streets and into shop windows, it became the city's red-light district and a centre for porn, strip joints and bawdy drinking clubs. Gay liberation soon followed, and by the 1980s Soho was the hub of London's gay scene, as it remains today. The neighbourhood has a real sense of community, best absorbed on a weekend morning when Soho is at its most villagelike.

### REGENT STREET [Map p68](#)

Regent St is the border separating the hoi polloi of Soho and the high-society residents of Mayfair. Designed by John Nash as a ceremonial route, it was meant to link the Prince Regent's long-demolished city dwelling with the 'wilds' of Regent's Park, and was conceived by the architect as a grand thoroughfare that would be the centrepiece of a new grid for this part of town. Alas, it was never to be – too many toes were being stepped on and Nash had to downscale his plan. There are some elegant shop fronts that look older than their 1920s origins (when the street was remodelled) but, as in the rest of London, the chain stores have almost completely taken over. Two distinguished retail outlets are [Hamleys](#) (p224), London's premier toy and game store, and the upmarket department store [Liberty](#) (p220).

### ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS [Map p68](#)

☎ 7300 8000; [www.royalacademy.org.uk](#); Burlington House, Piccadilly W1; admission varies; 10am-6pm, to 10pm Fri; 1 Green Park; 22 Britain's first art school was founded in 1768, though it only moved here in the following century. It's a great place to come for some free art, thanks to the John Madejski's Fine Rooms, where drawings ranging from Constable, Reynolds, Gainsborough and Turner to Hockney are displayed for nowt. The Academy's galleries have sprung back to life in recent years with mega-successful populist exhibitions such as the Art of the Aztecs and Turks, though the

famous Summer Exhibition (early June to mid-August), which has showcased art submitted by the general public for nearly 250 years, is the Academy's biggest event.

The Academy is enjoying its new Annenberg Courtyard, which features a dashing stone-paved piazza with choreographed lights and fountains flanking a statue of founder Joshua Reynolds, though he's often replaced or joined by various (and dubious) art pieces.

### BURLINGTON ARCADE [Map p68](#)

51 Piccadilly W1; 1 Green Park  
Flanking Burlington House – home of the Royal Academy of Arts – on its western side is the curious Burlington Arcade, built in 1819 and evocative of a bygone era. Today it is a shopping precinct for the very wealthy and is most famous for the Burlington Berties, uniformed guards who patrol the area keeping an eye out for punishable offences such as running, chewing gum or whatever else might lower the arcade's tone. The fact that the arcade once served as a brothel isn't mentioned.

### ST JAMES'S PICCADILLY [Map p68](#)

☎ 7734 4511; 197 Piccadilly W1; 1 8am-7pm; 1 Green Park  
The only church Christopher Wren built from scratch and on a new site (most of the others were replacements for ones razed in the Great Fire), this simple building is exceedingly easy on the eye and substitutes what some might call the pompous flourishes of his most famous

churches with a warm and elegant user-friendliness. The spire, although designed by Wren, was added only in 1968. This is a particularly sociable church: it houses a counselling service, stages lunchtime and evening concerts, provides shelter for an antiques market and an arts and crafts fair (from 10am to 6pm on Tuesday, and from Wednesday to Sunday, respectively), has a Caffé Nero attached on the side, as well as, what was the last thing...oh, yeah, teaching the word of God.

### WHITE CUBE GALLERY [Map p68](#)

☎ 7930 5373; [www.whitecube.com](#); 25-26 Mason's Yard SW1; admission free; 1 10am-6pm Tue-Sat; 1 Piccadilly

Opened in early summer 2007, this central sister to the Hoxton original (p149) has recently hosted two major high-profile exhibitions: an Andreas Gursky collection of photographs from North Korea; and the massively publicised Damien Hirst 'For the Love of God' exhibition – famed for its diamond skull – that brought back some of the media frenzy the Young British Artists (YBAs) were used to in the 1990s. Housed in Mason's Yard, a traditional courtyard with brick houses and an old pub, the White Cube looks like an ice block – white, straight-lined and angular. The two contrasting styles work well together and the courtyard often serves as a garden for the gallery on popular opening nights.

## COVENT GARDEN & LEICESTER SQUARE

Covent Garden, though the throbbing heart of tourist London, is as beautiful and pleasant as tourist areas can get. Located east of Soho, the area is dominated by the piazza, which draws thousands of tourists into its elegant arched belly with boutiques, stalls, open-air cafés and pubs, and street entertainers who mostly perform outside St Paul's Church. Most Londoners avoid the human traffic jam of the area, but you should see it at least once. If you can, try to walk through the piazza after 11pm: it's calmer and almost totally empty, save for a busker or two, and you can appreciate its old-world beauty and Inigo Jones's design without the crowds. Additionally, there is an excellent antiques market on Monday that's worth a wander.

To the north of the piazza is the Royal Opera House, ruthlessly yet brilliantly rebuilt

in the late 1990s to make it one of the world's most superb singing venues. The wider area of Covent Garden is a honeypot for shoppers who revel in the High-Street outlets on Long Acre and independent boutiques along the little side streets. Neal St is no longer the grooviest strip, although the little roads cutting across it maintain its legendary style. Neal's Yard is a strange and charming little courtyard featuring overpriced vegetarian eateries. Floral St is where swanky designers such as Paul Smith have stores.

Covent Garden's history is quite different from its present-day character: it was a site of a convent (hence, 'covent') and its garden in the 13th century, owned by Westminster Abbey, which became the property of John Russell, the first Earl of Bedford, in 1552. The area developed thanks to his descendants, who employed Inigo Jones to convert a vegetable field into a piazza in the 17th century. He built the elegant Italian-style piazza, flanked by St Paul's Church to the west, and its tall terraced houses soon started to draw rich socialites who coveted the central living quarters. The bustling fruit and veg market – immortalised in *My Fair Lady* – dominated the piazza. London society, including writers such as Pepys, Fielding and Boswell, gathered here in the evenings looking for some action among the coffee houses, theatres, gambling dens and brothels. Lawlessness became commonplace, leading to the formation of a volunteer police force known as the Bow Street Runners (see *Georgian London*, p24). In 1897 Oscar Wilde was charged with gross indecency in the now-closed Bow St magistrate's court. A flower market designed by Charles Fowler was added at the spot where London's Transport Museum now stands.

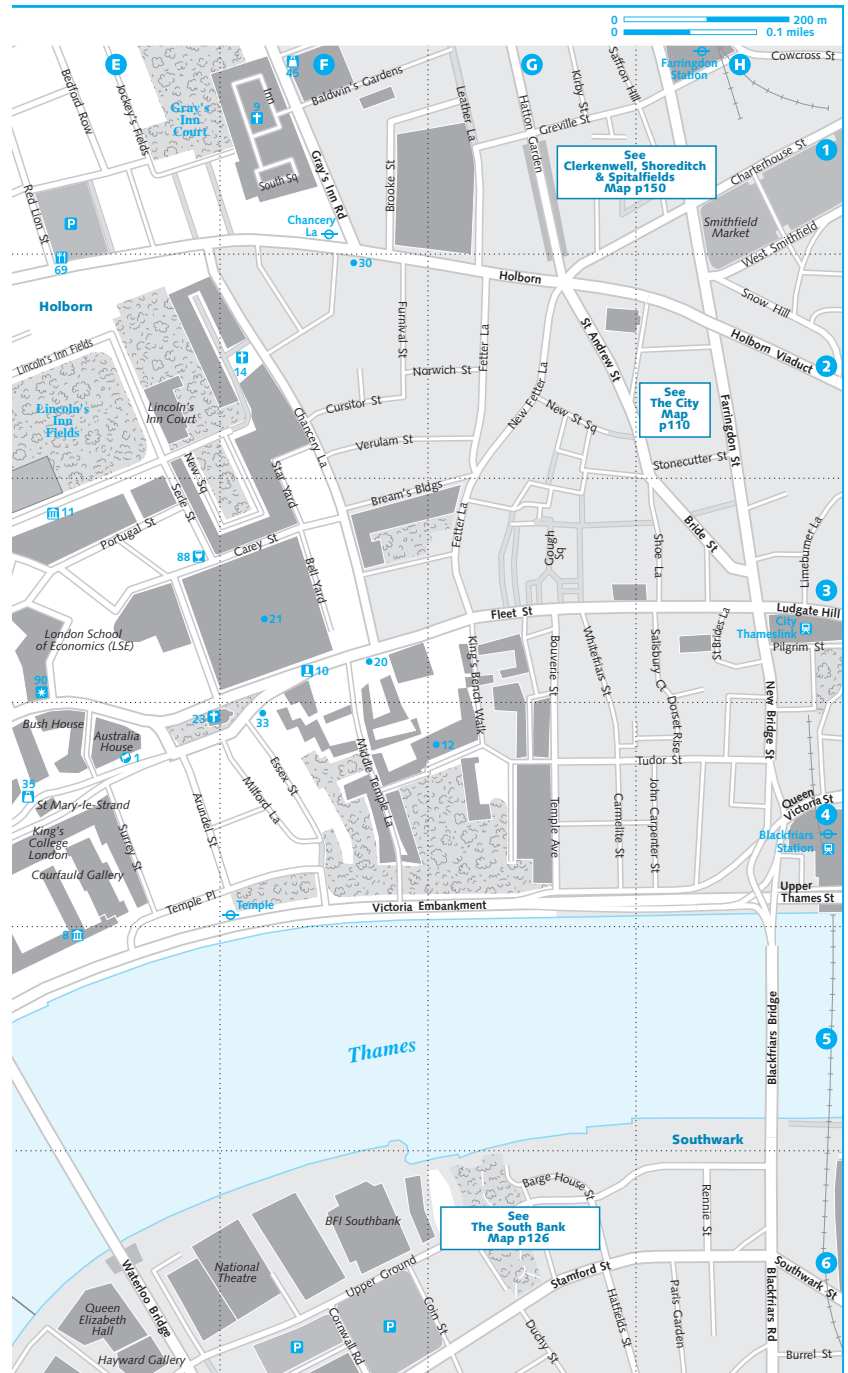
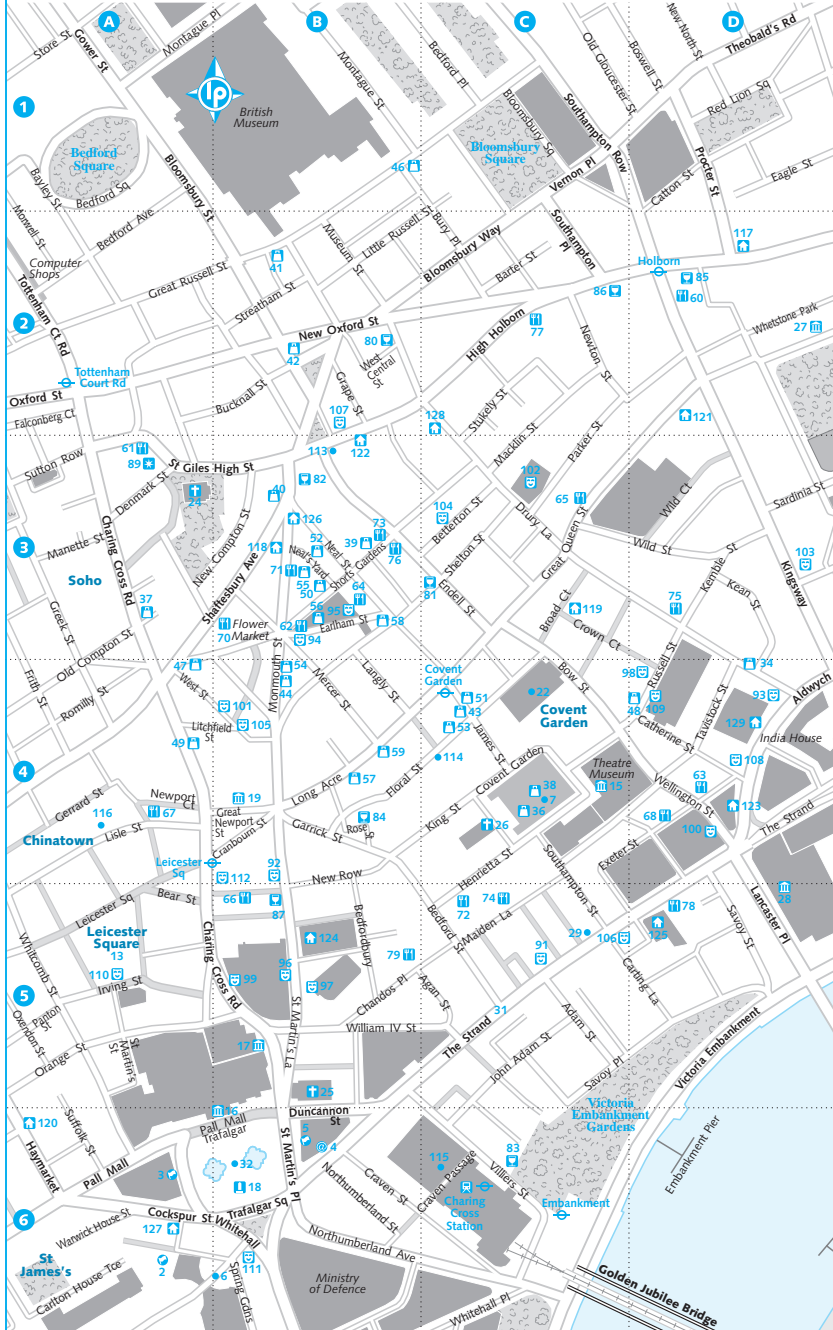
During the 1970s, it became increasingly difficult to maintain the fruit and veg market amid the city traffic and the market was moved in 1974. Property developers loomed over the space and there was even talk of the market being demolished for a road, but thanks to the area's dedicated residential community who demonstrated and picketed for weeks, the piazza was saved and transformed into what you see today.

### TRAFALGAR SQUARE [Map pp72-3](#)

In many ways this is the centre of London, where many great rallies and marches take place, where the New Year is ushered in by tens of thousands of revellers, and where locals congregate for anything from com-



# THE WEST END: COVENT GARDEN, LEICESTER SQUARE, HOLBORN & STRAND



## THE WEST END: COVENT GARDEN, LEICESTER SQUARE, HOLBORN & STRAND

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munal open-air cinema to various political protests. The great square was neglected over many years, ringed with gnarling traffic and given over to flocks of pigeons that would dive-bomb anyone with a morsel of food on their person. But things have changed.

The grand square has Mayor Ken Livingstone to thank for its new lease of life and, primarily, hygiene: one of the first things Livingstone did when he became mayor was take aim at the pesky pigeons and ban people from feeding them. Once he

had dispersed the pooping 'flying rats' (as they are affectionately known in London), he embarked on a bold and imaginative scheme to transform it into the kind of space John Nash had intended when he designed it in the early 19th century. Traffic was banished from the northern flank in front of the National Gallery, and a new pedestrian plaza built. The front of the National Gallery itself has been dolled up, with a new façade and entrance hall, and Ken has taken pains to organise cultural events to showcase the city's multicultural-

ism, with celebrations for Russian, Jewish and Chinese New Year, concerts of African music, or concerts celebrating Ken's friendship with Venezuela's left-wing president Hugo Chavez.

In 2005 Livingstone, together with Wendy Woods (widow of the anti-apartheid journalist Donald Woods) and film director Lord Attenborough, applied to erect a 2.7m-tall statue of Nelson Mandela on the square's north terrace. The application was rejected by Westminster Council who suggested the statue be placed outside South Africa house. This, in turn, was rejected by the Mayor and Lord Attenborough, who claimed that the location would not allow the statue to be viewed properly. The debate continues.

The pedestrianisation has made it easier to appreciate not only the square but also the splendid buildings around it: the National Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery and the newly renovated church of St Martin-in-the-Fields. The ceremonial **Pall Mall** runs southwest from the top of the square. To the southwest stands **Admiralty Arch** (p85), with the Mall leading to Buckingham Palace beyond it. To the west is **Canada House** (1827), designed by Robert Smirkin. The 52m-high **Nelson's Column** (upon which the admiral surveys his fleet of ships to the southwest) has stood in the centre of the square since 1843 and commemorates the admiral's victory over Napoleon off Cape Trafalgar in Spain in 1805. It was cleaned in 2006 and the admiral now shines with more confidence than ever.

### NATIONAL GALLERY Map pp72–3

% 7747 2885; [www.nationalgallery.org.uk](http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk); Trafalgar Sq WC2; admission free to permanent

exhibits, prices vary for temporary exhibitions; 11am–6pm Thu–Tue, to 9pm Wed; t Charing Cross; v

With more than 2000 Western European paintings on display, the National Gallery is one of the largest galleries in the world. But it's the quality of the works, and not the quantity, that impresses most. Almost five million people visit each year, keen to see seminal paintings from every important epoch in the history of art, including works by Giotto, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Titian, Velázquez, Van Gogh and Renoir, just to name a few. Although it can get ridiculously busy in here, the galleries are spacious, sometimes even sedate, and it's never so bad that you can't appreciate the works. That said, weekday mornings and Wednesday evenings (after 6pm) are the best times to visit, as the crowds are small. If you have the time to make multiple visits, focus on one section at a time to fully appreciate the astonishing collection.

The size and layout can be confusing, so make sure you pick up a free gallery plan at the entrance. To see the art in chronological order, start with the Sainsbury Wing on the gallery's western side, which houses paintings from 1260 to 1510. In these 16 rooms you can explore the Renaissance through paintings by Giotto, Leonardo da Vinci, Botticelli, Raphael and Titian, among others. This is where you'll also find the Micro gallery, a dozen computer terminals on which you can explore the pictorial database, find the location of your favourite works or create your own personalised tour.

The High Renaissance (1510–1600) is covered in the West Wing, where Michelangelo, Titian, Correggio, El Greco and Bronzino

## THE FOURTH PLINTH

Three of the four plinths located at Trafalgar Sq's corners are occupied by notables, including King George IV on horseback, and military men General Charles Napier and Sir Henry Havelock. One, originally intended for a statue of William IV, has largely remained vacant for the past 150 years. The Royal Society of Arts conceived of the unimaginatively titled **Fourth Plinth Project** ([www.fourthplinth.co.uk](http://www.fourthplinth.co.uk)) in 1999, deciding to use the empty space for works by contemporary artists. The stunning *Ecce Homo* by Mark Wallinger (1999) was the first one, a life-size statue of Jesus which appeared tiny in contrast to the enormous plinth, commenting on the human illusions of grandeur; it was followed by Bill Woodrow's *Regardless of History* (2000) and Rachel Whiteread's *Monument* (2001), a resin copy of the plinth, turned upside down.

The Mayor's office has since taken over the Fourth Plinth Project, continuing with the contemporary-art theme, with Marc Quinn's *Alison Lapper Pregnant* (2005), a statue of the Thalidomide-affected artist (Alison Lapper) when expecting a child, being replaced by Tomas Schütte's *Model for a Hotel 2007* (2007).

hold court, while Rubens, Rembrandt and Caravaggio can be found in the North Wing (1600–1700). The most crowded part of the gallery – and for good reason – is likely to be the East Wing (1700–1900) and particularly the many works of the impressionists and postimpressionists, including Van Gogh, Gauguin, Cézanne, Monet, Degas and Renoir. Although it hardly stands out in such exalted company, the impressive display featuring 18th-century British landscape artists Gainsborough, Constable and Turner is also well worth checking out.

The gallery's collection cuts off at 1900 and therefore to see 20th-century art you need to head to [Tate Modern](#) (p129) and, for British art, [Tate Britain](#) (p103).

Temporary exhibitions – for which you normally have to pay, and often book in advance – go on show in the basement of the Sainsbury Wing and are often outstanding.

The highlights listed in the boxed text (right) include many of the most important works, but if you want to immerse yourself in this pool of riches rather than just skim across the surface, borrow a themed or comprehensive audioguide (£4 donation recommended) from the Central Hall. Free one-hour introductory [guided tours](#) leave from the information desk in the Sainsbury Wing daily at 11.30am and 2.30pm, with an extra tour at 6.30pm on Wednesday. There are also special trails and activity sheets for children.

The new [National Dining Rooms](#) (☎ 7747 2525; www.thenationaldiningrooms.co.uk; 10am–5pm Sun–Tue, to 8.30pm Wed), in the Sainsbury Wing, is a wonderful recent addition to the gallery. Run by Oliver Peyton (the man behind Inn the Park in St James's Park; see p245), this is an excellent, well-lit space, with quality British food in the restaurant, and pastries and cakes in the bakery.

## NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Map pp72–3

☎ 7306 0055; www.npg.org.uk; St Martin's Pl WC2; admission free, prices vary for temporary exhibitions; 10am–6pm, to 9pm Thu & Fri; 1 Charing Cross or Leicester Sq; √ Excellent for putting faces to names over the last five centuries of British history, the gallery houses a primary collection of some 10,000 works, which are regularly rotated, among them the museum's first acquisition, the famous Chandos portrait of Shake-

## NATIONAL GALLERY HIGHLIGHTS

- *Pentecost* – Giotto
- *Virgin and Child with St Anne and St John the Baptist* – Leonardo da Vinci
- *Arnolfini Wedding* – Van Eyck
- *Venus and Mars* – Botticelli
- *The Ansidei Madonna* – Raphael
- *The Madonna of the Pinks* – Raphael
- *Le Chapeau de Paille* – Rubens
- *Charles I* – Van Dyck
- *Bacchus and Ariadne* – Titian
- *The Entombment* – Michelangelo
- *Rokeby Venus* – Velázquez
- *The Supper at Emmaus* – Caravaggio
- *Bathers* – Cézanne
- *Sunflowers* – Van Gogh
- *The Water Lily Pond* – Monet
- *Miss La La* – Degas
- *The Hay-Wain* – Constable
- *The Fighting Temeraire* – Turner

peare. Despite the recent discovery that the Royal Shakespeare Company's Flower portrait of the Bard was a 19th-century forgery, the National Portrait Gallery still believes this one to have been painted during Shakespeare's lifetime.

To follow the paintings chronologically you should take the huge escalator to the top floor and work your way down. The 1st floor is dedicated to the Royal family, but the most fun is seeing one of the two portraits of the Queen made by Andy Warhol. The ground floor is most interesting with portraits of contemporary figures using a variety of media, including sculpture and photography. Among the most popular of these is Sam Taylor-Wood's *David*, a video-portrait of David Beckham asleep after football training, which attracted a lot of women to suddenly take interest in this part of the gallery. There's an annual Photographic Portrait Prize exhibition, featuring some of the best contemporary photographers.

Audioguides (a £3 donation is suggested) highlight some 200 portraits and allow you to hear the voices of some of the people portrayed. The Portrait Café and bookshop are in the basement and the [Portrait restaurant](#) (p240) is on the top floor, offering some superb views towards Westminster.

(Continued on page 85)





## ARCHITECTURE



*Ornate choir stalls and quire of Wren's masterpiece, St Paul's Cathedral*



# LONDON ARCHITECTURE

Unlike some other great metropolises, London has never been methodically planned. Rather, it has developed in an organic (read: haphazard) fashion. There has traditionally been an aversion to the set piece here and, until relatively recently, buildings were rarely used as parts of a larger town or district plan.

## LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

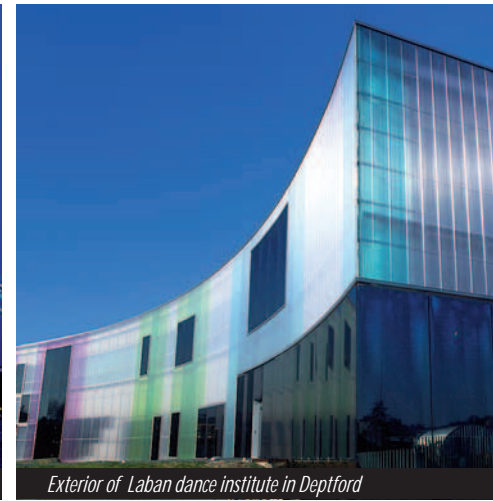
London's roots lie in the walled Roman settlement of Londinium, established in AD 43 on the northern banks of the River Thames, roughly on the site of today's City. Few traces of it survive outside museums, but stretches of the Roman wall remain as foundations to a medieval wall outside Tower Hill tube station and in a few sections below Bastion Highwalk, next to the Museum of London.

The Saxons, who moved into the area after the decline of the Roman Empire, found Londinium too small and built their communities further up the Thames. Excavations carried out by archaeologists from the Museum of London during renovations at the Royal Opera House in the late 1990s uncovered extensive traces of the Saxon settlement of Lundenwic, including some wattle-and-daub housing. But the best place to see what the Saxons left behind *in situ* is the church of [All Hallows-by-the-Tower](#) (p123), northwest of the Tower of London, which boasts an important archway and the walls of a 7th-century Saxon church.

With the arrival of William the Conqueror in 1066, the country got its first example of Norman architecture in the shape of the [White Tower](#) (p121), the sturdy keep at the heart of the Tower of London. The church of [St Bartholomew-the-Great](#) (p114) at Smithfield also has Norman arches and columns marching down its nave. The west door and elaborately moulded porch at the [Temple Church](#) (p113) in Inner Temple are other outstanding details of Norman architecture.



Night views of Tower Bridge and the River Thames



Exterior of Laban dance institute in Deptford

*Westminster Abbey, London's finest example of Early English Gothic architecture*



## MEDIEVAL LONDON

[Westminster Abbey](#) (p99), enlarged and refurbished between the 12th and 14th centuries, is a splendid reminder of what the master masons of the Middle Ages could produce, while [Temple Church](#) (p113) illustrates the transition from the round-arched, solid, Norman Romanesque style to the pointed-arched delicateness of Early English Gothic. Perhaps the finest surviving medieval church in the City is 13th-century [Church of St Ethelburga-the-Virgin](#) (Map p110; 78 Bishopsgate EC2) near Liverpool St station, which was restored after Irish Republican Army (IRA) bombings in 1993. The 15th-century [Church of St Olave](#) (Map p110; Hart St EC3), northwest of Tower Hill, is one of the City's few remaining Gothic parish churches, while the crypt at the largely restored church of [St Ethelreda](#) (Map p150; Ely Pl EC1), north of Holborn Circus, dates from about 1250.

Secular buildings are even scarcer, although the ragstone [Jewel Tower](#) (Map pp96–7; Abingdon St SW1) opposite the Houses of Parliament dates from 1365, and most of the [Tower of London](#) (p119) goes back to the Middle Ages. [Staple Inn](#) (Map pp72–3; High Holborn WC1) in Holborn dates from 1378, but the half-timbered shopfront façade (1589) is mostly Elizabethan and was heavily restored in the 1950s after wartime bombing.

## AN AGE OF ARCHITECTS

The finest London architect of the first half of the 17th century was Inigo Jones (1573–1652), who spent a year and a half in Italy and became a convert to Palladian Renaissance architecture. His *chefs-d'œuvre* include [Banqueting House](#) (1622; p105) in Whitehall and [Queen's House](#) (1635; p182) in Greenwich. Often overlooked is the much plainer church of [St Paul's](#) (Map pp72–3) in Covent Garden, which he designed in the 1630s to go with the new piazza and described as 'the handsomest barn in England'.

The greatest architect ever to leave his mark on London was Sir Christopher Wren (1632–1723), responsible not just for his masterpiece and monument [St Paul's Cathedral](#) (1710; p109) but also for many of central London's finest churches. He oversaw the building of dozens of them, many replacing medieval churches lost in the Great Fire, as well as the [Royal Hospital Chelsea](#) (1692; p137) and the [Old Royal Naval College](#) (p181), begun in 1694 at Greenwich. His neoclassical buildings and churches are taller, lighter and generally more graceful than their medieval predecessors.

Nicholas Hawksmoor (1661–1736) was a pupil of Wren who worked with him on several churches before going on to design his own masterpieces. The restored [Christ Church](#) (1729; p152) in Spitalfields and the 1731 [St George's Bloomsbury](#) (Map pp92–3; Bloomsbury Way WC1), as well as [St Anne's, Limehouse](#) (1725; p161) and [St George-in-the-East](#) (1726; p163) at Wapping, are among his finest works.



*Neo-Palladian mansion of Kenwood House, Hampstead*

Another Wren protégé, James Gibb (1682–1754), was responsible for [St Martin-in-the-Fields](#) (1726; p85). The style of these two architects' buildings is usually defined as English baroque.

A few domestic buildings dating from before the 18th century still survive, among them the half-timbered 1611 [Prince Henry's Room](#) (Map pp72–3; 17 Fleet EC4) and several old pubs on Fleet St and along the Strand.

## GEORGIAN MANNERS

The Georgian period saw the return of classicism (or neo-Palladianism). Among the greatest exponents of this revived style was Robert Adam (1728–92). Much of his work was demolished by the Victorians, but an excellent example that endures is [Kenwood House](#) (1773; p171), on Hampstead Heath.

Adam's fame has been eclipsed by that of John Nash (1752–1835), and rightly so: his contribution to London's architecture compares favourably to that of Wren. Nash was responsible for the layout of Regent's Park and its surrounding elegant crescents. To give London a 'spine', he created [Regent Street](#) (p70) as a straight north–south axis from St James's Park in the south to the new Regent's Park in the north. This grand scheme also involved the formation of Trafalgar Sq, and the development of the Mall and the western end of the Strand.

Nash's contemporary, John Soane (1753–1837), was the architect of the [Bank of England](#) (Map p110; Threadneedle St EC2), completed in 1833 (though much of his work was lost during the bank's rebuilding by Herbert Baker, 1925–39), as well as the [Dulwich Picture Gallery](#) (1814; p185). Robert Smirke (1780–1867) designed the [British Museum](#) (p89) in 1823, one of the finest expressions anywhere of the Greek Revivalist style.

## A GOTHICK RETHINK

In the 19th century a reaction emerged in the form of the highly decorative neo-Gothic style, also known as Victorian High Gothic or 'Gothick'. Champions were George Gilbert Scott (1811–78),

Alfred Waterhouse (1830–1905), Augustus Pugin (1812–52) and Charles Barry (1795–1860). Scott was responsible for the elaborate [Albert Memorial](#) (1872; p144) in Kensington Gardens and [St Pancras Chambers](#) (1874; Map p168). Waterhouse designed the flamboyant [Natural History Museum](#) (1880; p141), while Pugin and Barry worked together from 1840 on the [Houses of Parliament](#) (p102), after the Palace of Westminster burned down in 1834. The last great neo-Gothic public building to go up in London was the [Royal Courts of Justice](#) (1882; p87), designed by George Edmund Street.

The emphasis on the artisanship and materials necessary to create these elaborate neo-Gothic buildings led to what has become known as the Arts and Crafts movement – 'British Art Nouveau', for lack of a better term – of which William Morris (1834–96) was a leading exponent. Morris' work can be best enjoyed in the Green Dining Room of the [Victoria & Albert Museum](#) (p139) and at his Bexleyheath residence, [Red House](#) (1860; p186). The 1902 [Euston Fire Station](#) (Map p168; 172 Euston Rd NW1) opposite St Pancras New Church is a wonderful example of Arts and Crafts architecture.

## FLIRTING WITH MODERNISM

Not many public buildings of note were built during the first 15 years of the 20th century, apart from [Admiralty Arch](#) (1910; p85), in the Edwardian baroque style of Aston Webb (1849–1930), who also designed the [Queen Victoria Memorial](#) (1911) opposite Buckingham Palace and worked on the front façade of the palace itself. [County Hall](#) (p127), designed by Ralph Knott in 1909, was not completed until 1933.

In the period between the two world wars, English architecture was hardly more creative though Edwin Lutyens (1869–1944), whose work is sometimes classified as British Art Deco, designed the [Cenotaph](#) (1920; p105) on Whitehall as well as the impressive 1927 [Britannic House](#) (Map p150; Finsbury Sq EC2), now Triton Court, in Moorgate.

Europeans architects introduced the modernist style, but the monuments they left are generally on a small scale. Russian Berthold Lubetkin (1901–90) is perhaps the best remembered, principally because of his [Penguin Pool](#) at the [London Zoo](#) (p165), with its concrete spiral ramp. Built in 1934, it is considered to be London's earliest modernist structure.

## POSTWAR RECONSTRUCTION

Hitler's bombs during WWII wrought the worst destruction on London since the Great Fire and the immediate postwar problem was a chronic housing shortage. Low-cost developments and

### OPEN SESAME

If you want to stick your nose inside buildings you wouldn't normally be able to see, September is the time to visit. One weekend that month (usually the third one), the charity Open House arranges for owners of up to 600 private buildings to throw open their front doors and let in the public free of charge. Major buildings, some of them listed in this chapter (eg 30 St Mary Axe, City Hall, Lloyd's of London, St Pancras Chambers etc) have also participated.

For more details, contact [Open House Architecture](#) (☎ 0900 160 0061; www.londonopenhouse.org). The charity also runs three-hour, architect-led [tours](#) (☎ 7380 0412; adult/student £18.50/13) every Saturday at 10am departing from the Building Centre (see below) at 10am. There's a rolling program visiting the Square Mile, Bankside, the West End or Docklands. The tours, which include lively, well-informed commentary, are highly recommended. Best of all, you can ask questions to your heart's content.

Another annual event worth keeping an eye out for is [Architecture Week](#) (☎ 7973 5246; www.architectureweek.org.uk) in mid-June, which has an enticing mix of talks by leading architects, designers and well-known TV design critics, plus events involving actors and bands. It's run as a joint venture between the [Royal Institute of British Architects](#) (www.riba.org) and the Arts Council.

If you're interested in where architecture is headed in London visit the [New London Architecture](#) (www.newlondonarchitecture.org) website or the [Building Centre](#) (Map pp92–3; ☎ 7692 4000; www.buildingcentre.co.uk; 26 Store St WC1E; admission free; ⌚ 9.30am–6pm Mon–Fri, 10am–5pm Sat; 📍 Tottenham Court Rd or Goodge St). Along with changing exhibitions and an outstanding bookshop, it has a scale diorama model of London that is updated quarterly.





*Heritage-listed BT Tower rises high above the West End*



*Classical and baroque merge in St Martin-in-the-Fields*

ugly high-rise housing were thrown up on bomb sites and many of these blocks still contribute to London's urban blight today.

The **Royal Festival Hall** (p128), designed by Robert Matthew and J Leslie Martin for the 1951 Festival of Britain, attracted as many accolades as brickbats when it opened as London's first major public building in the modernist style. The former now far outweighs the latter after a two-year, £75 million refit. Hardly anyone seems to have a good word to say about Denys Lasdun's brutalist **National Theatre** (p128), however, begun in 1966 and finished a decade later.

The 1960s saw the ascendancy of the workaday glass-and-concrete high-rises exemplified by the mostly unloved 1967 **Centre Point** (Map p68; New Oxford St WC1) by Richard Seifert. But one person's muck is another's jewel; the once-vilified modernist tower has been listed by English Heritage, meaning that it represents a particular style, is of great value to the patrimony and largely cannot be altered outside (and in some cases inside as well). The 1964 **BT Tower** (Map pp92-3; 60 Cleveland St W1), formerly the Post Office Tower and designed by Eric Bedford, has also been given Heritage-listed status.

The 1970s saw very little building in London apart from roads, and the recession of the late 1980s and early 1990s brought much of the development and speculation in the Docklands and the City to a standstill. In 1990 the publication of *A Vision of Britain*, a reactionary tract by Prince Charles that argued for a synthetic 'English tradition', helped polarise traditionalists and modernists still further. For these and other reasons, the London skyline had little to compare with that of New York or Hong Kong.

## POSTMODERNISM LANDS

London's contemporary architecture was born in the City and the Docklands in the mid-1980s. The former centrepiece was **Lloyd's of London** (1986; p117), Sir Richard Rogers' 'inside-out' masterpiece of ducts, pipes, glass and stainless steel. Taking pride of place in the Docklands was Cesar Pelli's 244m-high **1 Canada Square** (1991), commonly known as Canary Wharf (see p161) and easily visible from central London.

## REACHING FOR THE SKIES

Mayor Ken Livingstone has suggested that London needs another 10 to 15 skyscrapers within the next decade if it is to retain its pre-eminence as a financial capital. English Heritage initially contested some of the following proposed high-rises on the grounds that they might obstruct 'strategic' views of St Paul's Cathedral, but its fears have been assuaged. All five of the following received planning permission and are on their way up.

**20 Fenchurch Street** (Map p110; 20 Fenchurch St EC3) Rafael Vinoly; 177m. The idea behind the 'Walkie Talkie' shape is that bigger top floors can command more rent, making the tower more profitable than others.

**Bishopsgate Tower** (Map p110; 288m; 22-24 Bishopsgate EC2) Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates; 288m. Scaled down from more than 307m, the 'Helter Skelter' will still be the highest tower in the City when completed.

**Heron Tower** (Map p110; 202m; 110 Bishopsgate EC3) Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates; 202m. The four façades of this stepped skyscraper will each be different, reflecting the buildings they face.

**Leadenhall Building** (Map p110; 122 Leadenhall St EC3) Sir Richard Rogers; 224m. This 48-storey tower nicknamed the Cheese Grater faces the architect's own Lloyd's of London building.

**London Bridge Tower** (Map p126; 32 London Bridge St SE) Renzo Piano; 310m. Luxury Asian hotel group Shangri-La has already signed up as a tenant on 18 floors of this thin, tall glass spike.



*Straight lines and red brick define the exterior of the British Library*

With a youthful New Labour in power at the end of the 1990s, Britain's economy on the up and the new millennium looming, attention turned to public buildings, including several landmarks that would define London in the early 21st century.

**Tate Modern** (Herzog & de Meuron, 1999; p129) was a success beyond even its architects' wildest dreams. From the disused Bankside Power Station (Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, 1963) they fashioned an art gallery that went straight to first place in the top 10 London tourist attractions, and then walked away with international architecture's most prestigious prize, the Pritzker. The stunning **Millennium Bridge** (Sir Norman Foster and Antony Caro, 2000; p130), the first bridge to be built over the Thames in central London since Tower Bridge (1894), had a case of the wobbles when it was first opened, but it is now much loved and much used. Even the **Millennium Dome** (Sir Richard Rogers; p181), the dunce of the class of 2000, probably through no fault of its tentlike exterior, has got a new lease of life as a sometime concert hall and sporting stadium called the **02**.

The graceful **British Library** (Colin St John Wilson, 1998; p167), with its warm red-brick exterior, Asianesque touches and its wonderfully bright interior, met a very hostile reception. It has now become a popular and much loved London landmark.



*Spiral staircase inside the glass-clad City Hall*

## TODAY & TOMORROW

The millennium icons and more recent structures such as the glass 'egg' of [City Hall](#) (2002; p133) and the ever-popular [30 St Mary Axe](#) (2003; p116), or 'the Gherkin', have given the city the confidence to continue planning more heady buildings – especially of the tall variety.

By 2010 London will be home to Europe's tallest building: the needlelike [London Bridge Tower](#) (see boxed text, p83). And that will be accompanied by a host of other high-rises, from several new towers near the Lloyd's building in the 'City cluster' to further lofty constructions in the Docklands.

The current mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, favours 'clusters' of high-quality high-rises throughout the capital. The financial districts of the City and Canary Wharf, with the biggest concentration of existing skyscrapers, are obvious candidates for expansion though other neighbourhoods have been slated for redevelopment, including three distinct sections of Paddington to the west, Elephant & Castle to the south, Silvertown Quays at the Docklands in the east and the Greenwich Peninsula to the southeast.

London's most ambitious project of urban development this century is the 200-hectare [Olympic Park](#) (Map p64; [www.london2012.com](http://www.london2012.com)) in the Lea River Valley near Stratford, where most of the events of the 2012 Summer Olympiad will take place, but even in parts of London where you'd least expect it, there are innovative buildings to be seen – from the [Laban](#) (Herzog & de Meuron, 1999; p313) dance institute in Deptford and one-of-a-kind low-cost housing in [Silvertown](#) (Map p64; Evelyn Rd E16; Ash Sakula, 2004; Map p64; 60-66 Boxley St E16) – 2004 by Neal McLaughlin – and [Southwark](#) (Map p198; Wansley St SE17) – 2006 by De Rijke Marsh Morgan – to the award-winning Adjaye Associates 2006 [Idea Store](#) (Map p156; Whitechapel Rd E1), a library for the iPod generation, in Whitechapel. You'll make architectural discoveries at virtually every turn in this, the capital of Europe.



*(Continued from page 76)***ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS** Map pp72–3

☎ 7766 1100, for brass-rubbing 7930 9306, for concert box office 7839 8362; [www.stmartin-in-the-fields.org](http://www.stmartin-in-the-fields.org); Trafalgar Sq WC2; admission free, pay for materials for brass-rubbing; 🕒 8am–6.30pm, brass-rubbing centre 10am–6pm Mon–Sat, noon–6pm Sun; 🚶 Charing Cross

The 'royal parish church' is a delightful fusion of classical and baroque styles that was completed by James Gibbs (1682–1754) in 1726. A £36 million refurbishment project, completed in October 2007, sees a new entrance pavilion and foyer, several new areas at the rear of the church, including spaces offering social care (many homeless and destitute people rely on the church's help), and a lovely 'contemplative space' accessible to the public. These are in addition to the main hall, where Mass and musical concerts are held, and the famous crypt café.

The refurbishment dig-up unearthed a 1.5-tonne limestone Roman sarcophagus containing a human skeleton in the churchyard; the yard also holds the graves of 18th-century artists Reynolds and Hogarth.

**COVENT GARDEN PIAZZA** Map pp72–3

London's first planned square is now the exclusive reserve of tourists who flock here to shop in the quaint old arcades, be entertained by buskers, pay through the nose for refreshments at outdoor cafés and bars, and watch men and women pretend to be statues.

On its western flank is **St Paul's Church** (☎ 7836 5221; [www.actorschurch.org](http://www.actorschurch.org); Bedford St WC2; admission free; 🕒 8.30am–5.30pm Mon–Fri, 9am–1pm Sun). The Earl of Bedford, the man who had commissioned Inigo Jones to design the piazza, asked for the simplest possible church, basically no more than a barn. The architect responded by producing 'the handsomest barn in England'. It has long been regarded as the actors' church for its associations with the theatre, and contains memorials to the likes of Charlie Chaplin and Vivian Leigh. The first Punch and Judy show took place in front of it in 1662.

Check out the lovely courtyard in the back, perfect for a picnic.

**LONDON TRANSPORT MUSEUM**

Map pp72–3

☎ 7379 6344; [www.ltmuseum.co.uk](http://www.ltmuseum.co.uk); Covent Garden Piazza WC2; adult/child/concession £5.95/2.50/4.50; 🕒 10am–6pm Sat–Thu, 11am–6pm Fri; 🚶 Covent Garden; ♿

This museum has had a massive renovation, with a revitalised existing collection (which consisted of buses from the horse age until today, plus taxis, trains and all other modes of transport) and more new collections, more display space and a 120-seat lecture theatre for educational purposes. You can get your Mind the Gap boxer shorts and knickers at the museum shop.

**ADMIRALTY ARCH** Map pp72–3

🚶 Charing Cross

From Trafalgar Sq, the Mall passes under this grand Edwardian monument, a triple-arched stone entrance designed by Aston Webb in honour of Queen Victoria in 1910. The large central gate is opened only for royal processions and state visits.

**ROYAL OPERA HOUSE** Map pp72–3

☎ 7304 4000; [www.royaloperahouse.org](http://www.royaloperahouse.org); Bow St WC2; adult/concession £8/7; 🕒 tours 10.30am, 12.30pm & 2.30pm Mon–Sat; 🚶 Covent Garden; ♿

On the northeastern flank of the Covent Garden piazza is the gleaming, redeveloped – and practically new – Royal Opera House. Unique 'behind the scenes' tours take you through the venue, and let you experience the planning, excitement and hissy fits that take place before a performance at one of the world's busiest opera houses. As it's a working theatre, plans can change so you'd best call ahead. Of course, the best way to enjoy it is by seeing a performance (see p316).

**PHOTOGRAPHERS' GALLERY** Map pp72–3

☎ 7831 1772; [www.photonet.org.uk](http://www.photonet.org.uk); 5 & 8 Great Newport St WC2; admission free; 🕒 11am–6pm Mon–Sat, noon–6pm Sun; 🚶 Leicester Sq, Covent Garden or Charing Cross; ♿

This tiny two-part gallery may be small in size, but it's certainly got a big reputation in the photography world. It won't even be that small come 2008, since plans are underway to relocate to 16–18 Ramillies St in Soho with the new premises designed by O'Donnell + Tuomey Architects. The prestigious Deutsche Börse Photography Competition (annually 9 February to 8

April) is of major importance for contemporary photographers; past winners include Richard Billingham, Luc Delahaye, Andreas Gursky, Boris Mikhailov and Juergen Teller. The gallery is always exhibiting excellent and thought-provoking photographers. The next-door café and exhibition space is a great place to sit in peace during weekdays, and the shop is good for photography books and quirky gifts.

### LEICESTER SQUARE Map pp72–3

Enormous cinemas and nightclubs dominate this 'aesthetically challenged' square, which could really do with a makeover. It heaves with crowds on weekends and becomes the inebriates' playground at night. There was a serious pickpocketing problem here some years ago, until a heavy police presence improved matters, but still keep an eye on your bag/wallet, especially when the square is very crowded. Britain's glitzy film premiers take place here, as well as the majority of London Film Festival screenings. The major Odeon cinema boasts the biggest screen in the country, and definitely the highest ticket prices (a whopping £17!).

It's been on a major comedown since the 19th century, when the square was so fashionable that artists Joshua Reynolds and William Hogarth chose to hang their hats here. There's a small statue of Charlie Chaplin inside the little park, which is there mainly because of Leicester Sq's cinematic importance rather than any historical connection of the comedian to the area.

### ST GILES-IN-THE-FIELDS Map pp72–3

☎ 7240 2532; 60 St Giles High St; ☎ 9am–4pm Mon–Fri; ☞ Tottenham Court Rd

Built in what used to be countryside between the City and Westminster, St Giles church isn't much to look at but has an interesting history, while the area around St Giles High St had perhaps the worst reputation of any London quarter. The current structure is the third to stand on the site of an original chapel built in the 12th century to serve the leprosy hospital. Until 1547, when the hospital closed, prisoners on their way to be executed at Tyburn stopped at the church gate and sipped a large cup of soporific ale – their last refreshment – from St Giles's Bowl. From 1650 the prisoners were buried in the church grounds. It was also within the boundaries of St Giles that the Great Plague

of 1665 took hold (this is cheerful, isn't it?). In Victorian times it was London's worst slum, oft namechecked by Dickens. Today the forbidding streets and drug-users who hang out around the area make you feel like things haven't changed much.

An interesting relic in the church is the pulpit that was used for 40 years by John Wesley, the founder of Methodism.

## HOLBORN & THE STRAND

This area – compacted here for convenience's sake – comprises the rough square wedged between the City to the east, Covent Garden to the west, High Holborn to the north and the Thames to the south. Past glory and prominence are its key characteristics: The Strand, connecting Westminster with the City, used to be one of the most important streets in London and was lined with fabulous town houses built by local luminaries and aristocrats. This rich history is only vaguely evident today, but while much of this pocket is soulless and commercial, it is saved by some architectural gems, a few splendid galleries and the calm, green recesses of the charming Inns of Court, the cradle of English law. Behind the Strand runs the Victoria Embankment Gardens, a lovely place for a picnic, a stroll and splendid views across the Thames to the recharged South Bank.

Fleet St was the former home of British journalism. It was named after the River Fleet, which in the 17th and 18th centuries was a virtual sewer filled with entrails and other grisly bits from **Smithfield Market** (p115) upriver. Holborn was named after one of its tributaries. Both were filled in the late 18th century, with the River Fleet now running underground. The area was a notorious slum in Victorian times and although efforts were made to smarten it up in the early 20th century, it was probably no great loss when the Germans flattened much of it during WWII, after which the current business moved in.

### SOMERSET HOUSE Map pp72–3

☎ 7845 4600; www.somerset-house.org.uk; the Strand WC2; ☎ House 10am–6pm, Great Court 7.30am–11pm; ☞ Temple or Covent Garden

Passing beneath the arch towards this splendid Palladian masterpiece, it's hard to believe that the magnificent courtyard in front of you, with its 55 dancing fountains, was a car park for tax collectors up until a spectacular refurbishment in 2000. William

Chambers designed the house in 1775 for royal societies and it now contains three fabulous museums. The courtyard is transformed into a popular ice rink in winter and used for concerts in summer, as well as an improvised fountain-bathing area for toddlers. Behind the house, there's a sunny terrace and café overlooking the embankment.

Immediately to your right as you enter the grounds of Somerset House from the Strand, you'll find the **Courtauld Institute of Art** (☎ 7848 2526; www.courtauld.ac.uk; adult/concession/UK student £5/4/free, free 10am–2pm Mon; ☎ 10am–6pm), a superb gallery connected to the Courtauld Institute of Arts, Britain's foremost academy of art history. Have an uncrowded stroll between the walls of this wonderful place, and see work by Rubens, Botticelli, Cranach, Cézanne, Degas, Renoir, Manet, Monet, Matisse, Gauguin, Van Gogh and Toulouse-Lautrec, to mention but a few. There are **lunchtime talks** on specific works or themes from the collection at 1.15pm every Monday and Friday. A little café and the plush Admiral 2 restaurant provide sustenance.

The vaults beneath the South Terrace have some of the finest Thames views and are home to the **Gilbert Collection of Decorative Arts** (Map pp72–3; ☎ 7420 9400; www.gilbert-collection.org.uk; adult/concession/UK student £5/4/free; ☎ 10am–6pm) In 1996 Anglo-American businessman Arthur Gilbert bequeathed to Britain his Italian mosaics, European silver, gold snuffboxes and portrait miniatures. The part-dazzling, part-gaudy display has been described as the most generous gift ever made to the nation. There are one-hour **guided tours** each Saturday at 3pm (free with admission ticket).

Finally, the **Hermitage Rooms** (☎ 7845 4630; www.hermitagerooms.com; adult/concession/UK student £5/4/free; ☎ 10am–6pm) are a charming outpost of the State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg (which holds some three million pieces that make up one of the finest art collections in the world). Small but fascinating Russian-themed exhibits from the Hermitage collection revolve every six months. The galleries are modelled on those in the Imperial Winter Palace, and there's a live feed to St Petersburg and even a short video on the State Hermitage Museum itself.

You can get a pass for two collections (on the same day) for £8; see all three for £12.

### ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE Map pp72–3

☎ 7936 6000; 460 The Strand; admission free; ☎ 9am–4.30pm Mon–Fri; ☞ Temple

Where the Strand joins Fleet St, you'll see the entrance to this gargantuan melange of Gothic spires, pinnacles and burnished Portland stone, designed by aspiring cathedral builder GE Street in 1874. (It took so much out of the architect that he died of a stroke shortly before its completion.) Inside the Great Hall there's an exhibition of legal costumes, as well as a list of cases to be heard in court that day; if you're interested in 'the criminal mind' and decide to watch, leave your camera behind and expect airportlike security.

### THE STRAND Map pp72–3

From the time it was built, at the end of the 12th century, the Strand (from the Old English and German word for beach) ran by the Thames. Its grandiose stone houses, built by the nobles, counted as some of the most prestigious places to live, sitting as they did on a street that connected the City and Westminster, the two centres of power; indeed, its appeal lasted for seven centuries, with the 19th-century prime minister Benjamin Disraeli pronouncing it 'the finest street in Europe'. It had the Savoy, the now-no-more Cecil Hotel, Simpson's, King's College and Somerset House.

But modern times haven't treated the Strand with the same sort of respect and awe: the street is now overrun by offices, cheap restaurants and odd souvenir shops, and despite the fact that the Savoy (which still does very glamorous cocktails), the building formerly Simpson's and the wonderful Somerset House still grace the street, it is hardly seen as the fine drag it once was. Still, there are some lovely things to see here, such as **Twining's** at No 216, a teashop opened by Thomas Twining in 1706 and believed to be the oldest company in the capital still trading on the same site and owned by the same family. It's also the centre of London philatelic life, with stamp- and coin-collector's mecca **Stanley Gibbons** at No 339.

### SIR JOHN SOANE'S MUSEUM Map pp72–3

☎ 7405 2107; www.soane.org; 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields WC2; admission free, suggested donation £3; ☎ 10am–5pm Tue–Sat, plus 6–9pm 1st Tue of month; ☞ Holborn

This little museum is one of the most atmospheric and fascinating sights in

## INNS OF COURT

For all of the West End's urban mania, the area hides some unexpected pockets of Zenlike calm. Clustered around Holborn and Fleet St are the Inns of Court, with quiet alleys, open spaces and a serene atmosphere. All London barristers work from within one of the four inns, and a roll call of former members ranges from Oliver Cromwell and Charles Dickens to Mahatma Gandhi to Margaret Thatcher. It would take a lifetime working here to grasp the intricacies of the protocols of the inns – they're similar to the Freemasons, and both are 13th-century creations with centuries of tradition – and it's best to just soak in the dreamy atmosphere and relax.

**Lincoln's Inn** (Map pp72–3; ☎ 7405 1393; Lincoln's Inn Fields WC2; 📄 grounds 9am–6pm Mon–Fri, chapel 12.30–2.30pm Mon–Fri; 🚶 Holborn) Lincoln's Inn is the most attractive of the four inns and has a chapel, pleasant square and picturesque gardens that invite a stroll, especially early or late in the day when the legal eagles aren't flapping about. The court itself, although closed to the public, is visible through the gates and is relatively intact, with original 15th-century buildings, including the Tudor Lincoln's Inn Gatehouse on Chancery Lane. Inigo Jones helped plan the well-preserved chapel which was built in 1623.

**Gray's Inn** (Map pp72–3; ☎ 7458 7800; Gray's Inn Rd WC1; 📄 grounds 10am–4pm Mon–Fri, chapel 10am–6pm Mon–Fri; 🚶 Holborn/Chancery Lane) This inn – destroyed during WWII, rebuilt and expanded – is less interesting than Lincoln's Inn although the peaceful gardens are still something of a treat. The walls of the original hall absorbed the first ever performance of Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*.

**Inner Temple** (Map pp72–3; ☎ 7353 8559; King's Bench Walk EC4; 🚶 Temple or Blackfriars) Duck under the archway next to Prince Henry's Room and you'll find yourself in the Inner Temple, a sprawling complex of some of the finest buildings on the river. The church (see p113) was originally planned and built by the secretive Knights Templar between 1161 and 1185. At the weekend you'll usually have to enter from the Victoria Embankment.

**Staple Inn** (Map pp72–3; Holborn; 🚶 Chancery Lane) The 16th-century shop-front façade is the main interest at Staple Inn (1589), the last of eight Inns of Chancery whose functions were superseded by the Inns of Court in the 18th century. The buildings, mostly postwar reconstructions, are now occupied by the Institute of Actuaries and aren't actually open to the public, although nobody seems to mind a discreet and considerate look around. On the same side of Holborn but closer to Fetter Lane stood Barnard's Inn, redeveloped in 1991. Pip lived here with Herbert Pocket in Dickens' *Great Expectations*.

London. The building is the beautiful, bewitching home of architect Sir John Soane (1753–1837), which he left brimming with surprising effects and curiosities, and the museum represents his exquisite and eccentric taste.

Soane was a country bricklayer's son, most famous for designing the Bank of England. In his work and life, he drew on ideas picked up while on an 18th-century grand tour of Italy. He married a rich woman and used the wealth to build this house and the one next door, which has been bought by the museum and is planned to open as an exhibition and education space in late 2007.

The heritage-listed house is largely as it was when Sir John was carted out in a box, and is itself a main part of the attraction. It has a glass dome which brings light right down to the basement, a lantern room filled with statuary, rooms within rooms, and a picture gallery where paintings are stowed behind each other on folding wooden panes. You can see Soane's choice paintings, including Canalettos and

Turners, drawings by Christopher Wren and Robert Adam, and the original *Rake's Progress*, William Hogarth's set of cartoon caricatures of late-18th-century London lowlife. You'll have to ask a guard to open the panes so that you can view all the paintings. Among Soane's more unusual acquisitions are an Egyptian hieroglyphic sarcophagus, an imitation monk's parlour, and slave's chains.

Note that groups of seven or more need to book ahead and are not admitted on Saturday, which is by far the museum's busiest day. Evenings of the first Tuesday of each month are a choice time to visit as the house is lit by candles and the atmosphere is even more magical.

**HUNTERIAN MUSEUM** Map pp72–3

☎ 7869 6560; www.rcseng.ac.uk/museums; Royal College of Surgeons, 35–43 Lincoln's Inn Fields WC2; admission free; 📄 10am–5pm Tue–Sat; 🚶 Holborn

The collection of anatomical specimens of pioneering surgeon John Hunter (1728–93) inspired this fascinating, slightly morbid,

little-known, yet fantastic London museum. Among the more bizarre items on display are the skeleton of a 2.3m giant, half of mathematician Charles Babbage's brain, and, hilariously, Winston Churchill's dentures. Thanks to a massive refurbishment some years back, the atmosphere is less gory and allows decent viewing of things such as animal digestive systems, forensically documented in formaldehyde, and wonders such as the 'hearing organ' of a blue whale. Upstairs includes a display on plastic surgery techniques, which will impress and disgust in equal measure. There's a free guided tour every Wednesday at 1pm.

**ST CLEMENT DANES** Map pp72–3

☎ 7242 8282; The Strand WC2; 📄 8.30am–4.30pm Mon–Fri, 9am–3.30pm Sat, 9am–12.30pm Sun; 🚶 Temple

An 18th-century English nursery rhyme that incorporates the names of London churches goes: 'Oranges and lemons, say the bells of St Clements', with the soothing final lines: 'Here comes a chopper to chop off your head, Chop chop chop chop the last man's dead!' Isn't that nice? Well, even though the bells of this church chime that nursery tune every day at 9am, noon and 3pm, this *isn't* the St Clements referred to in the first line the verse – that's St Clements Eastcheap, in the City. But we all know that historical fact needn't get in the way of a good story.

Sir Christopher Wren designed the original building in 1682 but only the walls and a steeple added by James Gibbs in 1719 survived the Luftwaffe, and the church was rebuilt after the war as a memorial to Allied airmen. Today it is the chapel of the Royal Air Force (RAF), and there are some 800 slate badges of different squadrons set into the pavement of the nave. The statue in front of the church quietly and contentiously commemorates the RAF's Sir Arthur 'Bomber' Harris, who led the bombing raids that obliterated Dresden and killed some 10,000 civilians during WWII.

## BLOOMSBURY

Immediately north of Covent Garden – though worlds away in look and atmosphere – is Bloomsbury, a leafy quarter and the academic and intellectual heart of London. Here you will find the University of London and its

many faculties and campuses scattered along the streets. And shaded by many trees and surrounded by Georgian and Victorian town houses is what must be one of the world's best museums: the British Museum. The beautiful squares were once colonised by the 'Bloomsbury Group', a group of artists and writers which included Virginia Woolf and EM Forster, and the stories of their many intricate love affairs are as fascinating as their books. Charles Dickens, Charles Darwin, William Butler Yeats and George Bernard Shaw also lived here or hereabouts, as attested by the many blue plaques dotted around. Today Bloomsbury continues to teem with students, bookshops and cafés, while remaining relatively uncommercial. At its heart, London's largest green square, Russell Sq, is looking better than ever with an excellent refit and tidy up a few years ago. It remains a wonderful place for lunch and people-watching. Nearby is **Brunswick Centre** (www.brunswick.co.uk), a wonderful 1960s complex that consists of apartments, restaurants, shops and a cinema. A £24 million project saw it turned from a dreary, stern space to a lovely, cream-coloured airy square in 2006, and the centre is now packed with people seven days a week. The original architect, Partick Hodginson, worked on the renovations and claimed that the centre now looks like what he'd planned in the '60s, but that the design was stunted by the local council.

**BRITISH MUSEUM** Map pp92–3

☎ 7323 8000, tours 7323 8181; www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk; Great Russell St WC1; admission free, £3 donation suggested; 📄 galleries 10am–5.30pm Sat–Wed, to 8.30pm Thu & Fri, Great Court 9am–6pm Sun–Wed, to 11pm Thu–Sat; 🚶 Tottenham Court Rd or Russell Sq; 🚶

One of London's most visited attractions, this museum draws an average of five million punters each year through its marvelous porticoed main gate on Great Russell St (a few go through the quieter Montague Pl entrance). One of the world's oldest and finest museums, the British Museum started in 1749 in the form of royal physician Hans Sloane's 'cabinet of curiosities' – which he later bequeathed to the country – and carried on expanding its collection (which now numbers some seven million items) through judicious acquisition and the controversial plundering of empire. It's an exhaustive and exhilarating stampede through world cultures, with galleries



## BRITISH MUSEUM HIGHLIGHTS

The first and most impressive thing you'll see is the museum's **Great Court**, covered with a spectacular glass-and-steel roof designed by Norman Foster in 2000; it is the largest covered public square in Europe. In its centre is the world-famous **Reading Room**, formerly the British Library, which has been frequented by all the big brains of history: George Bernard Shaw, Mahatma Gandhi, Oscar Wilde, William Butler Yeats, Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy.

The northern end of the courtyard's lower level houses the terrific new **Sainsbury African Galleries**, a romp through the art and cultures of historic and contemporary African societies.

Check out the 1820 **King's Library**, the most stunning neoclassical space in London, which hosts a permanent exhibition 'Enlightenment: Discovering the World in the 18th Century'.

One of the museum's major stars is the **Rosetta Stone** (room 4), discovered in 1799. It is written in two forms of ancient Egyptian and Greek and was the key to deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphics. Another major star is the **Parthenon Sculptures** (aka Parthenon Marbles; room 18). The marbles once adorned the walls of the Parthenon on the Acropolis in Athens, and are thought to show the great procession to the temple that took place during the Panathenaic Festival, on the birthday of Athena, one of the grandest events in the Greek world. They are better known as the Elgin Marbles (after Lord Elgin, the British ambassador who shipped them to England in 1806), though this name is bound in controversy due to the British Museum's dispute with the Greek government, who want to see the pieces back in Athens. The battle continues, but you can read the museum's side of the story on a leaflet entitled 'Why are the Parthenon Sculptures always in the news?'

Prepare for a bit of gore in the Mexican Gallery (room 27), at the foot of the eastern staircase. The room features the 15th-century Aztec **Mosaic Mask of Tezcatlipoca (The Skull of the Smoking Mirror)**, which has a turquoise mosaic laid over a human skull.

On a calmer note, rooms 33 and 34 host the Asian collections with the wonderful **Amaravati Sculptures** (room 33a), Indian goddesses, dancing Shivas and serene cross-legged Buddhas in copper and stone.

The story goes that bandits tried to steal the impressive **Oxus Treasure** (room 52), but the British rescued the collection of 7th- to 4th-century BC pieces of Persian gold which originated in the ancient Persian capital of Persepolis, and brought it to the museum.

The **Lindow Man** (room 50) is a 1st-century unfortunate who appears to have been smacked on the head with an axe and then garrotted. His remains were preserved in a peat bog until 1984 when a peat-cutting machine sliced him in half.

that lets you take a virtual tour of the museum, plan your own circuit or get information on specific exhibits.

### DICKENS HOUSE MUSEUM Map pp92-3

📍 7405 2127; [www.dickensmuseum.com](http://www.dickensmuseum.com); 48 Doughty St WC1; adults/under 16yr/concession £5/3/4; 🕒 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, 11am-5pm Sun; 🚶 Russell Sq

The great Victorian novelist lived a nomadic life in the big city, moving around London so prolifically that he left behind him an unrivalled trail of blue plaques. This handsome four-storey house is his sole surviving residence before he upped and moved to Kent. Not that he stayed here for very long – he lasted a mere two-and-a-half years (1837-39) – but this is where his work really flourished: he dashed off *The Pickwick Papers*, *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Oliver Twist* despite worry over debts, deaths and his ever-growing family. The house was saved from demolition and the fasci-

nating museum opened in 1925, showcasing the family drawing room (restored to its original condition) and 10 rooms chock-a-block with memorabilia. In the dressing room you can see texts Dickens had prepared for his reading tours, which include funny notes-to-self such as 'slapping the desk'. The said slapped desk is on display, a velvet-topped bureau purpose-made for his public readings.

### NEW LONDON ARCHITECTURE

Map pp92-3

📍 7636 4044; [www.newlondonarchitecture.org](http://www.newlondonarchitecture.org); Building Centre, 26 Store St WC1; admission free; 🕒 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat, closed Sun; 🚶 Goodge St

An excellent way to see which way London's architectural development is going, this is a frequently changing exhibition that will capture the imagination and interest of anyone who loves London. A large model of the capital highlights the new building areas, showing the extent of the 2012 Olympics plans and various neighbourhood regeneration programmes. Photographs and details of individual buildings make it easy to locate each new structure, so that you can either go and see it in real life or spot it as you go along.

### PERCIVAL DAVID FOUNDATION OF CHINESE ART Map pp92-3

📍 7387 3909; [www.pdfmuseum.org.uk](http://www.pdfmuseum.org.uk); 53 Gordon Sq WC1; admission free; 🕒 10am-12.30pm & 1.30-5pm Mon-Fri; 🚶 Russell Sq

Although it feels like a fusty old institution, the friendly staff, lack of crowds and quirky collection here make for a rewarding visit. With some 1700 pieces, it's the largest collection of Chinese ceramics from the 10th to 18th centuries outside China. Sir Percival David donated it to the University of London in 1950 on the condition that every single piece be displayed at all times. Among the highlights are the David Vases (1351), the earliest dated and inscribed blue-and-white Chinese porcelain, named after Sir Percival himself.

### PETRIE MUSEUM OF EGYPTIAN ARCHAEOLOGY Map pp92-3

📍 7679 2884; [www.petrie.ucl.ac.uk](http://www.petrie.ucl.ac.uk); University College London (UCL), Malet PI WC1; admission free; 🕒 1-5pm Tue-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat; 🚶 Goodge St

If you've got any interest in things Egyptian, you'll love this quiet and oft-overlooked museum, where some 80,000 objects make up one of the most impressive collections of Egyptian and Sudanese archaeology in the world. Behind glass – and amid an atmosphere of academia – are exhibits ranging from fragments of pottery to the world's oldest dress (2800 BC). The museum is named after Professor William Flinders Petrie (1853-1942), who uncovered many of the exhibits during his excavations and donated the collection to the university in 1933. The entrance is through the University's Science Library.

### POLLOCK'S TOY MUSEUM Map pp92-3

📍 7639 3452; [www.pollockstoymuseum.com](http://www.pollockstoymuseum.com); 1 Scala St W1; adult/child £3/1.50; 🕒 10am-5pm Mon-Sat; 🚶 Goodge St

Aimed at both kids and adults, this museum is simultaneously creepy and mesmerising. You walk in through the museum shop laden with excellent wooden toys and various games, and start your exploration by climbing up a rickety narrow staircase where displays begin with framed dolls from Latin America, Africa, India and Europe; upstairs is the museum's collection of toy theatres, many made by Benjamin Pollock himself, the leading Victorian manufacturer of the popular sets. Up another set of stairs and you see tin toys and weird-looking dolls in cotton nighties, and as you carry on the higgledy-piggledy trail of creaking stairs and floorboards, the dolls follow you with their glazed eyes. After you've climbed three flights of stairs, you'll descend four and, as if by magic, be led back to the shop.

### THE SQUARES OF BLOOMSBURY

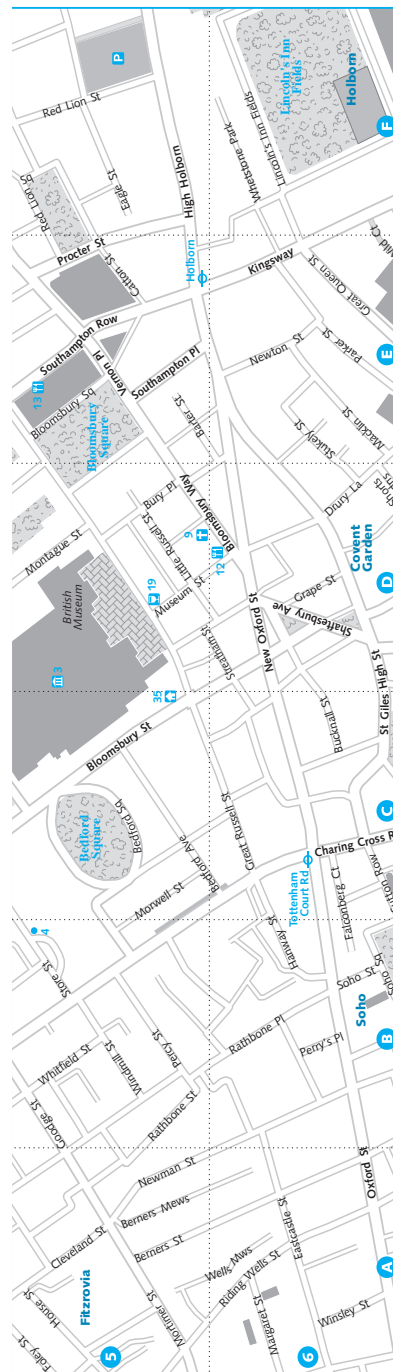
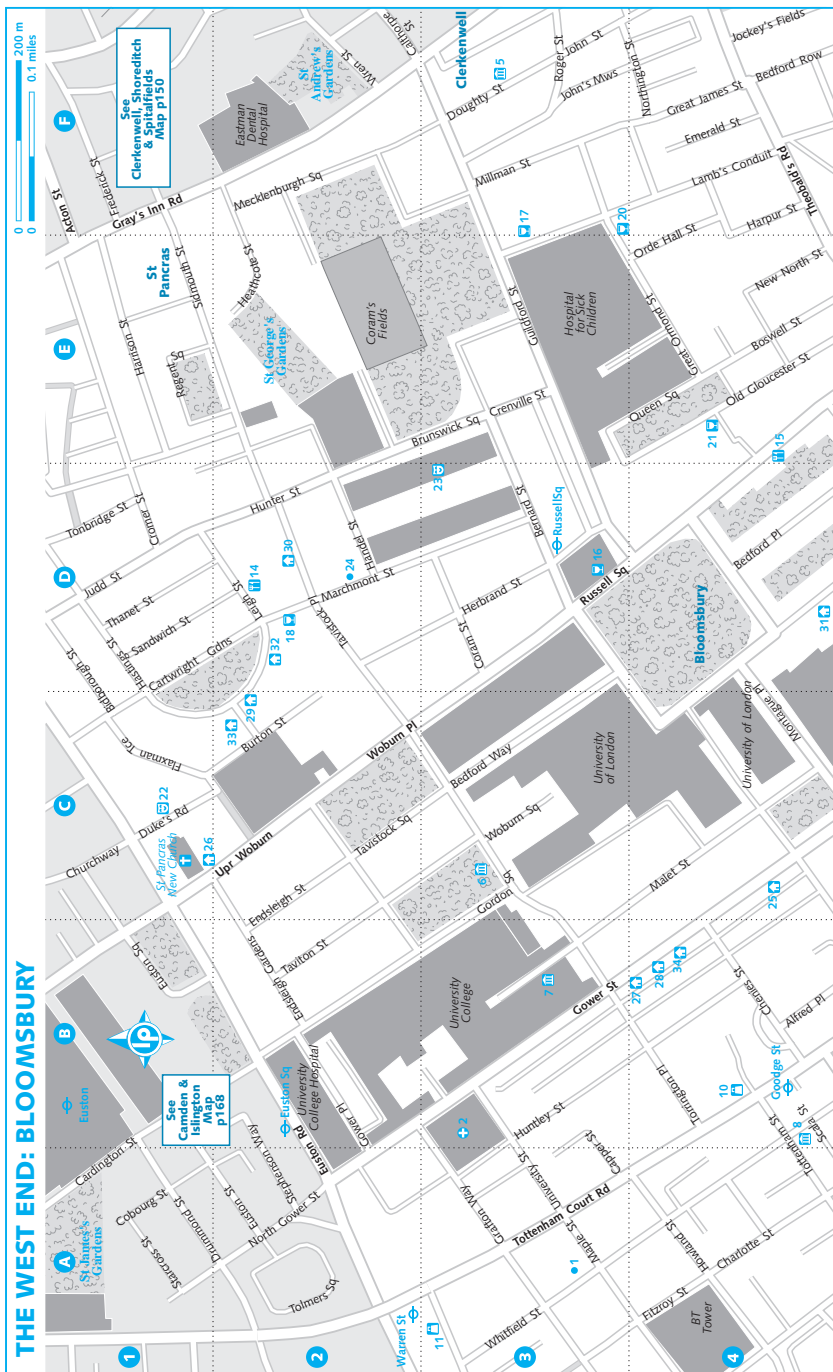
Map pp92-3

At the very heart of Bloomsbury is **Russell Square**. Originally laid out in 1800 by Humphrey Repton, it was dark and bushy until the striking face-lift that pruned the trees, tidied up the plants and gave it a 10m-tall fountain.

The centre of literary Bloomsbury was **Gordon Square** where, at various times, Bertrand Russell lived at No 57, Lytton Strachey at No 51 and Vanessa and Clive Bell, Maynard Keynes and the Woolf family at No 46. Strachey, Dora Carrington and Lydia Lopokova (the future wife of Maynard Keynes) all took



## THE WEST END: BLOOMSBURY



turns living at No 41. Not all the buildings, many of which now belong to the university, are marked with blue plaques.

Lovely Bedford Square, the only completely Georgian square still surviving in Bloomsbury, was home to many London publishing houses until the 1990s, when they were swallowed up by multinational conglomerates and relocated. They included Jonathan Cape, Chatto and the Bodley Head (set up by Woolf and her husband Leonard), and were largely responsible for perpetuating the legend of the Bloomsbury Group by churning out seemingly endless collections of associated letters, memoirs and biographies.

**ST GEORGE'S BLOOMSBURY** Map pp92-3  
 ☎ 7405 3044; Bloomsbury Way WC1; 🕒 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10.30am-12.30pm Sun; 🚗 Holborn or Tottenham Court Rd

Superbly restored in 2005, this Nicholas Hawksmoor church (1731) is distinguished by its classical portico of Corinthian capitals and a steeple that was inspired by the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus. It is topped with a statue of George I in Roman dress.

## FITZROVIA

After the war, Fitzrovia – to the west of Bloomsbury – was a forerunner to Soho as a bohemian enclave populated by struggling artists and writers who frequented its many pubs, particularly the Fitzroy Tavern. It's home to hundreds of media offices, with tons of bars and restaurants along Charlotte St heaving after office hours. It's a bit of a tourist blind spot due to the fact that its one main sight, the 1960s BT Tower (once the highest structure in London), closed years ago as a result of terrorist threats.

## ST JAMES'S

St James's is where the aristocrats are entertained in exclusive gentlemen's clubs (the Army and Navy sort as opposed to lapdancing), and whose refined tastes are catered to in the many galleries, historic shops and elegant buildings. Despite much commercial development, its matter-of-fact elitism remains intact, and as you enter the seat of royal London along the grand, processional Mall that sweeps alongside the gorgeous St James's Park, up to Buckingham Palace and the Queen's driveway, you'll see why.

## THE WEST END: BLOOMSBURY

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The district took shape when Charles II moved his court to St James's Palace in the 17th century, and the toffs followed. The great Georgian squares – Berkeley, Hanover and Grosvenor – were built in the next century, by which time St James's was largely filled. By 1900 it was the most fashionable part of London, teeming with theatres, restaurants and boutiques. Savile Row is still where gentlemen go for tailoring, Bond Sts (old and new) are where ladies go for jewellery, and Cork St is where they go together for expensive art. Some residents couldn't keep up with the Joneses of St James's and moved out, to be replaced by businesses, offices and embassies. Grosvenor Sq is dominated by the US embassy.

### BUCKINGHAM PALACE Map pp96–7

☎ 7766 7300, for disabled access 7766 7324; [www.royalcollection.org.uk](http://www.royalcollection.org.uk); Buckingham Palace Rd SW1; adult/child/concession/family £15/8.50/13.50/38.50; ☎ 9.30am–4.30pm 28 Jul–25 Sep, timed ticket with admission every 15min; ☉ St James's Park, Victoria or Green Park; ♿

Built in 1705 as Buckingham House for the duke of the same name, this palace has provided the royal family's London lodgings since 1837, when St James's Palace was judged too old-fashioned and insufficiently impressive. It is dominated by the 25m-high **Queen Victoria Memorial** at the end of the Mall. Tickets for the palace are on sale from a kiosk in Green Park.

After a series of crises and embarrassing revelations in the early 1990s, the royal spin doctors cranked things up a gear to try and rally public support behind the royals once again, and it was decided to swing open the

royal doors of Buck House to the public for the first time. Well, to 19 of the 661 rooms, at least. And only during August and September, when HRH is holidaying in Scotland. And for a veritable king's ransom, but still, we mustn't quibble – no price is too great for an opportunity to see the Windsors' Polaroids plastered all over the fridge door.

The 'working rooms' are stripped down each summer for the arrival of the commoners, and the usual carpet is replaced with industrial-strength rugs, so the rooms don't look all that lavish. The tour starts in the Guard Room, too small for the Ceremonial Guard who are deployed in adjoining quarters; allows a peek inside the State Dining Room (all red damask and Regency furnishings); then moves on to the Blue Drawing Room, with a gorgeous fluted ceiling by John Nash; to the White Drawing Room, where foreign ambassadors are received; and to the Ballroom, where official receptions and state banquets are held. The Throne Room is pretty hilarious with kitschy his-and-hers pink chairs initialled 'ER' and 'P', sitting smugly under what looks like a theatre arch.

The most interesting part of the tour (for all but the royal sycophants) is the 76.5m-long Picture Gallery, featuring splendid works from the likes of Van Dyck, Rembrandt, Canaletto, Poussin, Canova and Vermeer, although the likes of these and much more are yours for free at the National Gallery. Wandering the gardens is another highlight here – it's bound to give you a real royal feeling.

Book in advance for disabled access.

## CHANGING OF THE GUARD

☎ 7766 7300; Buckingham Palace, Buckingham Palace Rd SW1; ☎ 11.30am daily Apr–Jul & alternate days, weather permitting Aug–Mar; ☉ St James's Park or Victoria

This is a London 'must see' – if you actually get to see anything from the crowds. The old guard (Foot Guards of the Household Regiment) comes off duty to be replaced by the new guard on the forecourt of Buckingham Palace, and tourists get to gape – sometimes from behind as many as 10 people – at the bright red uniforms and bearskin hats of shouting and marching soldiers for just over half an hour. The official name for the ceremony is Guard Mounting, which, we dare say, sounds more interesting.

### QUEEN'S GALLERY Map pp96–7

☎ 7766 7300; [www.the-royal-collection.com](http://www.the-royal-collection.com); southern wing, Buckingham Palace, Buckingham Palace Rd SW1; adult/child/concession £8/4/7; ☎ 10am–5.30pm; ☉ St James's Park or Victoria; ♿ Paintings, sculpture, ceramics, furniture and jewellery are among the items displayed in the collection of art amassed by the royals over 500 years. The splendid gallery was originally designed by John Nash as a conservatory. It was converted into a chapel for Victoria in 1843, destroyed in a 1940 air raid and reopened as a gallery in 1962. A £20 million renovation for the Golden Jubilee in 2002 enlarged the entrance and added a Greek Doric portico, a multimedia centre and three times as much display space. Entrance to the gallery is through Buckingham Gate.

### ROYAL MEWS Map pp96–7

☎ 7766 7302; [www.the-royal-collection.com](http://www.the-royal-collection.com); Buckingham Palace Rd SW1; adult/child/concession £7/4.50/6; ☎ 11am–4pm Mar–Jul, 10am–5pm Aug & Sep; ☉ Victoria; ♿ South of the palace, the Royal Mews started life as a falconry but is now a working stable looking after the royals' immaculately groomed horses, along with the opulent vehicles the monarchy uses for getting from A to B. Highlights include the stunning gold coach of 1762, which has been used for every coronation since that of George III, and the Glass Coach of 1910, used for royal weddings. The Mews is closed in June during the four-day racing carnival of Royal Ascot, when the

royal heads try to win some money on the horses.

### ST JAMES'S PARK Map pp96–7

☎ 7930 1793; The Mall SW1; ☎ 5am–dusk; ☉ St James's Park

This is one of the smallest but most gorgeous of London's parks. It has brilliant views of the London Eye, Westminster, St James's Palace, Carlton Terrace and Horse Guards Parade, and the view of Buckingham Palace from the footbridge spanning St James's Park Lake is the best you'll find (get those cameras out). The central lake is full of different types of ducks, geese, swans and general fowl, and its southern side's rocks serve as a rest stop for pelicans (fed at 3pm daily). Some of the technical-our flowerbeds were modelled on John Nash's original 'floriferous' beds of mixed shrubs, flowers and trees, and old-age squirrel feeders congregate under the trees daily, with bags of nuts and bread. Spring and summer days see Londoners and tourists alike sunbathing, picnicking and generally enjoying the sunshine, though sometimes in annoyingly large numbers. Nearby the popular café and restaurant **Inn the Park** (p245) stands the **National Police Memorial**, one column of marble and another of glass. Conceived by film director Michael (*Death Wish*) Winner and designed by architect Norman Foster and artist Per Arnoldi, it pays tribute to 1600 'bobbies' who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

### ST JAMES'S PALACE Map pp96–7

Cleveland Row SW1; closed to the public; ☉ Green Park

The striking Tudor gatehouse of St James's Palace, the only surviving part of a building initiated by the palace-mad Henry VIII in 1530, is best approached from St James's St to the north of the park. This was the official residence of kings and queens for more than three centuries and foreign ambassadors are still formally accredited to the Court of St James, although the tea and biscuits are actually served at Buckingham Palace. Princess Diana, who hated this place, lived here up until her divorce from Charles in 1996, when she moved to Kensington Palace. Prince Charles and his sons stayed on at St James's until 2004, before decamping next door to Clarence House, leaving St James's Palace to a brace of





minor royals including Charles's famously tetchy sister, Princess Anne. Don't get too close in case she sends out a footman to tell you to naff off.

### CLARENCE HOUSE Map pp96-7

☎ 7766 7303, for disabled access 7766 7324; Cleve-land Row SW1; guided tour adult/concession £7/4; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Aug-Oct; ♿ Green Park; ♿

After his beloved granny the Queen Mum died in 2002, Prince Charles got the tradesmen into her former home of Clarence House and spent £4.6 million of taxpayers' money reshaping the house to his own design. The 'royal residences are held in trust for future generations', but the current generation has to pay to have a look at five official rooms when the Prince, his sons and Camilla are away on their summer hols. The highlight is the former Queen Mum's small art collection, including one painting by playwright Noël Coward and others by WS Sickert and Sir James Gunn. Admission is by tour only, which must be booked (far in advance); book also for disabled access. The house was originally designed by John Nash in the early 19th century, but – as Prince Charles wasn't the first royal to call in the redecorators – has been modified much since.

### SPENCER HOUSE Map pp96-7

☎ 7499 8620; [www.spencerhouse.co.uk](http://www.spencerhouse.co.uk); 27 St James's Pl SW1; adult/concession £9/7; ☎ 10.30am-5.45pm Sun, last entry 4.45pm, closed Jan & Aug; ♿ Green Park; ♿

Just outside the park, Spencer House was built for the first Earl Spencer, an ancestor of Princess Diana, in the Palladian style between 1756 and 1766. The Spencers moved out in 1927 and their grand family home was used as an office, until Lord Rothschild stepped in and returned it to its former glory in 1987 with an £18 million restoration. Visits to the eight lavishly furnished rooms of the house are by guided tour only.

The gardens, returned to their 18th-century design, are open only between 2pm and 5pm on a couple of Sundays in summer. Tickets cost £3.50 or £11 for combined house and garden entry.

### QUEEN'S CHAPEL Map pp96-7

Marlborough Rd SW1; ♿ only for Sunday services at 8.30am & 11.15am Apr-Jul; ♿ St James's Park

The royal sights generally don't leave people breathless, but this one may touch your heartstrings: it's where all the contemporary royals from Princess Diana to the Queen Mother have lain in their coffins in the run-up to their funerals. The church was originally built by Inigo Jones in the Palladian style and was the first post-Reformation church in England built for Roman Catholic worship. It was once part of St James's Palace but was separated after a fire. The simple interior has exquisite 17th-century fittings and is atmospherically illuminated by light streaming in through the large windows above the altar.

### GREEN PARK Map pp96-7

Piccadilly W1; ♿ 5am-dusk; ♿ Green Park Less manicured than the adjoining St James's, this park has wonderful huge oaks and hilly meadows, and it's never as crowded as St James's. It was once a duelling ground and served as a vegetable garden during WWII.

### GUARDS MUSEUM Map pp96-7

☎ 7976 0850; [www.theguardsmuseum.com](http://www.theguardsmuseum.com); Wellington Barracks, Birdcage Walk SW1; adult/child/concession £3/free/2; ♿ 10am-4pm Feb-Dec, last entry 3.30pm; ♿ St James's Park; ♿ If you found the crowds at the Changing of the Guards tiresome and didn't see a thing, get here for 10.50am on any day from April to August to see the guards entering formation outside the museum, for their march up to Buckingham Palace. In addition, check out the history of the five regiments of foot guards and their role in military campaigns from Waterloo on, in this little museum established in the 17th century during the reign of Charles II. There are uniforms, oil paintings, medals, curios and memorabilia that belonged to the soldiers. Perhaps the biggest draw here is the huge collection of toy soldiers in the shop.

### INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS Map pp96-7

ICA; ☎ 7930 3647; [www.ica.org.uk](http://www.ica.org.uk); The Mall SW1; day membership adult/concession Mon-Fri £2/1.50, Sat, Sun & during exhibitions £3/2; ♿ noon-10.30pm Mon, to 2am Tue-Sat, to 11pm Sun; ♿ Charing Cross or Piccadilly Circus; ♿ Housed in a traditional building along the Mall, the ICA (as it's locally known) is as untraditional as you can possibly get. This

was where Picasso and Henry Moore had their first UK shows, and ever since then the institute has sat comfortably on the cutting and controversial edge of the British arts world, with an excellent range of experimental/progressive/radical/obscure films, music and club nights, photography, art, theatre, lectures, multimedia works and book readings. Sure, you may see an exhibition here and come out none the wiser – we often do – and the place has been known to award a £26,000 prestigious sculpture prize for what was essentially a wonky shed, but the institute's programme is generally fantastic. Plus there's the licensed ICA Bar & Restaurant (♿ to 2am most nights). The complex also includes an excellent bookshop, gallery, cinema and theatre.

The Duke of York Column, up the steps beside the ICA into Waterloo Pl, commemorates a son of George III. It was erected in 1834, but never quite caught the public imagination like Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Sq, although it's only 6m shorter.

## MAYFAIR

London has many well-heeled neighbourhoods but none is so frightfully Jimmy Chooed up as this. Just wander up Old Bond St and you'll understand that this is a path walked by those with blue blood, old money and designer shoes. It's fascinating to witness the unabated flow of wealth and power stretching between Mayfair (the highest step on London's property ladder) and Chelsea.

Mayfair is west of Regent St and is where high society gives high-fives to one another; defining features are silver spoons and old-fashioned razzamatazz. But, in its southwestern corner, nudging Hyde Park, Shepherd Market is near the site of a rowdy and debauched fair that gave the area its name. The fair was banned in 1730, and today 'the old village centre of Mayfair' is a tiny enclave of pubs and bistros.

### HANDEL HOUSE MUSEUM Map p100

☎ 7495 1685; [www.handelhouse.org](http://www.handelhouse.org); 25 Brook St W1; adult/child/concession £5/2/4.50; ♿ 10am-6pm Tue-Sat, to 8pm Thu, noon-6pm Sun; ♿ Bond St; ♿

George Frederick Handel lived in this 18th-century Mayfair building for 36 years until his death in 1759, and the house opened as a museum in late 2001. It has been restored to how it would have looked when the

great German-born composer was in residence, complete with artworks borrowed from several museums. Exhibits include early editions of Handel's operas and oratorios, although being in the hallowed space where he composed and first rehearsed the likes of *Water Music*, *Messiah*, *Zadok the Priest* and *Fireworks Music* is ample attraction for any enthusiast. Entrance to the museum is on Lancashire Ct.

Funnily enough, the house at No 23 (now part of the museum) was home to a musician as different from Handel as could be imagined: American guitarist Jimi Hendrix (1942-69) lived there from 1968 until his death.

## WESTMINSTER

### WESTMINSTER ABBEY Map pp96-7

☎ 7222 5152; [www.westminster-abbey.org](http://www.westminster-abbey.org); Dean's Yard SW1; adult/child/concession £10/free/6; ♿ 9.30am-3.45pm Mon-Fri, to 6pm Wed, to 1.45pm Sat, last entry 1hr before closing; ♿ Westminster; ♿

Westminster Abbey is such an important commemoration site for both the British royalty and the nation's political and artistic idols, it's difficult to overstress its symbolic value or imagine its equivalent anywhere else in the world. With the exception of Edward V and Edward VIII, every sovereign has been crowned here since William the Conqueror in 1066, and most of the monarchs from Henry III (died 1272) to George II (died 1760) were also buried here.

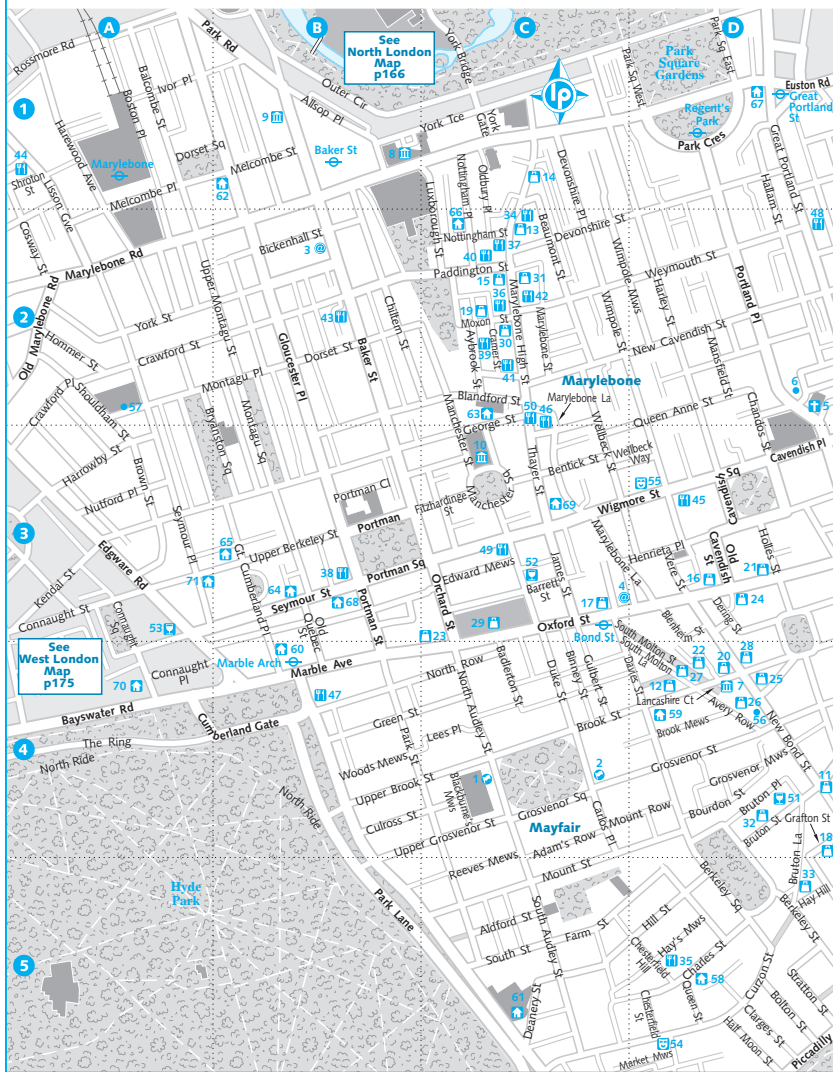
There is an extraordinary amount to see here but, unless you enjoy feeling like part of a herd, come very early or very late.

The abbey is a magnificent sight. Though a mixture of architectural styles, it is considered the finest example of Early English Gothic (1180-1280). The original church was built in the 11th century by King (later St) Edward the Confessor, who is buried in the chapel behind the main altar. Henry III (r 1216-72) began work on the new building but didn't complete it; the French Gothic nave was finished in 1388. Henry VII's huge and magnificent chapel was added in 1519. Unlike St Paul's, Westminster Abbey has never been a cathedral – it is what is called a 'royal peculiar' and is administered directly by the Crown.

It is perhaps more impressive from outside than within. The interior is chock-a-block with small chapels, elaborate tombs



THE WEST END: MAYFAIR & MARYLEBONE



of monarchy, and monuments to various luminaries down through the ages. And, as you might expect for one of the most visited churches in Christendom, it can get intolerably busy.

Immediately past the barrier through the north door is what's known as **Statesmen's Aisle**, where politicians and eminent public figures are commemorated mostly by staggeringly large marble statues. The

Whig and Tory prime ministers who dominated late Victorian politics, Gladstone (who is buried here) and Disraeli (who is not), have their monuments uncomfortably close to one another. Nearby is a monument to Robert Peel, who, as home secretary in 1829, created the Metropolitan Police force. Robert's policemen became known as 'Bobby's boys' and later, simply, 'bobbies'.

THE WEST END: MAYFAIR & MARYLEBONE

INFORMATION

- American Embassy..... 1 C4
- Canadian Consulate..... 2 C4
- easyEverything..... 3 B2
- easyEverything..... 4 C3

SIGHTS

- All Souls Church..... 5 D2
- Broadcasting House..... 6 D2
- Handel House Museum..... 7 D4
- Madame Tussauds..... 8 B1
- Sherlock Holmes Museum..... 9 B1
- Wallace Collection..... 10 C3

SHOPPING

- Burberry..... 11 D4
- Butler & Wilson..... 12 D4
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- Conran Shop..... 14 C1
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- Debenhams..... 16 D3
- French Connection UK..... 17 C3
- Garrard..... 18 D4
- Ginger Pig..... 19 C2
- Jigsaw..... 20 D4
- John Lewis..... 21 D3
- Kurt Geiger..... 22 D4
- Marks & Spencer..... 23 C3
- Marylebone Farmers' Market. (see 39)
- Miss Selfridge..... 24 D3

- Mulberry..... 25 D4
- Paul Smith Sale Shop..... 26 D4
- Poste..... 27 D4
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EATING

- Eat & Two Veg..... 34 C2
- Golden Hind..... (see 50)
- Gordon Ramsay at Claridge's. (see 59)
- Greenhouse..... 35 D5
- La Fromagerie..... 36 C2
- Le Pain Quotidien..... 37 C2
- Locanda Locatelli..... 38 B3
- Marylebone Farmers' Market..... 39 C2
- Ping Pong..... 40 C2
- Providers & Tapa Room..... 41 C2
- Quiet Revolution..... 42 C2
- Reubens..... 43 B2
- Ginger Pig..... 44 A1
- Six 13..... 45 D3
- Stara Polska..... 46 C2
- Taman Gang..... 47 B4
- Villandry..... 48 D3
- Wagamama..... 49 C3
- Wallace..... (see 10)

- Woodlands..... 50 C2

DRINKING

- Guinea..... 51 D4
- Moose Bar..... 52 C3
- Salt Whisky Bar..... 53 A3

ARTS

- Curzon Mayfair..... 54 D5
- Wigmore Hall..... 55 D3

SLEEPING

- Chesterfield..... 58 D5
- Claridge's..... 59 D4
- Cumberland Hotel..... 60 B4
- Dorchester..... 61 C5
- Dorset Square Hotel..... 62 B1
- Durrants Hotel..... 63 C2
- Edward Lear Hotel..... 64 B3
- Glyne Court Hotel..... 65 B3
- Hotel La Place..... 66 C2
- International Students House..... 67 D1
- Leonard Hotel..... 68 B3
- Mandeville..... 69 C3
- Parkwood Hotel..... 70 A4
- Sumner Hotel..... 71 A3

At the eastern end of the sanctuary, opposite the entrance to the Henry VII Chapel, is the rather ordinary-looking **Coronation Chair**, upon which almost every monarch since the late 13th century is said to have been crowned. Up the steps in front of you and to your left is the narrow **Queen Elizabeth Chapel**, where Elizabeth I and her half-sister 'Bloody Mary' share an elaborate tomb.

The **Henry VII Chapel**, in the easternmost part of the abbey, has spectacular circular vaulting on the ceiling. Behind the chapel's altar is the elaborate sarcophagus of Henry VII and his queen, Elizabeth of York.

Beyond the chapel's altar is the **Royal Air Force (RAF) Chapel**, with a stained-glass window commemorating the force's finest hour, the Battle of Britain. Next to it, a plaque marks the spot where Oliver Cromwell's body lay for two years until the Restoration, when it was disinterred, hanged and beheaded. The bodies believed to be those of the two child princes (allegedly) murdered in the Tower of London in 1483 are buried here. The chapel's southern aisle contains the **tomb of Mary Queen of Scots**, beheaded on the orders of her cousin Elizabeth and with the acquiescence of her son, the future James I.

The **Chapel of St Edward the Confessor**, the most sacred spot in the abbey, lies just east of the sanctuary and behind the high altar; ac-

cess may be restricted to protect the 13th-century floor. St Edward was the founder of the abbey and the original building was consecrated a few weeks before his death. His tomb was slightly altered after the original was destroyed during the Reformation.

The south transept contains **Poets' Corner**, where many of England's finest writers are buried and/or commemorated; a memorial here is the highest honour the Queen can bestow. Just north is the **Lantern**, the heart of the abbey, where coronations take place. If you face eastwards while standing in the centre, the sanctuary is in front of you. George Gilbert Scott designed the ornate high altar in 1897. Behind you, Edward Blore's chancel, dating from the mid-19th century, is a breathtaking structure of gold, blue and red Victorian Gothic. Where monks once worshipped, boys from the Choir School and lay vicars now sing the daily services.

The entrance to the **Cloister** is 13th century, while the cloister itself dates from the 14th. Eastwards down a passageway off the Cloister are three museums run by English Heritage. The octagonal **Chapter House** (9.30am-5pm Apr-Sep, 10am-5pm Oct, 10am-4pm Nov-Mar) has one of Europe's best-preserved medieval tile floors and retains traces of religious murals. It was used as a meeting

place by the House of Commons in the second half of the 14th century. To the right of the entrance to Chapel House is what is claimed to be the oldest door in the UK – it's been there 950 years. The adjacent **Pyx Chamber** (🕒 10am–4.30pm) is one of the few remaining relics of the original abbey and contains the abbey's treasures and liturgical objects. The **Abbey Museum** (🕒 10.30am–4pm) exhibits the death masks of generations of royalty, wax effigies representing Charles II and William III (who is on a stool to make him as tall as his wife Mary), as well as armour and stained glass.

To reach the 900-year-old **College Garden** (🕒 10am–6pm Tue–Thu Apr–Sep, to 4pm Tue–Thu Oct–Mar), enter Dean's Yard and the Little Cloisters off Great College St.

On the western side of the cloister is **Scientists' Corner**, where you will find **Sir Isaac Newton's tomb**; a nearby section of the northern aisle of the nave is known as **Musicians' Aisle**.

The two towers above the west door are the ones through which you exit. These were designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor and completed in 1745. Just above the door, perched in 15th-century niches, are the latest sacred additions to the abbey: 10 stone statues of international 20th-century martyrs. These were unveiled in 1998 and they include the likes of Martin Luther King and the Polish priest St Maximilian Kolbe, who was murdered by the Nazis at Auschwitz.

To the right as you exit is a memorial to innocent victims of oppression, violence and war around the world. 'All you who pass by, is it nothing to you?' it asks poignantly.

There are 90-minute **guided tours** (📞 7222 7110; £5) that leave several times during the day (Monday to Saturday) and limited **audioguide tours** (£4). One of the best ways to visit the abbey is to attend a service, particularly evensong (5pm weekdays, 3pm at weekends). Sunday Eucharist is at 11am.

## HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

Map pp96–7  
📞 7219 4272; [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk); St Stephen's Entrance, St Margaret St SW1; admission free; 🕒 during Parliamentary sessions 2.30–10.30pm Mon, 11.30am–7pm Tue & Wed, 11.30am–6.30pm Thu, 9.30am–3pm Fri; 🚶 Westminster; 🚶 The House of Commons and House of Lords are housed here in the sumptuous Palace of Westminster. Charles Barry, assisted by interior designer Augustus Pugin,

built it between 1840 and 1860, when the extravagant neo-Gothic style was all the rage. The most famous feature outside the palace is the Clock Tower, commonly known as **Big Ben**. Ben is the bell hanging inside and is named after Benjamin Hall, the commissioner of works when the tower was completed in 1858. If you're very keen (and a UK resident) you can apply in writing for a free tour of the Clock Tower (see the website). Thirteen-tonne Ben has rung in the New Year since 1924, and the clock gets its hands and face washed by abseiling cleaners once every five years. The best view of the whole complex is from the eastern side of Lambeth Bridge. At the opposite end of the building is **Victoria Tower**, completed in 1860.

The House of Commons is where Members of Parliament (MPs) meet to propose and discuss new legislation, to grill the prime minister and other ministers, and to get their mugs on TV to show their constituents they are actually working. Watching a debate is not terribly exciting unless it's Prime Minister's Question Time, for which you will have to book advance tickets through your MP or local British embassy.

The layout of the Commons Chamber is based on that of St Stephen's Chapel in the original Palace of Westminster. The current chamber, designed by Giles Gilbert Scott, replaced the earlier one destroyed by a 1941 bomb. Although the Commons is a national assembly of 646 MPs, the chamber has seating for only 437. Government members sit to the right of the Speaker and Opposition members to the left. The Speaker presides over business from a chair given by Australia, while ministers speak from a despatch box donated by New Zealand.

When Parliament is in session, visitors are admitted to the **House of Commons Visitors' Gallery** via **St Stephen's Entrance**. Expect to queue for an hour or two if you haven't already organised a ticket. Parliamentary recesses (ie holidays) last for three months over the summer and a couple of weeks over Easter and Christmas, so it's best to ring in advance. To find out what's being debated on a particular day, check the notice board posted beside the entrance, or look in the *Daily Telegraph* or the freebie *Metro* newspaper under 'Today in Parliament', though it has to be said that the debates leave a lot to be desired both in terms of attendance

and enthusiasm. Bags and cameras must be checked at a cloakroom before you enter the gallery and no large suitcases or backpacks are allowed through the airport-style security gate.

After campaign group 'Fathers 4 Justice' lobbied a condom full of purple powder at Tony Blair in May 2004 and prohunt campaigners broke into the Commons that September, security was further tightened, and a bulletproof screen now sits between members of the public and the debating chamber.

As you're waiting for your bags to go through the X-ray machines, look left at the stunning roof of **Westminster Hall**, originally built in 1099 and today the oldest surviving part of the Palace of Westminster, the seat of the English monarchy from the 11th to the early 16th centuries. Added between 1394 and 1401, it is the earliest known example of a hammer-beam roof and has been described as 'the greatest surviving achievement of medieval English carpentry'. Westminster Hall was used for coronation banquets in medieval times, and also served as a courthouse until the 19th century. The trials of William Wallace (1305), Thomas More (1535), Guy Fawkes (1606) and Charles I (1649) all took place here. In the 20th century, monarchs and Winston Churchill lay in state here.

The **House of Lords Visitors' Gallery** (📞 7219 3107; admission free; 🕒 2.30–10pm Mon–Wed, 11am–1.30pm & 3–7.30pm Thu, 11am–3pm Fri) is also open for visits. Against a backdrop of peers' gentle snoring, you can view the intricate Gothic interior that led poor Pugin (1812–52) to an early death from overwork and nervous strain.

When Parliament is in recess, there are 75-minute **guided summer tours** (📞 0870 906 3773; St Stephen's Entrance, St Margaret St; adult/child/concession £12/5/8) of both chambers and other historic buildings. Times change, so telephone or check [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk) for latest details.

## TATE BRITAIN

Map pp96–7  
📞 7887 8000, 7887 8888; [www.tate.org.uk](http://www.tate.org.uk); Millbank SW1; admission free, prices vary for temporary exhibitions; 🕒 10am–5.50pm; 🚶 Pimlico; 🚶 You'd think that Tate Britain may have suffered since its lavish, sexy sibling, **Tate Modern** (p129), took half its collection and all of the limelight up river when it opened in 2000,

but on the contrary, things have worked out perfectly for both galleries. The venerable Tate Britain, built in 1897, stretched out splendidly into all its increased space, filling it with its definitive collection of British art from the 16th to the late 20th centuries, while the Modern sister devoted its space to, well, modern art.

The permanent galleries are broadly chronological in order, and you can expect to see some of the most important works by artists such as Constable and Gainsborough – who have entire galleries devoted to them – and Hogarth, Reynolds, Stubbs, Blake and Moore, among others. Adjoining the main building is the Clore Gallery, which houses the superb JMW Turner, including the two recovered classics *Shade and Darkness* and *Light and Colour* which were nicked in 1994 and found nine years later.

Just before you thought that all the moderns and contemporaries were up at the Modern, Tate Britain's got work by Lucian Freud, Francis Bacon, David Hockney and Howard Hodgkin, as well as Anthony Gormley and bad-girl Tracey Emin. Tate Britain also hosts the prestigious and often controversial Turner Prize of contemporary art from October to early December every year.

There are several free one-hour **thematic tours** each day, mostly on the hour (last tour at 3pm), along with free 15-minute talks on paintings, painters and styles at 1.15pm Tuesday to Thursday in the Rotunda. **Audioguide tours** for the collection cost £3.50/3 (adult/concession). The best way to see both Tates and have a fabulous art day is to get the boat that connects the two galleries; see p387. A good time to visit the Tate is for its Late at Tate nights on the first Friday of every month, when the gallery stays open until 10pm.

## HORSE GUARDS PARADE

Map pp96–7  
📞 0906 866 3344; 🕒 Changing of the Guard 11am Mon–Sat, 10am Sun; 🚶 Westminster  
In a more accessible version of Buckingham Palace's Changing of the Guard, the mounted troopers of the Household Cavalry change guard here daily, at the official entrance to the royal palaces (opposite the Banqueting House). A lite-pomp version takes place at 4pm when the dismantled guards are changed. On the Queen's official birthday in June, the Trooping of the Colour is also staged here.



Fittingly, as the parade ground and its buildings were built in 1745 to house the Queen's so-called 'Life Guards', this will be the pitch for the beach volleyball during the London 2012 Olympics (see [www.london2012.org](http://www.london2012.org)). When this choice of venue was first announced, it had Tony Blair gloating about what a good view of the bikini-clad players he would have from his Downing St back window, though he may have to go around to Gordon Brown's now to get a glimpse (if Brown will let him in, that is).

### ST JOHN'S, SMITH SQUARE Map pp96-7

☎ 7222 1061; [www.sjss.org.uk](http://www.sjss.org.uk); Smith Sq, Westminster SW1; ☉ Westminster  
In the heart of Westminster, this eye-catching church was built by Thomas Archer in 1728 under the Fifty New Churches Act (1711), which aimed to build 50 new churches for London's rapidly growing metropolitan area. Though they never did build all 50 churches, St John's, along with a dozen others, saw the light of day. Unfortunately, with its four corner towers and monumental façades, the structure was much maligned for the first century of its existence thanks to rumours that Queen Anne likened it to a footstool, though it's also said that she actually requested a church built in the shape of a footstool. Whatever the case, it's generally agreed now that the church is a masterpiece of English baroque, although it no longer serves as a church. After receiving a direct hit during WWII, it was rebuilt in the 1960s as a classical music venue (p309), and is renowned for its crisp acoustics.

The brick-vaulted restaurant in the crypt is called, predictably, the **Footstool**, and is open for lunch Monday to Friday, as well as for pre- and postconcert dinner.

### WHITEHALL

Whitehall and its extension, Parliament St, is the wide avenue that links Trafalgar and Parliament Sqs, and it is lined with many government buildings, statues, monuments and other historical bits and pieces.

### CHURCHILL MUSEUM & CABINET WAR ROOMS Map pp96-7

☎ 7930 6961; [www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk); Clive Steps, King Charles St SW1; adult/under 16yr/unemployed/senior

& student £10/free/5/8; ☎ 9.30am-6pm, last admission 5pm; ☉ Charing Cross or Westminster; ♿  
Down in the bunker where Prime Minister Winston Churchill, his cabinet and generals met during WWII, £6 million has been spent on a huge exhibition devoted to 'the greatest Briton'. This whizz-bang, multimedia Churchill Museum joins the highly evocative Cabinet War Rooms, where chiefs of staff slept, ate and plotted Hitler's downfall, blissfully believing they were protected from Luftwaffe bombs by the 3m slab of concrete overhead. (Turns out it would have crumpled like paper had the area taken a hit.) Together, these two sections make you forget the Churchill who was a maverick and lousy peacetime politician, and drive home how much the cigar-chewing, wartime PM was a case of right man, right time.

The Churchill Museum contains all sorts of posters, trivia and personal effects, from the man's cigars to a 'British bulldog' vase in his image, and from his formal Privy Council uniform to his shockingly tasteless red velvet 'romper' outfit. Even though the museum doesn't shy away from its hero's fallibilities, it does begin with his strongest suit – his stirring speeches, replayed for each goose-bumped visitor who steps in front of the matching screen. 'I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat', 'We will fight them on the beaches', 'Never in the course of human history has so much been owed by so many to so few'. Elsewhere, silver-tongued Winnie even gets credit for inspiring Orson Welles' famous rant about Switzerland and cuckoo clocks, with a speech he made to Parliament several years before *The Third Man* was filmed.

There's fantastically edited footage of Churchill's 1965 state funeral, making the April 2005 burial of Pope John Paul II look like a low-key family affair, and you can check on what the PM was doing nearly every day beforehand via the huge, table-top interactive lifeline. Touch the screen on a particular year, and it will open up into months and days for you to choose.

In stark contrast, the old Cabinet War Rooms have been left much as they were when the lights were turned off on VJ Day in August 1945 and everyone headed off for a well-earned drink. The room where the Cabinet held more than 100 meetings, the Telegraph Room with a hotline

to Roosevelt, the cramped typing pool, the converted broom cupboard that was Churchill's office and scores of bedrooms have all been preserved.

You will pass the broadcast niche where Churchill made four of his rousing speeches to the nation, including one about Germany's fuelling 'a fire in British hearts' by launching the London Blitz. In the Chief of Staff's Conference Room, the walls are covered with huge, original maps that were only discovered in 2002. If you squint two-thirds of the way down the right wall, somebody (Churchill himself?) drew a little doodle depicting a cross-eyed and bandy-legged Hitler knocked on his arse.

The free audioguide is very informative and entertaining and features plenty of anecdotes, including some from people who worked here in the nerve centre of Britain's war effort – and weren't even allowed by their irritable boss to relieve the tension by whistling.

### BANQUETING HOUSE Map pp96-7

☎ 0870 751 5178; [www.hrp.org.uk](http://www.hrp.org.uk); Whitehall SW1; adult/concession £4.50/3.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat; ☉ Westminster or Charing Cross; ♿  
This is the only surviving part of the Tudor Whitehall Palace, which once stretched most of the way down Whitehall and burned down in 1698. It was designed as England's first purely Renaissance building by Inigo Jones after he returned from Italy, and looked like no other structure in the country at the time. Apparently, the English hated it for more than a century.

A bust outside commemorates 30 January 1649 when Charles I, accused of treason by Cromwell after the Civil War, was executed on a scaffold built against a 1st-floor window here. When the royals were reinstated with Charles II, it inevitably became something of a royalist shrine. In a huge, virtually unfurnished hall on the 1st floor there are nine ceiling panels painted by Rubens in 1635. They were commissioned by Charles I and depict the 'divine right' of kings.

It is still occasionally used for state banquets and concerts, but fortunately you don't have to be on the royal A-list to visit, though if the house is rented for an event, it will be closed to the public, so phone in advance to check.

Book in advance for disabled access.

### CENOTAPH Map pp96-7

Whitehall SW1; ☉ Westminster or Charing Cross  
The Cenotaph (Greek for 'empty tomb'), built in 1920 by Edwin Lutyens, is Britain's main memorial to the British and Commonwealth victims who were killed during the two world wars. The Queen and other public figures lay poppies at its base on the Sunday nearest 11 November.

### NO 10 DOWNING STREET Map pp96-7

[www.number10.gov.uk](http://www.number10.gov.uk); 10 Downing St SW1; ☉ Westminster or Charing Cross

As most people know, when it comes to property it's all 'location, location, location' and it's certain that British prime ministers have it pretty good postcode-wise. Number 10 has been the official office of British leaders since 1732, when George II presented No 10 to Robert Walpole, and since refurbishment in 1902 it's also been the PM's official London residence. As Margaret Thatcher, a grocer's daughter, famously put it, the PM 'lives above the shop' here.

For such a famous address, however, No 10 is a small-looking building on a plain-looking street, hardly warranting comparison to the White House, for example. A stoic bobby stands guard outside, but you can't get too close; the street was cordoned off with a rather large iron gate during Margaret Thatcher's times.

Breaking with tradition when he came to power, Tony Blair and his family swapped houses with the then-unmarried Chancellor, who traditionally occupied the rather larger flat at No 11. He also commandeered the offices at No 12, traditional base of the chief whip, claiming the need for more work space. We'll see what Brown does in his years in power.

### MARYLEBONE

#### MADAME TUSSAUDS Map p100

☎ 0870 400 3000; [www.madame-tussauds.com](http://www.madame-tussauds.com); Marylebone Rd NW1; adult/under 16yr £24/20; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat & Sun; ☉ Baker St; ♿

What can one say about Madame Tussauds? It's unbelievably kitsch and terribly overpriced, yet it draws more than 3 million people every year and sits high on the 'must-do' list of any visitor to London. Different strokes for different folks, as they say, but if you like the idea of wax celebrities,

movie stars and fantastically lifelike figures of the Windsors, you're in for a treat.

Madame Tussauds dates back more than two centuries when the eponymous Swiss model-maker started making death masks of the people killed during the French Revolution. She came to London in 1803 and exhibited around 30 wax models in Baker St, on a site not far from this building, which has housed the waxworks since 1885. The waxworks were an enormous hit in Victorian times, when the models provided the only opportunity for visitors to glimpse the famous and infamous before photography was widespread and long before the advent of TV.

Madame Tussauds is very keen on public surveys telling it who the punters would like to see most, resulting in such highlights as a photo op with the **Kate Moss figure** (of a very poor similitude), an **eco Prince Charles** statue, the **Blush Room** where A-listers stand listlessly and where the J-Lo figure blushes if you whisper in her ear. **Bollywood** fans are treated with a smiling Shahrukh Khan and 'Big Bruvva' lovers can get into the Diary Room and take the video home. There are tons of temporary exhibits, such as the *Pirates of the Caribbean* chamber, potting holes with Tiger Woods, and so on.

Permanent photo opportunities include the political leaders in **World Stage** and the array of celebrities in **Premiere Room**. The famous **Chamber of Horrors** details the horrors of Jack the Ripper and is usually a huge hit with children. Finally you can take a ride in the **Spirit of London 'time taxi'**, where you sit in a mock-up of a London black cab and are whipped through a five-minute historical summary of London, a mercifully short time to endure the god-awful scripts and hackneyed commentary. The old Planetarium is now the **Stardome** that screens an entertaining and educational animation by Nick Park, creator of *Wallace and Gromit* (it involves aliens and celebrities).

In case you were wondering what happens to the models of those people whose 15 minutes have passed, contrary to popular belief, they are never melted, but simply resting in storage.

If you want to avoid the queues (particularly in summer) book your tickets online and get a timed entry slot. They are cheaper this way too.

### WALLACE COLLECTION Map p100

☎ 7563 9500; [www.wallacecollection.org](http://www.wallacecollection.org); **Hertford House, Manchester Sq W1**; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm; ☉ Bond St; 🚶

Arguably London's finest small gallery (relatively unknown even to Londoners), the Wallace Collection is an enthralling glimpse into 18th-century aristocratic life. The sumptuously restored Italianate mansion houses a treasure-trove of 17th- and 18th-century paintings, porcelain, artefacts and furniture collected by generations of the same family and bequeathed to the nation by the widow of Sir Richard Wallace (1818-90) on condition it should always be on display in the centre of London.

Among the many highlights here – besides the warm and friendly staff – are paintings by the likes of Rembrandt, Hals, Delacroix, Titian, Rubens, Poussin, Van Dyck, Velázquez, Reynolds and Gainsborough in the stunning **Great Gallery**. There's a spectacular array of medieval and Renaissance armour (including some to try on), a Minton-tiled smoking room, stunning chandeliers and a sweeping staircase that is reckoned to be one of the best examples of French interior architecture in existence. There are also temporary exhibitions (admission payable) and very popular themed events involving Marie Antoinette and other French aristocrats, costumes and ballroom dancing (check the website for what's on when you're here).

Have lunch at the excellent glass-roofed restaurant, **Café Bagatelle** – which occupies the central courtyard and feels like something in southern Spain – and you'll have spent one of the most outstanding days in London.

### SHERLOCK HOLMES MUSEUM Map p100

☎ 7935 8866; [www.sherlock-holmes.co.uk](http://www.sherlock-holmes.co.uk); **221b Baker St**; adult/child £6/4; ☎ 9.30am-6pm; ☉ Baker St

Though the museum gives its address as 221b Baker St, the actual fictional abode of Sherlock Holmes is the Abbey National building a bit further south. Fans of the books will enjoy examining the three floors of reconstructed Victoriana, deerstalkers, burning candles, flickering grates, but may balk at the dodgy waxworks of Professor Moriarty and 'the Man with the Twisted Lip'. The only disappointment is the lack of

material and information on Arthur Conan Doyle.

### BROADCASTING HOUSE Map p100

☎ 0870 603 0304; [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk); **Portland Pl**; ☎ shop 9.30am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-5.30pm Sun; ☉ Oxford Circus

Broadcasting House is the iconic building from which the BBC began radio broadcasting in 1932, and where much of the BBC's radio output still comes from. There's a shop stocking any number of products relating to BBC programmes, even though the majority of the Beeb's output is produced in the corporation's glassy complex in Shepherd's Bush (hop on the website if you want to get tickets to a recording). Broadcasting House is currently having a vast extension built onto it, to where the World Service is scheduled to relocate when its lease on its current premises, Bush House on the Strand, expires in 2008.

### ALL SOULS CHURCH Map p100

☎ 7580 3522; [www.allsouls.org](http://www.allsouls.org); **Langham Pl W1**; ☎ 9am-6pm, closed Sat; ☉ Oxford Circus

A Nash solution for the curving, northern sweep of Regent St was this delightful church, which features a circular columned porch and distinctive needlelike spire, reminiscent of an ancient Greek temple. Built from Bath stone, the church was very unpopular when completed in 1824 – a contemporary cartoon by George Cruikshank shows Nash rather painfully impaled on the spire through the bottom with the words 'Nashional Taste!!!' below it. It was bombed during the Blitz and renovated in 1951, and is now one of the most distinctive churches in central London.

## THE WEST END WALK

### Walking Tour

#### 1 Covent Garden Piazza

Yes it's touristy, but it's worth seeing this wonderful **Inigo Jones piazza** (p85) and some of the street performers who make a living buffooning around in front of St Paul's Church.

#### 2 Photographers Gallery

Small but with a hard artistic punch, this **gallery** (p85) is where top photographic exhibitions

take place. Check out the shop for great photography books.

### 3 Chinatown

Avoid Leicester Sq and walk down Lisle St under the ersatz Oriental gates of **Chinatown** (p67). Breathe in the aromatic spices, pick one of the restaurants – try **Jen Café** (p243) or **New World** (p239) for some delicious Chinese food.

### 4 Shaftesbury Avenue

This is theatre land and Shaftesbury Ave is where some of West End's most prestigious theatres are. This is where Hollywood stars such as Juliette Lewis, Jessica Lange and Christian Slater have performed, along with London's own Daniel Radcliffe.

### 5 Piccadilly Circus

Hectic and traffic-choked, but still lovely, **Piccadilly Circus** (p67) is like London's Times Sq, full of flashing ads, tons of shops and tourists.

### 6 Piccadilly

An elegant stretch away from the Circus, Piccadilly gives a whiff of the nearby aristocratic St James's and Mayfair. Pop into **St James's Piccadilly** (p70), the only church Sir Christopher built from scratch, check out the market stalls selling crafts and antiques outside, and sit down for a coffee while the pigeons fight for the bread crumbs left behind. Or you could visit **Minamoto Kitchoan** (p222) Japanese sweet shop for a green tea and some sweets.

Free art and pay-for exhibitions abound at the brilliant **Royal Academy of Arts** (p70), where the courtyard installations can often be quite bizarre.

### 7 Green Park

Walk past the Ritz and turn left into **Green Park** (p98), a quiet, green space with some stunning oak trees and olde-worlde street lamps.

### 8 Buckingham Palace

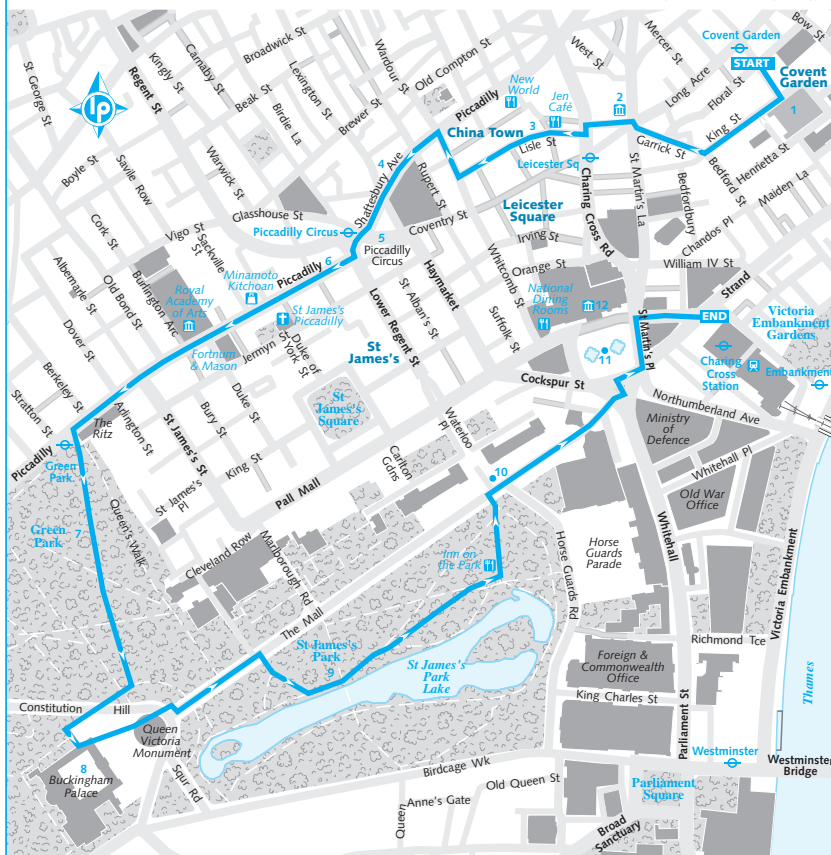
Admire the **Queen's abode** (p94), though if you're keen on seeing some of the rooms (public access summer only), you're better off buying a ticket in advance. Walk down the grandiose Mall, where processions often take place and the Queen's limousine is escorted by her guards.

### 9 St James's Park

One of London's smaller, but definitely one of its most beautiful, **parks** (p95), this place is wonderful in summer and winter. Feed the



## THE WEST END WALK



ducks, squirrels or swans, and take a look at the pelicans. Have a break in the stylish wooden **Inn the Park** (p246), where you can have some modern British food too. It's one of the more atmospheric places for dinner.

### 10 Institute of Contemporary Arts

Pop into the edgy ICA (p98) and have a look at whatever exhibition is taking place – you'll come out feeling something, good or bad.

### 11 Trafalgar Square

Another tourist magnet, but worth it all the way, **Trafalgar Square** (p74) is a magnificent beauty of a square. Check out the views of Big Ben from its southern side.

### WALK FACTS

Start Covent Garden tube station  
End Trafalgar Sq (Charing Cross tube station)  
Distance 2.5 miles  
Duration One hour 15 minutes  
Fuel stops Jen Café (p243), New World (p239), Inn the Park (p245), National Gallery Dining Rooms (p76)

### 12 The National Gallery

Take a few hours to admire the artwork at the **National Gallery** (p75). Sit down for a well-deserved lunch or dinner in the new and stylish National Dining Rooms, where you can enjoy British cuisine in its finest form.

## THE CITY

Eating p248; Drinking p282; Sleeping p349

The ancient, hallowed streets of the City are some of London's most fascinating. The Square Mile occupies pretty much exactly the same patch of land around which the Romans first constructed a defensive wall almost two millennia ago and probably contains more history than the rest of the city put together.

The tiny backstreets and ancient churches are today juxtaposed with skyscrapers and office blocks as this is the home of London's stock exchange, the Bank of England and countless other financial institutions. Very few people live in the City today, which was badly bombed during the Blitz, and so while it's very animated Monday to Friday, you can hear a pin drop at the weekend and even on a weeknight after 9pm once the commuters are all safely on their way home.

The centre of gravity for the City is Wren's masterpiece and London's great survivor, St Paul's Cathedral, still a must for all visitors to the capital. To the north of here is Smithfield, home to the notorious St Bartholomew's fair for centuries and a favoured spot for witch burnings and other gory public executions. East of Smithfield is the Barbican, a vast arts complex and a visual statement that will either make your heart sing or your eyes ache depending what side of the architectural debate you bat for. Personally we love it, but there you go.

Further east still is Bank, the prosaically named district home to many of the major financial institutions of the country including the titular Bank of England. This is where the City can justly be called a bit sterile – pubs often only open Monday to Friday and eating choices split between Marks & Spencer sandwiches or five-course *haute cuisine* meals for those with expense accounts – yet beauties such as Lloyd's of London, the Gherkin and wonderful Leadenhall Market more than compensate for the lack of life at street level.

Further to the east still is Tower Hill, home to the world-famous Tower of London and iconic Tower Bridge. This is an area dominated by faceless office blocks, although pockets of colour do spill over from the neighbouring multicultural areas of Aldgate and Whitechapel and well-heeled Wapping. However, what the City lacks in great hangouts and community it more than makes up for with a wealth of historic sights and fascinating museums.

## SMITHFIELD & ST PAUL'S

**ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL** Map p110 & p112

☎ 7236 4128; [www.stpauls.co.uk](http://www.stpauls.co.uk); St Paul's Churchyard EC4; adult/6-16yr/senior & student £9.50/3.50/8.50; 🕒 8.30am-4pm (last entry) Mon-Sat; 🚶 St Paul's; ♿

Occupying a superb position atop Ludgate Hill, one of London's most recognisable buildings is Sir Christopher Wren's masterpiece, completed in 1710 after the previous building was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666. The proud bearer of the capital's largest church dome, St Paul's Cathedral has seen a lot in its 300-plus years, although Ludgate Hill has been a place of worship for almost 1400 years, the current incarnation being the fifth to stand on this site. St

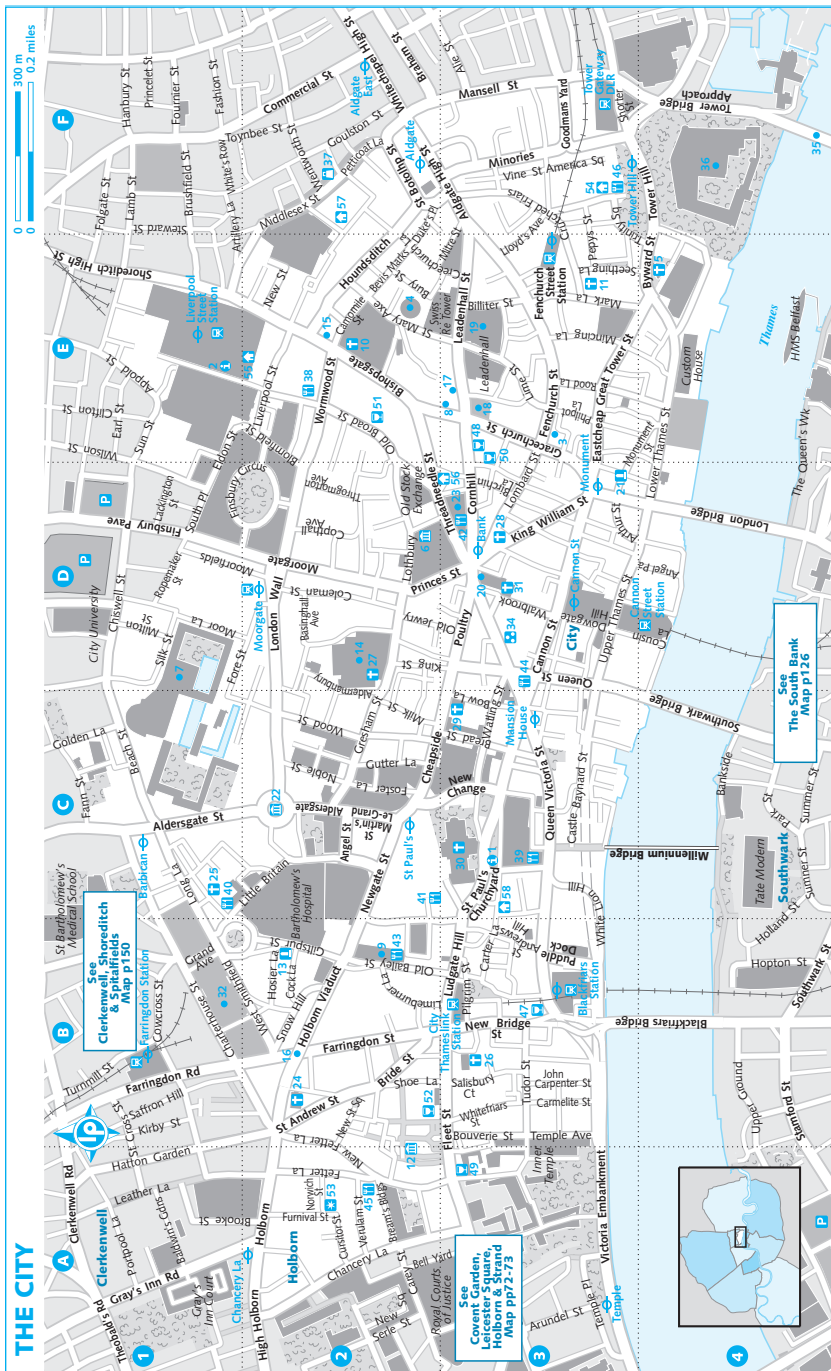
## top picks

### THE CITY

- St Paul's Cathedral (below)
- Tower of London (p119)
- Museum of London (p113)
- 30 St Mary Axe (p116)
- Temple Church (p113)

Paul's almost didn't make it off the drawing board, as Wren's initial designs were rejected. However, since its first service in 1697, it's held funerals for Lord Nelson, the Duke of Wellington and Winston Churchill, and has played host to Martin Luther King as well as the ill-fated wedding of Charles and Diana. For Londoners the vast dome, which still manages to loom amid the far higher skyscrapers in the Square Mile, is a symbol of resilience and pride – miraculously surviving the Blitz unscathed. Today the cathedral is undergoing a huge restoration project to coincide with its 300th anniversary in 2010, so some parts may be under scaffold when you visit.

However, despite all the fascinating history and its impressive interior, people



## THE CITY

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Liverpool Street Tourist Office.....	2	E1

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20 Fenchurch St.....	3	E2
30 St Mary Axe.....	4	E2
All Hallows-by-the-Tower.....	5	E4
Bank of England Museum.....	6	D2
Barbican.....	7	D1
Bishopsgate Tower.....	8	E3
Central Criminal Court (Old Bailey).....	9	B2
Church of St Ethelburga-the-Virgin.....	10	E2
Church of St Olave.....	11	E3
Dr Johnson's House.....	12	A2
Golden Boy of Pye Corner.....	13	B2
Guildhall.....	14	D2
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Heron Tower.....	15	E2
Holborn Viaduct.....	16	B2
Leadenhall Building.....	17	E3
Leadenhall Market.....	18	E3
Lloyd's of London.....	19	E3
Mansion House.....	20	D3
Monument.....	21	D3
Museum of London.....	22	C2

Roman London Amphitheatre.....	(see 14)	
Royal Exchange.....	23	D3
St Andrew Holborn.....	24	B2
St Bartholomew-the-Great.....	25	C1
St Brides, Fleet St.....	26	B3
St Lawrence Jewry.....	27	D2
St Mary Woolnoth.....	28	D3
St Mary-le-Bow.....	29	C3
St Paul's Cathedral.....	30	C3
St Stephen Walbrook.....	31	D3
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Temple of Mithras.....	34	D3
Tower Bridge.....	35	F4
Tower of London.....	36	F4

### SHOPPING (pp215–34)

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### EATING (pp235–75)

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### NIGHTLIFE (pp297–310)

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### SLEEPING (pp339–61)

Grange City Hotel.....	54	F3
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Threadneedles.....	56	D3
Travelodge Liverpool Street.....	57	F2
YHA London St Paul's.....	58	C3

are usually most interested in climbing the dome for one of the best views of London imaginable. It's actually three domes, one inside the other, but it made the cathedral Wren's *tour de force* and only a handful of others throughout the world (mostly in Italy) outdo it in size. Exactly 530 stairs take you to the top, but it's a three-stage journey. The cathedral is built in the shape of a cross, with the dome at its intersection. So first find the circular paved area between the eight massive columns supporting the dome, then head to the door on the western side of the southern transept. Some 30m and precisely 259 steps above, you reach the interior walkway around the dome's base. This is the Whispering Gallery, so called because if you talk close to the wall it really does carry your words around to the opposite side, 32m away.

Climbing even more steps (another 119) you reach the **Stone Gallery**, which is an exterior viewing platform, with 360-degree views of London, all of which are rather obscured by pillars and other suicide-preventing measures.

The further 152 iron steps to the **Golden Gallery** are steeper and narrower than below but are really worth the effort as long as you don't suffer from claustrophobia. From here, 111m above London, the city opens up to you, your view unspoilt by superflu-

ous railings; you'll be hard pushed to see anything better.

Of course, back on the ground floor, St Paul's offers plenty of riches for those who like to keep their feet firmly on its black-and-white tiled floor – and the interior has been stunningly restored in recent years. Just beneath the dome, for starters, is a compass and an epitaph written for Wren by his son: *Lector, si monumentum requiris, circumspice* (Reader, if you seek his monument, look around you).

In the northern aisle you'll find the **All Souls' Chapel** and the **Chapel of St Dunstan**, dedicated to the 10th-century archbishop of Canterbury, and the grandiose **Duke of Wellington Memorial** (1875). In the north transept chapel is Holman Hunt's celebrated painting *The Light of the World*, which depicts Christ knocking at an overgrown door that, symbolically, can only be opened from the inside. Beyond, in the cathedral's heart, are the particularly spectacular **quire** (or chancel) – its ceilings and arches dazzling with green, blue, red and gold mosaics – and the **high altar**. The ornately carved **choir stalls** by Grinling Gibbons on either side of the quire are exquisite, as are the ornamental wrought-iron gates, separating the aisles from the altar, by Jean Tijou (both men also worked on Hampton Court Palace). Walk around the altar, with its massive gilded



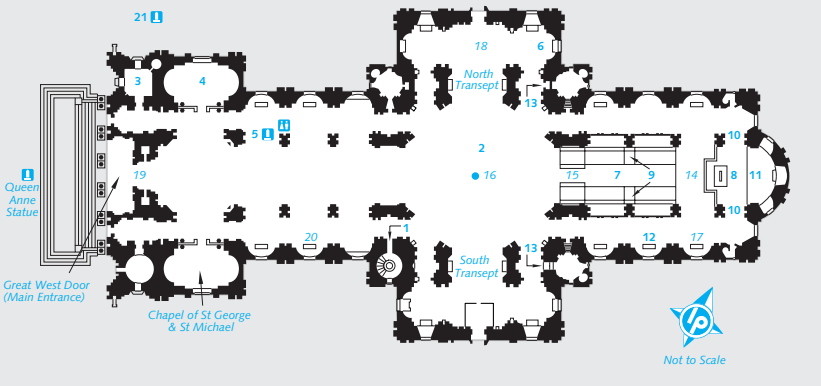
## ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

### GROUND FLOOR

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 Entrance to Dome & Whispering Gallery | 7 Quire                     |
| 2 Dome & Wren's Epitaph                 | 8 High Altar                |
| 3 All Souls' Chapel                     | 9 Choir Stalls              |
| 4 Chapel of St Dunstan                  | 10 Wrought-iron Gates       |
| 5 Duke of Wellington Memorial           | 11 American Memorial Chapel |
| 6 The Light of the World                | 12 Effigy of John Donne     |
|   | 13 Crypt Entrances          |

### CRYPT (keyed in italics)

- |                      |                                     |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 14 OBE Chapel        | 21 Monument to the People of London |
| 15 Wellington's Tomb |                                     |
| 16 Nelson's Tomb     |                                     |
| 17 Wren's Tomb       |                                     |
| 18 Treasury          |                                     |
| 19 Crypt Café        |                                     |
| 20 Shop              |                                     |



oak canopy, to the American Memorial Chapel, a memorial to the 28,000 Americans based in Britain who lost their lives during WWII.

Around the southern side of the ambulatory is the effigy of John Donne (1573–1631). The one-time dean of St Paul's, Donne was also a metaphysical poet, most famous for the immortal lines 'No man is an island' and 'Ask not for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee' (both in the same poem!).

On the eastern side of both the north and south transepts are stairs leading down to the crypt, treasury and OBE Chapel, where weddings, funerals and other services are held for members of the Order of the British Empire. The crypt has memorials to up to 300 military demigods, including Florence Nightingale and Lord Kitchener, while both the Duke of Wellington and Admiral Nelson are actually buried here, Nelson having been placed in a black sarcophagus that is directly under the dome. On the surrounding walls are plaques in memory of those from the Commonwealth who died in various conflicts during the 20th century.

Wren's tomb is in the crypt, while architect Edwin Lutyens and poet William Blake are also remembered here. In a niche, there is

also an exhibit of Wren's controversial plans for St Paul's and his actual working model. St Paul's was one of the 50 commissions the great architect was given after the Great Fire of London wiped out most of the City.

The treasury displays some of the cathedral's plate, along with some spectacular needlework, including Beryl Dean's jubilee cope (bishop's cloak) of 1977, showing spires of 73 London churches, and its matching mitre. There is a Crypt Café (☎ 9am–5pm Mon–Sat, 10.30am–5pm Sun) and the restaurant Refectory (☎ 9am–5.30pm Mon–Sat, 10.30am–5.30pm Sun), in addition to a shop (☎ 9am–5pm Mon–Sat, 10.30am–5pm Sun).

Just outside the north transept, there's a simple monument to the people of London, honouring the 32,000 civilians killed (and another 50,000 seriously injured) in the defence of the city and the cathedral during WWII. Also to the left as you face the entrance stairway is Temple Bar, one of the original gateways to the City of London. This medieval stone archway once straddled Fleet St at a sight marked by a griffin (Map pp72–3) but was removed to Midsex in 1878. Temple Bar was restored and made a triumphal return to London

(albeit in a totally new place) alongside the redevelopment of Paternoster Sq in 2003.

Audioguide tours in multiple languages lasting 45 minutes cost £3.50 for adults, or £3 for seniors and students; guided tours lasting 1½ to two hours (adult/senior and student/child aged six to 16 years £3/2.50/1) leave the tour desk at 11am, 11.30am, 1.30pm and 2pm. There are free organ recitals at St Paul's at 5pm most Sundays, as well as celebrity recitals (adult/concession £8/5.50) at 6.30pm on the first Thursday of the month between May and October. Evensong takes place at 5pm Monday to Saturday and at 3.15pm on Sunday.

There is limited disabled access. Call ahead for further information.

### MUSEUM OF LONDON Map p110

☎ 0870 444 3852, 7600 0807; [www.museumoflondon.org.uk](http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk); London Wall EC2; admission free; ☎ 10am–5.50pm Mon–Sat, noon–5.50pm Sun; ♿ Barbican; ♿

The Museum of London is one of the capital's best museums but remains largely off the radar for most visitors. That's not surprising when you consider that it's encased in concrete and located above a roundabout in the Barbican. Despite this, once you're inside it's a fascinating walk through the various incarnations of the capital from Anglo-Saxon village to global financial centre.

The newest gallery, called London Before London, outlines the development of the Thames Valley from 450 million years ago. Harnessing computer technology to enliven its exhibits and presenting impressive fossils and stone axe heads in shiny new cases, it somehow feels less warm and colourful than the more-established displays. In these you begin with the city's Roman era and move anticlockwise through the Saxon, medieval, Tudor and Stuart periods. Continuing down a ramp and past the ornate Lord Mayor's state coach, this history continues progressively until 1914, although at the time of writing the galleries were being expanded and improved to take visitors up to the present day. The finished galleries are due to open in late 2009.

Aside from the magnificently over-the-top state coach, highlights include the 4th-century lead coffin, skeleton and reconstructed face of a well-to-do young Roman woman whose remains were discovered in Spitalfields in 1999; the Cheapside Hoard, an amazing find of 16th- and 17th-century jewellery; the lo-fi but heartfelt Great Fire

of London diorama, narrated from the renowned diary of Samuel Pepys; and a timeline of London's creeping urbanisation during the 18th and 19th centuries. There are two mock-ups of city streets: one represents Roman London, the other is called Victorian Walk and harks back to the 19th century (although Leadenhall Market, p118, creates a slightly less authentic, but more lively Victorian feeling).

You can pause for a breather in the pleasant garden in the building's central courtyard or head for the adjoining Museum Café, which serves light meals from 10am to 5.30pm (from 11.30am on Sunday). Alternatively, on a sunny day, pack some sandwiches and lunch in the next-door Barber Surgeon's Herb Garden.

When arriving, look for the Barbican's gate seven; before leaving, don't forget to have a browse through the well-stocked bookshop and check what the temporary exhibits are as these tend to be some of London's more interesting.

### TEMPLE CHURCH Map p110

☎ 7353 3470; [www.templechurch.com](http://www.templechurch.com); Temple EC4; admission free; ☎ usually approx 2–4pm Wed–Sun, but call or email ahead to check as these change frequently; ♿ Temple or Chancery Lane

This magnificent church lies within the walls of the Temple, built by the legendary Knights Templar, an order of crusading monks founded in the 12th century to protect pilgrims travelling to and from Jerusalem. The order moved here around 1160, abandoning its older headquarters in Holborn. Today the sprawling oasis of fine buildings and pleasant traffic-free green space is home to two Inns of Court (housing the chambers of lawyers practising in the City), the Middle and the Lesser Temple.

The Temple Church has a distinctive design: the Round (consecrated in 1185 and designed to recall the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem) adjoins the Chancel (built in 1240), which is the heart of the modern church. Both parts were severely damaged by a bomb in 1941 and have been lovingly reconstructed. Its most obvious points of interest are the life-size stone effigies of nine knights that lie on the floor of the Round. These include the Earl of Pembroke, who acted as the go-between for King John and the rebel barons, eventually leading to the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215. In recent years the church has become

a must-see for readers of *The Da Vinci Code*, in which a key scene was set here.

During the week, the easiest access to the church is via Inner Temple Lane, off Fleet St. At the weekends, you'll need to enter from the Victoria Embankment.

## CENTRAL CRIMINAL COURT (OLD BAILEY)

Map p110

☎ 7248 3277; cnr Newgate & Old Bailey Sts; admission free; ☎ approx 10am-1pm & 2-5pm Mon-Fri; ☎ St Paul's

Just as fact is often better than fiction, taking in a trial in the Old Bailey leaves watching a TV courtroom drama for dust. Of course, it's too late to see author Jeffrey Archer being found guilty of perjury here, watch the Guildford Four's convictions being quashed after their wrongful imprisonment for IRA terrorist attacks or view the Yorkshire Ripper Peter Sutcliffe being sent down. However, 'the Old Bailey' is a byword for crime and notoriety. So even if you sit in on a fairly run-of-the-mill trial, simply being in the court where such people as the Kray twins and Oscar Wilde (in an earlier building on this site) once appeared is memorable in itself.

Choose from 18 courts, of which the oldest – courts one, two and three – usually have the most interesting cases. As cameras, video equipment, mobile phones, large bags and food and drink are all forbidden inside, and there are no cloakrooms or lockers, it's important not to take these with you. Take a cardigan or something to cushion the hard seats though, and if you're interested in a high-profile trial, get there early.

The Central Criminal Court gets its nickname from the street on which it stands: *baillie* was Norman French for 'enclosed courtyard'. The current building opened in 1907 on the combined site of a previous Old Bailey and Newgate Prison. Intriguingly, the figure of justice holding a sword and scales in her hands above the building's copper dome is *not* blindfolded (against undue influence, as is traditionally the case). That's a situation that has sparked many a sarcastic comment from those being charged here.

## DR JOHNSON'S HOUSE

Map p110  
☎ 7353 3745; www.drjohnsonshouse.org; 17 Gough Sq EC4; adult/child/concession/family £4.50/1.50/3.50/10; ☎ 11am-5.30pm Mon-Sat May-Sep, to 5pm Mon-Sat Oct-Apr; ☎ Chancery Lane or Barbican

This wonderful house, which was built in 1700, is a rare surviving example of a Georgian city mansion. All around it today huge office blocks loom and tiny Gough Sq can be quite hard to find as a result. The house has been preserved, of course, as it was the home of the great Georgian wit Samuel Johnson, the author of the first serious dictionary of the English language (transcribed by a team of six clerks in the attic) and the man who proclaimed 'When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life'.

The museum doesn't exactly crackle with Dr Johnson's immortal wit, yet it's still an atmospheric and fascinating place to visit with its antique furniture and artefacts from Johnson's life (his brick from the Great Wall of China must surely be the oddest of these). The numerous paintings of Dr Johnson and his associates, including his black manservant Francis Barber and his clerk and biographer James Boswell are sadly not particularly revealing of the great minds who would have considered the building home from home. A more revealing object is a chair from Johnson's local pub, the Old Cock Tavern on Fleet St.

There's a rather ponderous video, plus leaflets telling how the lexicographer and six clerks (Boswell wasn't among them, yet) developed the first English dictionary in the house's attic during the period he lived here from 1748 to 1759. Children will love the Georgian dressing-up clothes on the top floor, and the temporary exhibits in the attic look at other aspects of 18th-century life.

Across Gough Sq is a statue of Johnson's cat, Hodge, sitting above the full quote explaining why when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life: 'For there is in London all that life can afford.'

## ST BARTHOLOMEW-THE-GREAT

Map p110

☎ 7606 5171; www.greatstbarts.com; West Smithfield EC1; adult/concession £4/3; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm mid-Nov-mid-Feb, plus 10.30am-4pm Sat & 8.30am-8pm Sun year-round; ☎ Farringdon or Barbican

This spectacular Norman church dates from 1123, originally a part of the monastery of Augustinian Canons, but becoming the parish church of Smithfield in 1539 when King Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries. The authentic Norman arches, the weathered and blackened stone, the dark wood carvings and the low lighting lend this space an an-

cient calm – especially as you'll often be the only visitor. There are historical associations with William Hogarth, who was baptised here, and with politician Benjamin Franklin, who worked on site as an apprentice printer. The church sits on the corner of the grounds of St Bart's Hospital, on the side closest to Smithfield Market. Another selling point for modern audiences is that scenes from *Shakespeare in Love* (and parts of *Four Weddings and a Funeral*) were filmed here. The location managers for those movies knew what they were doing: St Bartholomew-the-Great is indeed one of the capital's most atmospheric places of worship.

## ST BRIDE'S, FLEET STREET

Map p110  
☎ 7427 0133; www.stbrides.com; St Bride's Lane EC4; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 11am-3pm Sat, 10am-1pm & 5-7.30pm Sun; ☎ St Paul's or Blackfriars  
Rupert Murdoch might have frogmarched the newspaper industry out to Wapping in the 1980s, but this small church off Fleet St remains 'the journalists' church'. Candles were kept burning here for reporters John McCarthy and Terry Anderson during their years as hostages in Lebanon during the 1990s, and a memorial plaque here keeps tab of the growing number of journalists killed in Iraq.

There's a brief, well-presented history of the printing industry in the crypt, dating from 1500 when William Caxton's first printing press was relocated next to the church after Caxton's death. St Bride's is also of architectural interest. Designed by Sir Christopher Wren in 1671, its add-on spire (1703) reputedly inspired the first tiered wedding cake.

## ST ANDREW HOLBORN

Map p110  
☎ 7353 3544; Holborn Viaduct EC4; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Mon-Fri; ☎ Chancery Lane

This church on the southeastern corner of Holborn Circus, first mentioned in the 10th century, was rebuilt by Wren in 1686 and was the largest of his parish churches. Even though the interior was bombed to smithereens during WWII, much of what you see inside today is original 17th century as it was brought from other churches.

## THE GOLDEN BOY OF PYE CORNER

Map p110

This small statue of a corpulent boy opposite St Bartholomew's Hospital, at the

corner of Cock Lane and Giltspur St, has a somewhat odd dedication: 'In memory put up for the fire of London occasioned by the sin of gluttony 1666'. All becomes clear, however, when you realise the Great Fire was started in a busy bakery on Pudding Lane and that the fire finally burned itself out in what was once called Pye (Pie) Corner, where the statue now stands. This was interpreted by many as a sign that the fire was an act of God as punishment for the gluttony of Londoners.

## SMITHFIELD MARKET

Map p110  
☎ 7248 3151; West Smithfield EC1; ☎ Farringdon  
Smithfield is central London's last surviving meat market. Its name derives from it being a smooth field where animals could be grazed, although its history is far from pastoral. Built on the site of the notorious St Bartholomew's fair, where witches were traditionally burned at the stake, this is where Scottish Independence leader William Wallace was executed in 1305 (there's a large plaque on the wall of St Bart's Hospital south of the market) as well as the place where the leader of the Peasants' Revolt Wat Tyler met his fate in 1381. Described in terms of pure horror by Dickens in *Oliver Twist*, this was once the armpit of London, where animal excrement and entrails created a sea of filth. Today it's an increasingly smart area full of bars, and the market itself is a wonderful building, although one constantly under threat of destruction and redevelopment into office blocks.

## HOLBORN VIADUCT

Map p110  
☎ St Paul's or Farringdon

This fine iron bridge was built in 1869 in an effort to smarten up the area, as well as to link Holborn and Newgate St above what had been a valley created by the River Fleet. The four bronze statues represent Commerce and Agriculture (on the north-east side) and Science and Fine Arts (on the south).

## BANK

By its very nature, much of the work of the City goes on behind closed doors. However, a short exploration of the streets around Bank tube station will take you to the door of many financial, as well as political and religious,



landmarks. Here, at the tube station's main exit, seven bank-filled streets converge. Take Princes St northwestwards to get to the Guildhall or head northeastwards along Threadneedle St for the Bank of England Museum. (All the following sights are on the City map, p110.)

The **Royal Exchange** (founded by Thomas Gresham) is the imposing, colonnaded building you see at the juncture of Threadneedle St and Cornhill to the east. It's the third building on a site originally chosen in 1564 by Gresham. It has not had a role as a financial institution since the 1980s and now houses a very upmarket (and much needed) shopping centre.

In the angle between Lombard St and King William St further south you'll see the twin towers of Hawksmoor's **St Mary Woolnoth** (☎ 7626 9701; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri), built in 1717. The architect's only City church, its interior Corinthian columns are a foretaste of his Christ Church in Spitalfields.

Between King William St and Walbrook stands the grand, porticoed **Mansion House** (☎ 7626 2500; www.cityoflondon.gov.uk), the official residence of the Lord Mayor of London, which was built in the mid-18th century by George Dance the Elder. It's not open to the public, though group tours are sometimes available when booked in advance.

Along Walbrook, past the City of London Magistrates Court, is **St Stephen Walbrook** (☎ 7283 4444; 39 Walbrook EC3; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Thu, to 3pm Fri), built in 1679. Widely considered to be the finest of Wren's City churches and a forerunner to St Paul's Cathedral, this light and airy building is indisputably impressive. Some 16 pillars with Corinthian capitals rise up to support its dome and ceiling, while a large cream-coloured boulder lies at the heart of its roomy central space. There is an altar by sculptor Henry Moore, cheekily dubbed 'the Camembert' by critics.

Queen Victoria St runs southwestwards from Bank. A short way along it on the left, in front of Temple Court at No 11, you'll find the remains of the 3rd-century AD **Temple of Mithras**. Truth be told, however, there's little to see here. If you're interested in this Persian God and the religion worshipping him, you're better off checking out the Museum of London (p113), where sculptures and silver incense boxes found in the temple are on display.

Due west of Bank is Poultry. The modern building at the corner, with striped layers of blond and rose stone, is by Stirling Wilford (the Wilford in question is also

behind the much-acclaimed Lowry centre in Salford Quays near Manchester). Behind this, Poultry runs into Cheapside, site of a great medieval market. On the left you'll see another of Wren's great churches, **St Mary-le-Bow** (☎ 7248 5139; Cheapside EC2; ☎ 6.30am-6pm Mon-Thu, to 4pm Fri), built in 1673. It's famous as the church whose bells dictate who is – and who isn't – a cockney; it's said that a true cockney has to have been born within earshot of Bow Bells, although before the advent of motor traffic this would have been a far greater area than it is today. The church's delicate steeple is one of Wren's finest works and the modern stained glass is striking.

### 30 ST MARY AXE Map p110

☎ 7071 5008; www.30stmaryaxe.com; St Mary Axe EC3; ⚡ Aldgate or Bank

Known to one and all as 'the Gherkin' for obvious reasons when you see its incredible shape, 30 St Mary Axe – as it is officially and far more prosaically named – remains London's most distinctive skyscraper, dominating the city despite actually being slightly smaller than the neighbouring NatWest Tower. The phallic Gherkin's futuristic, sci-fi exterior has become an emblem of modern London as recognisable as Big Ben or the London Eye.

Built in 2002–03 to a multi-award-winning design from Norman Foster, this is London's first ecofriendly skyscraper: Foster laid out the offices so they spiral around internal 'sky gardens'. The windows (one of which popped out of its frame in 2005) can be opened and the gardens are used to reprocess stale air, so air-conditioning is kept to a minimum. Its primary fuel source is gas, low-energy lighting is used throughout the building and the design heightens the amount of natural light let into the building, meaning that less electricity is used.

Its 41 floors mainly house the reinsurance giant Swiss Re's London offices, and tours are not currently possible. The gorgeous top-floor restaurant is usually open only to staff and their guests, but it's possible to gain access by booking one of the private dining rooms, although this will need to be done well in advance. In some years mere mortals are granted access during the superb **Open House Weekend** (www.openhouse.org.uk), an annual September event. When included as a venue, the Gherkin is always one of the most popular openings.

### MONUMENT Map p110

☎ 7626 2717; Monument St EC3; adult/5-15yr £2/1; ☎ 9.30am-5pm; ⚡ Monument

The vast column of Monument is definitely one of the best vantage points over London due to its centrality as much as to its height: the river, St Paul's and the City are all around you and you truly feel at London's bustling heart. The column itself is a memorial to the Great Fire of London in 1666, which, in terms of the physical devastation and horrifying psychological impact it wreaked on the city, must have been the 9/11 of its day. Fortunately, this event lies further back in history and few people died, so it's possible to simply enjoy Sir Christopher Wren's 1677 tower and its panoramic views of London. Slightly southeast of King William St, near London Bridge, the Monument is exactly 60.6m from the bakery in Pudding Lane where the fire started and exactly 60.6m high. To reach the viewing platform, just below a gilded bronze urn of flames that some call a big gold pincushion, you will need to climb 311 steps on the impressive circular staircase. On descent, you're given a certificate to say you did it, and if you did go all the way to the top, you'll feel it's justly deserved.

### BARBICAN Map p110

☎ information 7638 8891, switchboard 7638 4141; www.barbican.org.uk; Silk St EC2; ☎ 9am-11pm Mon-Sat, noon-11pm Sun; ⚡ Barbican or Moorgate

Londoners remain fairly divided about the architectural legacy of this vast housing and cultural complex in the heart of the City. While the Barbican is named after a Roman fortification protecting ancient Londinium that may once have stood here, what you see here today is very much a product of the 1960s and '70s. Built on a huge bomb site abandoned since WWII and opened progressively between 1969 and 1982, it's fair to say that its brutalist concrete isn't everyone's cup of tea. Yet despite topping several recent polls as London's most ugly building, many Londoners see something very beautiful about its cohesion and ambition – incorporating Shakespeare's local church St Giles Cripplegate into its brave-new-world design and embellishing its public areas with lakes and ponds. With a £7 million refit in 2005, the

Barbican is much better loved than London's other modernist colossus, the South Bank Centre. Trendy urban architects are racing to get hold of the back-in-fashion apartments and the residences in the three high-rise towers that ring the cultural centre are some of the city's most sought after living spaces.

Home of the London Symphony Orchestra and one of the best places to see dance in capital, the Barbican is still London's pre-eminent cultural centre, boasting three cinemas that show a combination of commercial and independent films, two theatres which feature touring drama as well as dance performances and the highly regarded **Barbican Gallery** (adult/senior, student & 12-17yr £8/6; ☎ 11am-8pm, to 6pm Tue & Thu), which stages excellent temporary exhibits.

See The Arts chapter for details of the theatres (p317), cinemas (p314) and concert halls (p312).

### LLOYD'S OF LONDON Map p110

☎ 7623 1000; 1 Lime St EC3; ⚡ Aldgate or Bank While the world's leading insurance brokers are inside underwriting everything from trains, planes and ships to cosmonauts' lives and film stars' legs, people outside still stop to gawp at the stainless steel external ducting and staircases of the Lloyd's of London building. French free climber, or 'spiderman', Alain Robert even felt moved to scale the exterior with his bare hands in 2003.

Lloyd's is the work of Richard Rogers, one of the architects of the Pompidou Centre in Paris, and although it was a watershed for London when it was built in 1986, it's since been overtaken by plenty of other stunning architecture throughout the capital. However, its brave-new-world postmodernism still strikes a particular contrast with the olde-worlde Leadenhall Market next door.

While you can watch people whizzing up and down the outside of the building in its all-glass lifts, sadly you can't experience it yourself. Access to the elevators and the rest of the interior is restricted to employees or professional groups, who must book in advance. Some years the Lloyd's building takes part in Open House Weekend, which gives the public very rare access to the inside of the building.

**LEADENHALL MARKET** Map p110  
[www.leadenhallmarket.co.uk](http://www.leadenhallmarket.co.uk); Whittington Ave EC1;  
 ☎ 7am-5pm Mon-Fri; 🚶 Bank

Like stepping into a small slice of Victorian London, a visit to this dimly lit, covered mall off Gracechurch St is a minor time-travelling experience. There's been a market on this site since the Roman era, but the architecture that survives is all cobblestones and late-19th-century ironwork; even modern restaurants and chain stores decorate their façades in period style here. The market also appears as Diagon Alley in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. For details of what's on sale, see p233.

**BANK OF ENGLAND MUSEUM** Map p110  
 ☎ 7601 5545; [www.bankofengland.co.uk](http://www.bankofengland.co.uk); Bartholomew Lane EC2; admission free, audioguides £1; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri; 🚶 Bank

When James II declared war against France in the 17th century, he looked over his shoulder and soon realised he didn't have the funds to finance his armed forces. A Scottish merchant by the name of William Paterson came up with the idea of forming a joint-stock bank that could lend the government money and, in 1694, so began the Bank of England and the notion of national debt. The bank rapidly expanded in size and stature and moved to this site in 1734. During a financial crisis at the end of the 18th century, a cartoon appeared depicting the bank as a haggard old woman, and this is probably the origin of its nickname 'the Old Lady of Threadneedle St', which has stuck ever since. The institution is now in charge of maintaining the integrity of the sterling and the British financial system and even sets interest rates since Gordon Brown empowered it to as Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1997. The gifted Sir John Soane built the original structure, although the governors saw fit to demolish most of his splendid bank in the early 20th century and replace it with a utilitarian, no-frills model that they would soon regret.

The centrepiece of the museum – which explores the evolution of money and the history of this venerable institution, and which is not *nearly* as dull as it sounds – is a postwar reconstruction of Soane's original stock office complete with mannequins in period dress behind original mahogany counters. A series of rooms leading off the office are packed with

exhibits ranging from photographs and coins to a gold bar you can lift up (it's amazingly heavy) and the muskets once used to defend the bank.

**GUILDHALL** Map p110  
 ☎ 7606 3030; [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk); Gresham St EC2; admission free; 🚶 always call ahead; 🚶 Bank; 🚶

Bang in the centre of the Square Mile, the Guildhall has been the City's seat of government for nearly 800 years. The present building dates from the early 15th century, making it the only secular stone structure to have survived the Great Fire of 1666, although it was severely damaged both then and during the Blitz of 1940.

Most visitors' first port of call is the impressive Great Hall, where you can see the banners and shields of London's 12 guilds (principal livery companies), which used to wield absolute power throughout the City. The lord mayor and sheriffs are still elected annually in the vast open hall, with its chunky chandeliers and its church-style monuments. It is often closed for various other formal functions, so it's best to ring ahead. Meetings of the Common Council are held here every third Thursday of each month (except August) at 1pm, and the Guildhall hosts the awards dinner for the Man Booker Prize, the leading British literary award.

Among the monuments to look out for if the hall is open are statues of Winston Churchill, Admiral Nelson, the Duke of Wellington and the two prime ministers Pitt the Elder and Younger. In the minstrels' gallery at the western end are statues of the biblical giants Gog and Magog, traditionally considered to be guardians of the City; today's figures replaced similar 18th-century statues destroyed in the Blitz. The Guildhall's stained glass was also blown out during the Blitz but a modern window in the southwestern corner depicts the city's history; look out for a picture of London's first lord mayor, Richard 'Dick' Whittington, and his famous cat.

Beneath the Great Hall is London's largest medieval crypt, with 19 stained-glass windows showing the livery companies' coats of arms. The crypt can be seen only as part of a free guided tour (☎ 7606 3030, ext 1463).

The buildings to the west house Corporation of London offices and the Guildhall

Library (☎ 7606 3030; Aldermanbury EC2; ☎ 9.30am-4.45pm Mon-Sat), founded in about 1420 under the terms of Dick Whittington's will. It is divided into three sections for research: printed books; manuscripts; and prints, maps and drawings. Also here is the Clockmakers' Company Museum (☎ 7332 1868; Guildhall Library, Aldermanbury EC2; admission free; ☎ 9.30am-4.45pm Mon-Fri), which has a collection of more than 700 clocks and watches dating back some 500 years. The clock museum sometimes closes for an hour or two on Monday to wind the clocks.

**GUILDHALL ART GALLERY & ROMAN LONDON AMPHITHEATRE** Map p110

☎ 7332 3700; [www.guildhall-art-gallery.org.uk](http://www.guildhall-art-gallery.org.uk); Guildhall Yard EC2; adult/senior & student £2.50/1, all day Fri & daily after 3.30pm free; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, noon-4pm Sun; 🚶 Bank

The gallery of the City of London provides a fascinating look at the politics of the Square Mile over the past few centuries, with a great collection of paintings of London in the 18th and 19th centuries, as well as the vast frieze entitled *The Defeat of the Floating Batteries* (1791), depicting the British victory at the Siege of Gibraltar in 1782. This huge painting was removed to safety just a month before the gallery was hit by a German bomb in 1941 – it spent 50 years rolled up before a spectacular restoration in 1999.

An even more recent arrival is a sculpture of former prime minister Margaret Thatcher, which has to be housed in a protective glass case as the iron lady was decapitated here by an angry punter with a cricket bat soon after its installation in 2002. Today, following some tricky neck surgery, the Maggie has finally rejoined the gallery's collection, but her contentious legacy lives on.

The real highlight of the museum is deep in the darkened basement, where the archaeological remains of Roman London's amphitheatre, or coliseum, lie. Discovered only in 1988 when work finally began on a new gallery following the original's destruction in the Blitz, they were immediately declared an Ancient Monument, and the new gallery built around them. While only a few remnants of the stone walls lining the eastern entrance still stand, they're imaginatively fleshed out with a black-and-fluorescent-green trompe l'oeil of the

missing seating, and computer-meshed outlines of spectators and gladiators. The roar of the crowd goes up as you reach the end of the entrance tunnel and hit the central stage, giving a real sense of how Roman London might have felt. Markings on the square outside the Guildhall mark out the original extent of the amphitheatre, allowing people to imagine the scale of the original building.

**ST LAWRENCE JEWRY** Map p110

☎ 7600 9478; Gresham St EC2; admission free; ☎ 7.30am-2.15pm; 🚶 Bank; 🚶

To look at the Corporation of London's extremely well-preserved official church, you'd barely realise that it was almost completely destroyed during WWII. Instead, it does Sir Christopher Wren, who built it in 1678, and its subsequent restorers proud, with its immaculate alabaster walls and gilt trimmings. The arms of the City of London adorn the organ above the door at the western end. The Commonwealth Chapel is bedecked with the flags of member nations. Free piano recitals are held each Monday at 1pm; organ recitals at the same time on Tuesday.

As the church name suggests, this was once part of the Jewish quarter – the centre being Old Jewry, the street to the southeast. The district was sadly not without its pogroms. After some 500 Jews were killed in 1262 in mob 'retaliation' against a Jewish moneylender, Edward I expelled the entire community from London to Flanders in 1290. They did not return until the late 17th century.

## TOWER HILL

**TOWER OF LONDON** Map p120

☎ 7709 0765; [www.hrp.org.uk](http://www.hrp.org.uk); Tower Hill EC3; adult/5-15yr/senior & student/family £16/9.50/13/45; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun & Mon Mar-Oct, 9am-5pm Tue-Sat, 10am-5pm Sun & Mon Nov-Feb, last admission on all days 1hr before closing time; 🚶 Tower Hill; 🚶

The absolute kernel of London with a history as bleak and bloody as it is fascinating, the Tower of London should be first on anyone's list of London's sights. Despite ever-growing ticket prices and the hoards of tourists that descend here in the summer months, this is one of those rare pleasures: somewhere worth the hype. Throughout



the ages, murder and political skulduggery have reigned as much as kings and queens, so tales of imprisonment and executions will pepper your trail.

The Tower is in fact a castle, and not towerlike at all (although in the Middle Ages it's easy to imagine how the White Tower would have dwarfed the huts of the peasantry surrounding the castle walls) and has been the property (and sometime London residence) of the monarch since it was begun during the reign of William the Conqueror (1066–87). By far the best preserved medieval castle in London, it's one of the capital's four Unesco World Heritage sites (the others are Westminster Abbey, Kew Gardens and Maritime Greenwich), and will fascinate anyone with any interest at all in history, the monarchy and warfare.

With more than two million visitors a year, crowds are quite serious in the high season and it's best to buy a ticket in advance as well as to visit later in the day. You can buy Tower tickets online, or at any tube station up to a week beforehand, which can save you a long time when you arrive. Also, after 3pm the groups have usually left and the place is a lot more pleasant to stroll around. During the winter months it's far less crowded, so there's no need to do either of the preceding.

Your best bet is to start with a free hour-long tour given by the Yeoman Warders, which are a great way to bring the various parts of the tower to life. The Yeoman Warders have been guarding the tower since 1485, and have all served a minimum of 22 years in the British Armed

Forces. Known affectionately as 'beefeaters' by the public (due to the large rations of beef given to them in the past), there are 35 Yeoman Warders today, including Moira Cameron, the first ever female beefeater, who began serving in 2007. While officially they guard the tower and Crown Jewels at night, their role is as tour guides (and to pose for photographs with curious foreigners). These tours leave from the Middle Tower every 30 minutes from 9.30am (10am on Sunday) to 3.30pm (2.30pm in winter) daily. The warders also conduct about eight different short talks (35 minutes) and tours (45 minutes) on specific themes. The first is at 9.30am Monday to Saturday (10.15am on Sunday in summer, 11.30am in winter), the last at 5.15pm (3pm in winter). Less theatrical are the self-paced audioguides available in five languages for £3 from the information point on Water Lane.

You enter the tower via the West Gate and proceed across the walkway over the dry moat between the Middle Tower and Byward Tower. The original moat was finally drained of centuries of festering sewage in the 19th century, necessitated by persistent cholera outbreaks, and a superbly manicured lawn now surrounds the Tower. Before you stands the Bell Tower, housing the tower's curfew bells and one-time home to Thomas More. The politician and author of *Utopia* was imprisoned here in 1534 before his execution for refusing to recognise King Henry VIII as the new head of the Church of England in place of the Pope. To your left are the casements of the former Royal Mint, which was moved from this site to new buildings northeast of the castle in 1812.

Continuing past the Bell Tower along Water Lane between the walls you come to the famous Traitors' Gate, the gateway through which prisoners being brought by river entered the tower. Above the gate, rooms inside St Thomas's Tower show what the hall and bedchamber of Edward I (1272–1307) might once have looked like. Here also archaeologists have peeled back the layers of newer buildings to find what went before. Opposite St Thomas's Tower is Wakefield Tower, built by Henry III between 1220 and 1240. Its upper floor is actually entered via St Thomas's Tower and has been even more enticingly furnished with a replica throne and huge candelabra to give an impression of how, as an anteroom

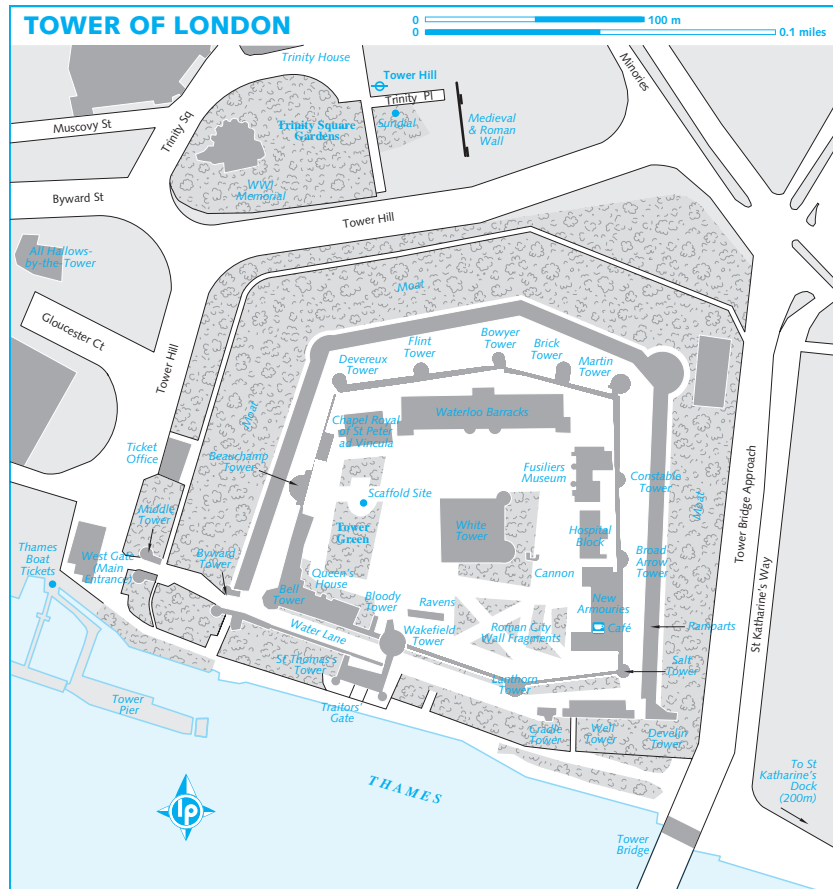
in a medieval palace, it might have looked in Edward I's day. During the 15th-century War of the Roses between the Houses of Lancaster and York, Henry VI was almost certainly murdered in this tower.

Below, in the basement of Wakefield Tower, there's a **Torture at the Tower** exhibition. However, torture wasn't practised as much in England as it was on the Continent apparently, and the display is pretty perfunctory, limiting itself to a rack, a pair of manacles and an instrument for keeping prisoners doubled up called a Scavenger's Daughter. Frankly, you'd see scarier gear at any London S&M club (or, the London Dungeon across the river in London Bridge, see p132). To get to this exhibition and the basement level of Wakefield Tower, you enter the tower courtyard through the arch opposite Traitors' Gate.

As you do so, you'll also see at the centre of the courtyard the Norman **White Tower** with a turret on each of its four corners and a golden weather vane spinning atop each. This tower has a couple of remnants of Norman architecture, including a fireplace and garderobe (lavatory). However, most of its interior is given over to a collection of cannons, guns and suits of armour for men and horses, which come from the Royal Armouries in Leeds. Among the most remarkable exhibits are the 2m suit of armour made for John of Gaunt (to see that coming towards you on a battlefield must have been terrifying) and alongside it a tiny child's suit of armour designed for James I's young son Henry. Another unmissable suit is that of Henry VIII, almost square-shaped to match the monarch's body by his 40s, and featuring what must have been the most impressive posing pouch in the kingdom.

The stretch of green between the Wakefield and White Towers is where the Tower's famous **ravens** are found. Opposite Wakefield Tower and the White Tower is the **Bloody Tower**, with an exhibition on Elizabethan adventurer Sir Walter Raleigh, who was imprisoned here three times by the capricious Elizabeth I, most significantly from 1605 to 1616.

The Bloody Tower acquired its nickname from the story that the 'princes in the tower', Edward V and his younger brother, were murdered here to annul their claims to the throne. The blame is usually laid at the door of their uncle Richard III, although



Henry VII might also have been responsible for the crime.

Beside the Bloody Tower sits a collection of black-and-white half-timbered Tudor houses that are home to Tower of London staff. The **Queen's House**, where Anne Boleyn lived out her final days in 1536, now houses the resident governor and is closed to the public.

North of the Queen's House, across **Tower Green**, is the scaffold site, where seven people were executed by beheading in Tudor times: two of Henry VIII's six wives, the alleged adulterers Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard; the latter's lady-in-waiting, Jane Rochford; Margaret Pole, countess of Salisbury, descended from the House of York; 16-year-old Lady Jane Grey, who fell foul of Henry's daughter Mary I by being her rival for the throne; William, Lord Hastings; and Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, once a favourite of Elizabeth I.

These people were executed within the tower precincts largely to spare the monarch the embarrassment of the usual public execution on Tower Hill, an event that was usually attended by thousands of spectators. In the case of Robert Devereux, the authorities perhaps also feared a popular uprising in his support.

Behind the scaffold site is the **Beauchamp Tower**, where high-ranking prisoners including Anne Boleyn and Lady Jane Grey were jailed and where unhappy inscriptions from the condemned are on display today.

Behind the scaffold site lies the **Chapel Royal of St Peter ad Vincula** (St Peter in Chains), a rare example of ecclesiastical Tudor architecture and the burial place of those beheaded on the scaffold outside or at nearby Tower Hill. Unfortunately, it can only be visited on a group tour or after 4.30pm, so if you aren't already part of a group hang around until one shows up and then tag along. Alternatively, attend a service, which takes place at 9am on Sunday.

To the east of the chapel and north of the White Tower is the building that visitors most want to see: **Waterloo Barracks**, the home of the **Crown Jewels**. You file past footage of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation backed by stirring patriotic music before you reach the vault itself (check out the doors as you go in – they look like they'd survive a nuclear attack). Once inside you'll be confronted with ornate sceptres, plates, orbs and, naturally, crowns. A very slow-moving travelator takes

you past the dozen or so crowns that are the centrepiece, including the £27.5 million Imperial State Crown, set with diamonds (2868 of them to be exact), sapphires, emeralds, rubies and pearls, and the platinum crown of the late Queen Mother, Elizabeth, which is famously set with the 105-carat Koh-i-Noor (Mountain of Light) diamond. Surrounded by myth and legend, the 14th-century diamond has been claimed by both India and Afghanistan. It reputedly confers enormous power on its owner, but male owners are destined to die a tormented death.

Behind the Waterloo Barracks is the newly opened **Bowyer Tower**, where George, Duke of Clarence, brother and rival of Edward IV, was imprisoned, and, according to a long-standing legend that has never been proved, was drowned in a barrel of Malmsey (sweet Madeira wine).

The **Fusiliers Museum** to the east of Waterloo Barracks is run by the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, who charge a separate nominal entrance fee. This museum covers the history of the Royal Fusiliers dating back to 1685, and has models of several battles. A 10-minute video gives details of the modern regiment.

The redbrick **New Armouries** in the south-eastern corner of the inner courtyard houses the **New Armouries Café** where you can grab a pricey sandwich or soup lunch.

There are plenty of other attractions, as well as churches, shops and toilets within the tower complex, but before you leave you should also walk along the inner ramparts. This **Wall Walk** begins with the 13th-century **Salt Tower**, probably used to store saltpetre for gunpowder, and takes in **Broad Arrow Tower**, which houses an exhibit about the gunpowder plotters imprisoned here, many of their original inscriptions having been discovered on the walls. The walk ends at the **Martin Tower**, which houses an exhibition about the original coronation regalia. Here you can see some of the older crowns, which have had their jewels removed. The oldest surviving crown is that of George I, which is topped with the ball and cross from James II's crown. It was from the Martin Tower that Colonel Thomas Blood attempted to steal the Crown Jewels in 1671, disguised as a clergyman.

Finally for those interested in the obscure ritual and ceremony of the British monarchy, the **Key Ceremony** takes place every evening at 9.30pm. This elaborate locking of the

main gates makes the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace look like a recently invented tourist trick – the guards have been performing the ceremony every day unbroken for more than 600 years. Even when a bomb hit the Tower of London during the Blitz, the ceremony was delayed by just 30 minutes, which as everyone agrees is the essence of the famed stiff upper lip. Entry to the ceremony is free, but in a suitably antiquated style you have to apply for tickets by post as demand is so high. See the website for details.

There is limited disabled access to the tower. Call ahead for more information.

## AROUND THE TOWER OF LONDON

Map p120

Despite the Tower's World Heritage Site status, the area immediately to the north is fairly disappointing, especially as in recent years much of it has been a construction site. Just outside Tower Hill tube station, a giant bronze **sundial** depicts the history of London from AD 43 to 1982. It stands on a platform offering a view of the neighbouring **Trinity Square Gardens**, once the site of the Tower Hill scaffold and now home to Edwin Lutyens' memorial to the marines and merchant sailors who lost their lives during WWI. A grassy area, off the steps leading to a subway under the main road, lets you inspect a stretch of the **medieval wall** built on Roman foundations, with a modern statue of Emperor Trajan (r AD 98–117) standing in front of it. At the other end of the tunnel is a postern (gate) dating from the 13th century.

## TOWER BRIDGE

Map p110

➔ **Tower Hill**  
Perhaps second only to Big Ben as London's most recognisable symbol, Tower Bridge doesn't disappoint up close. There's something about its neo-Gothic towers and blue suspension struts that that make it quite enthralling to look at. Built in 1894 as a much-needed crossing point in the east, it was equipped with a then revolutionary bascule (seesaw) mechanism that could clear the way for oncoming ships in three minutes. Although London's days as a thriving port are long over, the bridge still does its stuff, lifting around 1000 times per year and as many as 10 times per day in summer. (For information on the next lifting ring ☎ 7940 3984 or check the following website.)

The **Tower Bridge Exhibition** (☎ 7940 3985; www.towerbridge.org.uk; adult/under 5yr/5-15yr/senior & student/family £6/free/3/4.50/14; 🕒 10am-6.30pm Apr-Oct, 9.30am-6pm Nov-Mar, last admission 1hr before closing) explains the nuts and bolts of it all. If you're not particularly technically minded, however, it's still interesting to get inside the bridge and look out its windows along the Thames.

## ALL HALLOWS-BY-THE-TOWER

Map p110  
☎ 7481 2928; Byward St EC3; admission free; 🕒 9am-5.45pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun; ➔ **Tower Hill**

All Hallows is the parish where famous diarist Samuel Pepys recorded his observations of the nearby Great Fire of London in 1666. Above ground it's a pleasant enough church, rebuilt after WWII. There's a copper spire added in 1957 to make the church stand out more, a pulpit from a Wren church in Cannon St destroyed in the war, a beautiful 17th-century font cover by the master woodcarver Grinling Gibbons and some interesting modern banners.

However, a church by the name All Hallows (meaning 'All Saints') has stood on this site since AD 675, and the best bit of the building today is undoubtedly its atmospheric Saxon undercroft, or **crypt** (admission £3; 🕒 10am-4pm Mon-Sat, 1-4pm Sun). There you'll find a pavement of reused Roman tiles and walls of the 7th-century Saxon church, as well as coins and bits of local history.

William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania, was baptised here in 1644 and there's a memorial to him in the undercroft. John Quincy Adams, sixth president of the USA, was also married at All Hallows in 1797.

## THE CITY WALK

### Walking Tour

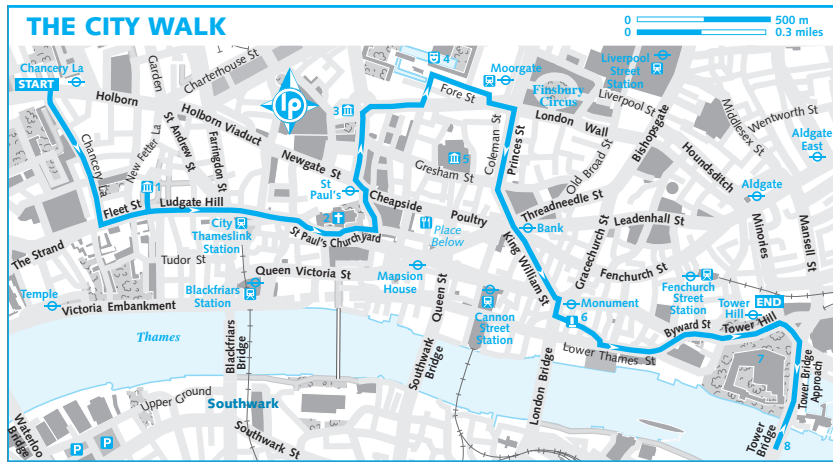
#### 1 Dr Johnson's House

Find your way to this miraculously well-preserved **Georgian mansion** (p114) in the heart of the City and explore the story of Dr Johnson's amazing life and wit within, perhaps even dropping by to his local, Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese on Fleet St (see p282).

#### 2 St Paul's Cathedral

Wren's masterpiece, this **cathedral** (p109) is an unlikely survivor of the Blitz and one of the London skyline's best-loved features. Join the crowds to see the dazzling





## WALK FACTS

Start Chancery Lane tube station  
End Tower Bridge (Tower Hill tube station)  
Distance 1.5 miles  
Duration Two hours  
Fuel stop Place Below (p249)

interior, the fascinating crypt, the whispering gallery and the breathtaking views over the capital from the cupola.

### 3 Museum of London

This wonderful museum (p113) may not look like much from the outside, but it's one of the city's best, totally devoted to documenting the multifaceted history of the capital through its many stages of development from Saxon Village to three-time Olympic city.

### 4 Barbican

Built on the site of an old Roman watch-tower whence its name, the modern Barbican (p117) is the City's fabulous arts centre and an architectural wonder all of its own – love it or hate it, it's worth a visit; check out the greenhouse, the lakes and Shakespeare's parish Church, St Giles' Cripplegate.

### 5 Guildhall

Once the very heart of the City, seat of power and influence, the Guildhall (p118) is today still the home to the Corporation of London,

which runs not only the City but many of the capital's biggest parks. Here delve into the bizarre ritual of the guilds, see the excellent art gallery and go back in time two millennia to see the remains of London's Roman amphitheatre.

### 6 Monument

This column (p117) marks the Great Fire of London, and – while not for the vertiginous – is a superb way to see the City up close. Despite the number of high rises all around, the Monument still feels extremely high, giving you an idea of how massive it would have looked in the 17th century!

### 7 Tower of London

The sheer amount of history within the massive stone walls of the Tower of London (p119) is hard to fathom. The White Tower, the Crown Jewels, the Yeoman Warders, the Scaffold Site and Traitor's Gate all have fascinating stories associated with them and the Tower of London deserves at least a half day's visit at the end of the walk.

### 8 Tower Bridge

A wonderful icon of Victorian engineering, Tower Bridge (p123) has been a symbol of London since the day it was built when it was the largest bascule bridge in the world. A walk across it (and visit to the interesting exhibition from which the views are spectacular) is a must to appreciate old Father Thames at its widest and most spectacular.

## THE SOUTH BANK

Eating p249; Drinking p282; Shopping p224; Sleeping p350

The transformation of this neighbourhood, which was until relatively recently considered to be the 'wrong' side of the Thames, has been nothing short of astonishing. This is where new London faces off old London, and both come out winners. Indeed, two of the city's major new landmarks have come to be located here, and they stare a pair of its oldest icons straight in the face. The British Airways London Eye 'wheel of good fortune' has been raised across the water from the neo-Gothic Parliament at Westminster, while the disused Bankside Power Station has morphed into Tate Modern, London's most visited sight, opposite St Paul's Cathedral.

The South Bank is made up of five contiguous areas, which tend to blend into one another without much warning. From west to east they are: the area around Waterloo railway station and the renovated Southbank Centre complex of theatres and concert halls; Bankside and, to the south, Southwark, with the stunning Millennium Bridge pushing off from between Tate Modern and Shakespeare's Globe; and Borough, with London's most popular (and trendy) food market, and Bermondsey, boasting a slew of popular museums, including the London Dungeon and the Design Museum.

The best way to see this neighbourhood is on foot. And if you follow the Silver Jubilee Walkway and the South Bank section of the Thames Path (see p206) along the southern riverbank – one of the most pleasant strolls in town – you're in pole position to see it. Images of the industrial age such as the Art Deco Oxo Tower have been given new life, while shiny space-age confections such as City Hall have also sprung up. And always in sight is Father Thames himself.

## WATERLOO

In 1951 the British government attempted to raise the spirits of a nation still digging through rubble and on restricted rations six years after the end of WWII by holding a national celebration called the Festival of Britain. Its permanent legacy in London was the brutalist Royal Festival Hall, a building that helped shape the face of the river-facing South Bank for the next two decades.

A cluster of concrete buildings known as the Southbank Centre still stands but has undergone a remarkable makeover over the past decade. Though it will never compete with the impressive County Hall or iconic London Eye in a beauty or popularity contest, the remodelled centre will at least be easier on the eye and continue to be the capital's most important cultural complex.

Waterloo, named after a field in Belgium where the Duke of Wellington stopped Napoleon's advance through Europe once and for all, was nearly all marshland until the 18th century, as the name of one of the area's main streets, Lower Marsh, suggests. Bridges from the northern bank of the Thames at Westmin-

## top picks

### THE SOUTH BANK

- BFI Southbank (p128)
- Borough Market (p132)
- British Airways London Eye (below)
- Shakespeare's Globe (p130)
- Tate Modern (p129)

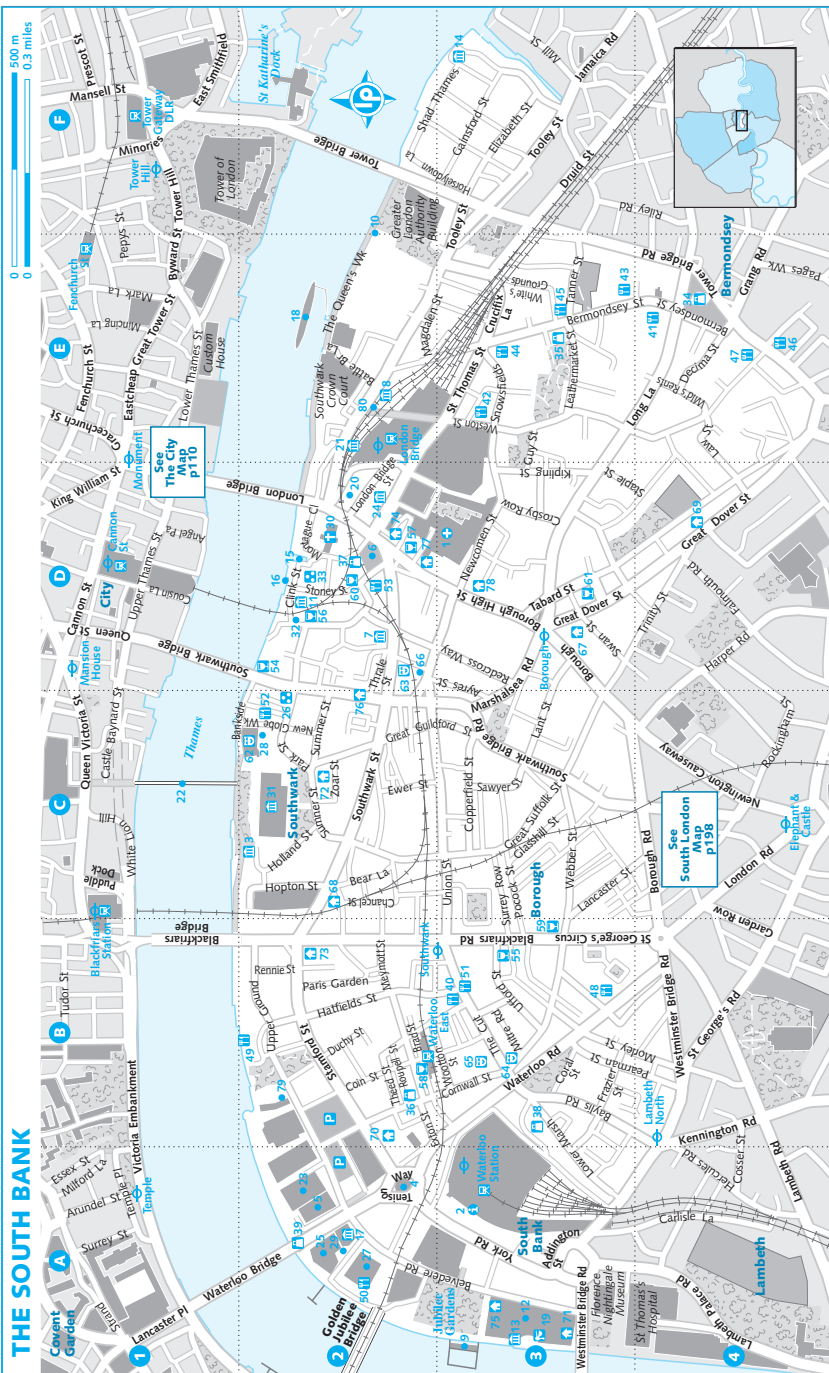
ster and Waterloo changed all that and massive Waterloo train station opened in 1848.

### BRITISH AIRWAYS LONDON EYE

Map p126

☎ 0870 500 0600; [www.londoneye.com](http://www.londoneye.com); Jubilee Gardens SE1; adult/5-15yr/senior £14.50/7.25/11; ☀ 10am-8pm, to 9pm Jun-Sep, closed 1 week in Jan; 🚶 Waterloo; 🚶

It's difficult to remember what London looked like before the landmark London Eye began twirling at the southwestern end of Jubilee Gardens during the millennium year. Not only has it fundamentally altered the skyline of the South Bank but, standing 135m tall in a fairly flat city, it is visible from many surprising parts of the city (eg Kennington and Mayfair). A ride – or 'flight', as sponsors British Airways (BA) like to call it – in one of the wheel's 32 glass-enclosed gondolas holding up to 25 people is something you really can't miss if you want to say you've 'done' London. It takes a gracefully slow 30 minutes and, weather permitting, you can see 25 miles in every direction from the top of what is the world's tallest Ferris



## THE SOUTH BANK

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while. To the west lies Windsor, while to the east the sea. In between, you have the chance to pick out familiar landmarks.

You can save 10% on standard flight prices and avoid the queues to buy tickets by booking online (minimum two hours before your chosen time). Be sure to arrive 30 minutes in advance.

### COUNTY HALL Map p126

Westminster Bridge Rd SE1; ☎ Westminster or Waterloo; ♿

Begun in 1909, County Hall took more than five decades to complete. Today it contains an art museum and gallery, vast aquarium and two hotels.

It seems that no major European city is complete these days without a museum devoted to the work of Salvador Dalí, and Dali Universe (☎ 0870 744 7485; www.daliuniverse.com; adult/4-7yr/8-16yr/senior & student/family £12/5/8/10/30; ☎ 10am-6.30pm) is the world's largest, with 500 of the prolific surrealist

artist's twisted paintings, etchings, sculptures and other works on display in a series of low-lit galleries arranged according to theme: Sensuality and Femininity, Religion and Mythology, and Dreams and Fantasy. Keep an eye out for Dalí's famous melting pocket watch (*Persistence of Memory*), Mae West Lips Sofa and the backdrop he painted for Hitchcock's film *Spellbound*. Temporary exhibitions, which have in the past focused on such artists as Picasso or Warhol, are located in the adjacent County Hall Gallery (☎ 10am-6.30pm); entry is included in the general admission price.

The London Aquarium (☎ 7967 8000; www.londonaquarium.co.uk; adult/3-14yr/senior & student/family £13.25/9.75/11.25/44; ☎ 10am-6pm, to 7pm late Jul-Aug; ☎ Westminster or Waterloo; ♿) is one of the largest in Europe and, as room after room of fish tanks go, this is a pretty good one. Fish are grouped in some 14 zones according to their geographic origin, from the Pacific to the Atlantic Oceans and from temperate



waters to tropical seas. The coral-reef (zone 10) and mangrove (zone 13) displays are particularly impressive, and there's a 'touch pool' with manta rays for the kids.

### SOUTHBANK CENTRE Map p126

☎ 0871 663 2509; [www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk); Belvedere Rd SE1; ☎ waterloo; ♿

The flagship venue of the Southbank Centre, the collection of concrete buildings and walkways wedged between Hungerford and Waterloo Bridges, is the Royal Festival Hall. It is the oldest building of the centre that is still standing, having been erected to cheer up a glum postwar populace as part of the 1951 Festival of Britain. Its slightly curved façade of glass and Portland stone always won it more public approbation than its 1970s neighbours, but a two-year refit costing £75 million has added new pedestrian walkways, food outlets, bookshops and music stores below it and a fabulous new restaurant called Skylyn (p249).

Just north, Queen Elizabeth Hall is the second-largest concert venue in the centre and hosts chamber orchestras, quartets, choirs, dance performances and even opera. It also contains the smaller Purcell Room. Underneath its elevated floor, you'll find a real skateboarders' hang-out, suitably decorated with master-class graffiti tagging.

The Hayward Gallery (☎ 0870 380 0400; [www.hayward.org.uk](http://www.hayward.org.uk); admission from £5; ☎ 10am-6pm, to 10pm Fri & Sat) is one of London's premier exhibition spaces for major international art shows. The grey fortresslike building dating from 1968 it makes an excellent hanging space for the blockbuster exhibitions it puts on. Admission prices depend on what's on.

### BFI SOUTHBANK Map p126

☎ 7255 1444, bookings 7928 3232; [www.bfi.org.uk](http://www.bfi.org.uk); Theatre Ave SE1; ☎ 11am-11pm; ☎ waterloo; ♿

Tucked almost out of sight under the arches of Waterloo Bridge, and until recently called the National Film Theatre, is the revamped British Film Institute Southbank containing four cinemas that screen some 2000 films a year, a gallery and the new Mediatheque (☎ 7928 3535; admission free; ☎ 11am-8pm), where you watch film and TV highlights from the BFI National Archive. The BFI is largely a repertory or art-house theatre, runs regular retrospectives and is the major venue for the London Film Festival in late October.

The Riverside Walk Market (☎ 10am-7pm Sat & Sun), with prints and second-hand books, takes place immediately in front of the BFI Southbank under the arches of the bridge.

### BFI IMAX CINEMA Map p126

☎ 0870 787 2525; [www.bfi.org.uk/imax](http://www.bfi.org.uk/imax); 1 Charlie Chaplin Walk SE1; adult/4-14yr/senior & student from £8.50/5/6.25; ☎ 7 screenings 11am-8pm, additional screening at 11.15pm Sat; ☎ Waterloo; ♿ The renamed British Film Institute IMAX Cinema in the centre of a busy roundabout screens the predictable mix of 2-D and IMAX 3-D documentaries about travel, space and wildlife, lasting from 40 minutes to 1½ hours, as well as recently released blockbusters. The drum-shaped building sits on 'springs' to reduce vibrations and traffic noise from the traffic circle and subways below, and the exterior changes colour at night. And size does matter here: the 477-seat cinema is the largest in Europe, with a screen measuring 20m high and 26m wide.

### NATIONAL THEATRE Map p126

☎ 7452 3400; [www.nationaltheatre.org.uk](http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk); South Bank SE1; ☎ Waterloo; ♿

This is the nation's flagship theatre complex, comprising three auditoriums: the Olivier, Lyttelton and Cottesloe. Opened in 1976 – one of your humble authors (no prize for guessing which one) worked in the staff canteen that spring and watched Albert Finney rehearse in Peter Hall's *Tamburlaine the Great* by Christopher Marlowe – and modernised to the tune of £42 million in the late 1990s, it's been undergoing an artistic renaissance under the directorship of Nicholas Hytner. **Backstage tours** (adult/concession/family £5/4/13; ☎ tours 6 times Mon-Fri, 2 times Sat) lasting 1¼ hours are also offered. There are sometimes art exhibitions in the lobby and other public areas.

## BANKSIDE & SOUTHWARK

Outside the jurisdiction of the City and notorious for its brothels, bear-baiting and prisons, Bankside was London's very own Sodom and Gomorrah during Elizabethan times. And it was for this reason that Shakespeare's Globe Theatre and the nearby Rose Theatre were built here. A full five centuries on, the area's entertainments are somewhat more highbrow. The Globe has gone respectable and a disused

power station has become the world's leading modern art gallery (and, importantly, London's most visited sight).

### TATE MODERN Map p126

☎ general enquiries 7887 8000, tickets 7887 8888, recorded information 7887 8008; [www.tate.org.uk/modern](http://www.tate.org.uk/modern); Queen's Walk SE1; admission free, special exhibitions £6-10; ☎ 10am-6pm Sun-Thu, to 10pm Fri & Sat; ☎ St Paul's, Southwark or London Bridge; ♿

The public's love affair with this phenomenally successful modern art gallery shows no sign of waning. Serious art critics have occasionally swiped at its populism (eg Carl Höller's funfairlike slides, Olafur Eliasson's participatory *The Weather Project*, both in the vast Turbine Hall) and poked holes in its collection. But five million visitors appear to disagree, making it the world's most popular contemporary art gallery and – almost unbelievably – the most visited sight in London, just ahead of the British Museum.

The critics are right in one sense, though: this 'Tate Modern effect' is really more about the building and its location than about the mostly 20th-century art inside. Leading Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron won the Pritzker, architecture's most prestigious prize, for their transformation of the empty Bankside Power Station, which was built between 1947 and 1963 and decommissioned 23 years later. Leaving the building's single central chimney, adding a two-storey glass box onto the roof and using the vast Turbine Hall as a dramatic entrance space were three strokes of genius. Then, of course, there are the wonderful views of the Thames and St Paul's, particularly from the restaurant-bar on the 7th level and coffee bar on the 4th. There's also a café on the 2nd level, plus places to relax overlooking the Turbine Hall. An 11-storey glass tower extension to the

southwest corner in the form of a ziggurat – a spiralling stepped pyramid – by the same architects is now under way and will be completed in 2012.

Tate Modern's permanent collection on levels 3 and 5 is now arranged by both theme and chronology. States of Flux is devoted to early-20th-century avant-garde movements, including cubism and futurism. Poetry and Dream examines surrealism through various themes and techniques. Material Gestures features European and American painting and sculpture of the 1940s and '50s. Idea and Object looks at minimalism and conceptual art from the 1960s onward.

More than 60,000 works are on constant rotation here, and the curators have at their disposal paintings by Georges Braque, Henri Matisse, Piet Mondrian and Andy Warhol, as well as pieces by Joseph Beuys, Marcel Duchamp, Damien Hirst, Rebecca Horn, Claes Oldenburg and Auguste Rodin. Mark Rothko's famous Seagram murals have been given their own space on level 3; other familiar favourites include Roy Lichtenstein's *Whaam!* (level 5), Jackson Pollock's *Summertime: No 9A* (level 3) and Andy Warhol's *Marilyn Diptych* (level 5).

Special exhibitions (level 4) in the past have included retrospectives on Edward Hopper, Frida Kahlo, August Strindberg, Nazism and 'Degenerate' Art and local 'bad boys' Gilbert & George. **Audioguides**, with four different tours, are available for £2. Free **guided highlights tours** depart at 11am, noon, 2pm and 3pm daily.

The **Tate Boat**, painted by Damien Hirst, operates between the Bankside Pier at Tate Modern and the Millbank Pier at sister-museum **Tate Britain** (p103), stopping en route at the London Eye. Services from Tate Modern depart from 10am to 4.40pm daily, at 40-minute intervals (see p387).

## PICK OF THE STYX: LONDON'S UNDERGROUND RIVERS

The Thames is not London's only river: many have been culverted over the centuries and now course unseen underground. Some survive only in place names: Hole Bourne, Wells, Tyburn, Walbrook and Westbourne, which was dammed up in 1730 to form the Serpentine in Hyde Park. The most famous of these Rivers Styx is the Fleet, which rises in Hampstead and Kenwood ponds and flows south through Camden Town, King's Cross, Farringdon Rd and New Bridge St, where it empties into the Thames at Blackfriars Bridge. It had been used as an open sewer and as a dumping area for entrails by butchers for centuries; the Elizabethan playwright Ben Jonson describes a voyage on the Fleet on a hot summer's night in which every stroke of the oars 'belch'd forth an ayre as hot as the muster of all your night-tubs discharging their merd-urinous load'. After the Great Fire Christopher Wren oversaw the deepening and widening of a section of the Fleet into a canal, but this was covered over in 1733 as was the rest of the river three decades later.



## MILLENNIUM BRIDGE Map p126

Arguably the most useful of all the so-called millennium projects to open in 2000, the Millennium Bridge pushes off from the south bank of the Thames in front of Tate Modern and berths on the north bank at the steps of Peter's Hill below St Paul's Cathedral. The low-slung frame designed by Sir Norman Foster and Antony Caro looks pretty spectacular, particularly lit up at night with fibre optics, and the view of St Paul's from the South Bank has swiftly become one of London's iconic images. The bridge got off on the wrong, err, footing when it had to be closed just three days after opening in June 2000 because of the alarming way it swayed under the weight of pedestrians. An 18-month refit costing £5 million eventually saw it right.

## SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE Map p126

☎ 7902 1500; [www.shakespeares-globe.org](http://www.shakespeares-globe.org); 21 New Globe Walk SE1; exhibition entrance incl guided tour of theatre adult/5-15yr/senior & student/family £9/6.50/7.50/20; ☎ 9am-noon & 12.30-5pm Mon-Sat, 9am-11.30am & noon-5pm Sun mid-Apr-mid-Oct, 10am-5pm mid-Oct-mid-Apr, tours every 15-30min; ☎ London Bridge; 🏛️ Shakespeare's Globe consists of the reconstructed Globe Theatre and, beneath it, an exhibition hall, entry to which includes a tour of the Globe Theatre except when matinées are being staged. Then the tour shifts to the nearby Rose Theatre (right). The exhibition focuses on Elizabethan London and stagecraft and the struggle to get the theatre rebuilt in the 20th century. The exhibits devoted to Elizabethan special effects and costumes are especially interesting as are the recordings of some of the greatest Shakespearean performances ever.

The original Globe – known as the 'Wooden O' after its circular shape and roofless centre – was erected in 1599 with timber taken from the demolished Theatre (1576) on Curtain Rd in Shoreditch. The Globe was closed in 1642 after the English Civil War was won by the Puritans, who regarded the theatre as the devil's workshop, and it was dismantled two years later. Despite the worldwide popularity of Shakespeare over the centuries, the Globe was barely a distant memory when American actor (and later film director) Sam Wanamaker came searching for it in 1949. Undeterred by the fact that the foundations of the theatre had vanished beneath a row

of listed Georgian houses, Wanamaker set up the Globe Playhouse Trust in 1970 and began fundraising for a memorial theatre. Work started only 200m from the original Globe site in 1987, but Wanamaker died four years before it opened in 1997.

The new Globe was painstakingly constructed with 600 oak pegs (there's not a nail or a screw in the house), specially fired Tudor bricks and thatching reeds from Norfolk that – for some odd reason – pigeons don't like; even the plaster contains goat hair, lime and sand as it did in Shakespeare's time. Unlike other venues for Shakespearean plays, this theatre has been designed to resemble the original as closely as possible – even if that means leaving the arena open to the skies and roar of passing aircraft, expecting the 500 'groundlings' to stand even in the rain, and obstructing much of the view from the seats closest to the stage with two enormous 'original' Corinthian pillars. The Globe Café on the Piazza level and the Globe Restaurant on the 1st floor are open for lunch and dinner till 10pm or 11pm.

The season runs from May to early October. For ticket details see p318. Attempts to raise funds to complete the indoor Inigo Jones Theatre, a replica of a Jacobean playhouse connected to the Globe for winter performances, have not been successful.

## ROSE THEATRE Map p126

☎ 7902 1500; [www.rosetheatre.org.uk](http://www.rosetheatre.org.uk); 56 Park St SE1; adult/5-15yr/senior & student £6.50/3.50/5.50; ☎ 1-5pm Tue-Sun May-Oct; ☎ London Bridge; 🏛️ The Rose, for which Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson wrote their greatest plays and in which Shakespeare learned his craft, is unique in that its original 16th-century foundations have been unearthed. They were discovered in 1989 beneath an office building at Southwark Bridge and given a protective concrete cover. Administered by the nearby Globe Theatre, the Rose is open to the public only when matinées are being performed at the Globe Theatre.

## GOLDEN HINDE Map p126

☎ 0870 011 8700; [www.goldenhinde.org](http://www.goldenhinde.org); St Mary Overie Dock, Cathedral St SE1; adult/child, senior & student/family £6/4.50/18; ☎ 9am-5.30pm; ☎ London Bridge

Okay, it looks like a dinky theme-park ride and kids do love it, but stepping aboard this replica of Sir Francis Drake's famous Tudor ship will inspire genuine admiration for

the admiral and his rather short – average height: 1.6m – crew. This tiny five-deck galleon was home to Drake and his crew from 1577 to 1580 as they became the first sailors to circumnavigate the globe. Adult visitors wandering around stooped must also marvel at how the taller, modern-day crew managed to spend 20 years at sea on this 37m-long replica, after it was launched in 1973.

Tickets are available from the Golden Hinde Shop (☎ 7403 0123; Pickfords Wharf, 1 Clink St SE1) just opposite the ruins of Winchester Palace. You can also spend the night aboard for £39.50 per person, including a supper of stew and bread and a breakfast of bread and cheese.

## CLINK PRISON MUSEUM Map p126

☎ 7403 0900; [www.clink.co.uk](http://www.clink.co.uk); 1 Clink St SE1; adult/senior, student & child/family £5/3.50/12; ☎ 10am-6pm, to 9pm Jul-Sep; ☎ London Bridge This erstwhile private jail in the park of Winchester Palace (below), a 28-hectare area known as the Liberty of the Clink and under the jurisdiction of the bishops of Winchester and not the City, was used to detain debtors, whores, thieves and even actors. This was the notorious address that gave us the expression 'in the clink' (in jail). The poky, rather hokey museum inside reveals the wretched life of the prisoners who were forced to pay for their own food and accommodation. There's a nice little collection of instruments of torture, too.

## WINCHESTER PALACE Map p126

Clink St SE1; ☎ London Bridge All that remains of a huge palace complex, built by the powerful and corrupt bishops of Winchester in the early 12th century, is a 14th-century rose window carved in a wall from the Great Hall, and parts of the flooring, both visible from the street. The palace was built in 1109 and remained the bishops' home for more than 500 years, before being converted into a prison for royalists under the puritanical Oliver Cromwell in 1642. The rose window was discovered in Clink St warehouse in 1814.

## VINOPOLIS Map p126

☎ 0870 241 4040; [www.vinopolis.co.uk](http://www.vinopolis.co.uk); 1 Bank End SE1; tours £16-31; ☎ noon-10pm Mon, Thu & Fri, 11am-9pm Sat, noon-6pm Sun; ☎ London Bridge; 🏛️ Vinopolis, spread over a hectare of Victorian railway vaults in Bankside, cashes in

on Londoners' love affair with things red, white and rosé. Vinopolis provides a pretty cheesy tour of the world of wine and it's very popular with hen parties; need we say more? However, those with time and patience who want to know a little more about wine production and regional varieties from France to South Africa and Chile to Australia will find it interesting enough. Be advised, though, that you need to follow the audioguide to make sense of the exhibits, which introduce visitors to the history of wine-making, vineyards and grape varieties, regional characteristics and which wine goes with which food. All tours, including the Original Tour (£16), end in the Grand Tasting Halls, where you sample five different wines from around the world. The Discovery (£21), Vintage (£26) and Champagne (£31) Tours include additional wine tastings as well as other alcoholic libations.

## BANKSIDE GALLERY Map p126

☎ 7928 7521; [www.banksidegallery.com](http://www.banksidegallery.com); 48 Hopton St SE1; admission free; ☎ 11am-6pm; ☎ St Paul's, Southwark or London Bridge; 🏛️ Bankside Gallery is home to the Royal Watercolour Society and the Royal Society of Painter-Printmakers. There's no permanent collection at this friendly upbeat place, but there are frequently changing exhibitions of watercolours, prints and engravings. Call ahead for the occasional Artists' Perspectives, where artists talk about their work, and other events.

## BOROUGH & BERMONDSEY

Although parts of these two are still pretty rundown, the area is very much on the up and up and trend-followers like to bill it as 'the new Hoxton'. Indeed, all the prerequisites are already in place here: a trendy market, a community of creative types living in loft buildings such as the former Hartley jam factory, and a growing cluster of gastropubs, restaurants and hip cafés in and around popular Bermondsey St. The HMS *Belfast*, the London Dungeon and the neighbourhood's several museums are all worth exploring.

## SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL Map p126

☎ 7367 6700; [www.southwark.anglican.org/cathedral](http://www.southwark.anglican.org/cathedral); Montague Close SE1; admission free, requested donation £4; ☎ 8am-6pm; ☎ London Bridge; 🏛️

The earliest surviving part of this relatively small cathedral is the atmospheric retrochoir,

which was part of the 13th-century Priory of St Mary Overie (from 'St Mary over the Water'). However, most of the building, including the nave, is Victorian.

You enter via the southwest door and immediately to the left is the **Marchioness memorial** to the 51 people who died when a pleasure cruiser on the Thames hit a dredger and sank near Southwark Bridge in 1989. In the north transept, you'll see a **memorial tablet to Lionel Lockyer** (a quack doctor celebrated for his pills) and its humorous epitaph. On the eastern side of the north transept is the **Harvard Chapel**, originally the chapel of St John the Evangelist but now named after John Harvard, founder of Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, who was baptised here in 1607.

A few steps to the east is the 16th-century **Great Screen** separating the choir from the retrochoir. The screen was a gift of the bishop of Winchester in 1520. On the choir floor is a tablet marking the **tomb of Edmund Shakespeare**, actor-brother of the Bard, who died in 1607.

In the south aisle of the nave is a green alabaster **monument to William Shakespeare** with depictions of the original Globe Theatre and Southwark Cathedral; the stained-glass window above shows characters from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*. Beside the monument is a **plaque to Sam Wanamaker** (1919–93), the American film director and actor who was the force behind the rebuilt Globe Theatre.

**Audioguides** (adult/child/senior & student £2.50/1.25/2) to the main cathedral, lasting about 40 minutes, are available from the gift shop. Evensong is at 5.30pm weekdays, 4pm Saturday and 3pm Sunday.

### BOROUGH MARKET Map p126

☎ 7407 1002; [www.boroughmarket.org.uk](http://www.boroughmarket.org.uk); nr Southwark & Stoney Sts SE1; ☎ 11am–5pm Thu, noon–6pm Fri, 9am–4pm Sat; ☉ London Bridge Here in some form or another since the 13th century, 'London's Larder' has enjoyed an enormous renaissance in recent years, overflowing with food-lovers, both experienced and wannabes, and has become quite a tourist destination. See also p242.

### DESIGN MUSEUM Map p126

☎ 0870 833 9955; [www.designmuseum.org](http://www.designmuseum.org); 28 Shad Thames SE1; adult/under 12/student & concession £7/free/4; ☎ 10am–5.45pm; ☉ Tower Hill or London Bridge; ♿

In recent years this museum, founded by Sir Terence Conran 20 years ago and housed in a 1930s-era warehouse, has abandoned its permanent collection of 20th- and 21st-century objects to make way for a revolving programme of special exhibitions. But although those shows are populist – a display of Manolo Blahnik shoes; Formula One racing cars; the evolution and use of what is our favourite material in the world, Velcro – they are also very popular. The informal **White Café** (☎ 10am–5.30pm) is on the ground floor and the more formal **Blue Print Café** (p250) restaurant is upstairs.

A short distance to the south of the museum in the centre of Queen Elizabeth St is a bronze **statue of Jacob**, one of the many Courage Brewery dray horses stabled here in the 19th century. These workhorses delivered beer all over London from the brewery on Horselydown ('horse lie down') Lane, where the poor old things rested before crossing the bridge – again and again.

### LONDON DUNGEON Map p126

☎ 7403 7221, recorded information 0900 160 0066; [www.thedungeons.com](http://www.thedungeons.com); 28–34 Tooley St SE1; adult/5–15yr/16–18yr, student & senior £16.95/11.05/13.95; ☎ 10am–5.30pm Apr–late Oct, to 5pm late Oct–Mar; ☉ London Bridge Under the arches of the Tooley St railway bridge, the London Dungeon was supposedly developed after somebody's kid didn't find Madame Tussauds Chamber of Horrors frightening enough. Well, they failed in that endeavour but the place continues to mint money.

It all starts with a stagger through a mirror maze (the Labyrinth of the Lost); followed by a waltz through the bubonic plague (c 1665); a push through a torture chamber; a run 'through' the Great Fire of London (where – to give you an idea of the production values – wafting fabric makes up the 'flames'); a close shave with Sweeney Todd, the demon barber of Fleet St; and an encounter with Jack the Ripper, where the Victorian serial killer is shown with the five prostitutes he sliced and diced, their entrails hanging out in full gory display. The best bits, though, are the vaudevillian delights of being sentenced by a mad, bewigged judge on trumped-up charges, the fairground-ride boat to Traitor's Gate and the new Extremis Drop Ride

to Doom that has you 'plummeting' to your death by hanging from the gallows.

It's a good idea to buy tickets online (adult/five to 15 years/16 to 18 years, student and senior £19.50/16.95/18.25) for this camped-up 90-minute gore-fest to avoid the mammoth queues.

### CITY HALL Map p126

☎ 7983 4100; [www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk); The Queen's Walk SE1; admission free; ☎ 8am–8pm Mon–Fri & 1st weekend of the month; ☉ Tower Hill or London Bridge; ♿ Glass-clad City Hall, designed by Sir Norman Foster and Ken Shuttleworth, is transparent in both the figurative and literal senses. There's a **visitors centre** (☎ 9am–5.30pm) on the lower ground floor, which also includes the 'London Photomat', an aerial photo of 1000 sq metres of the city stuck to the floor and large enough for you to walk on and pick out individual buildings, and a café looking onto an outside amphitheatre. Some other areas, including the ramp, the meeting room on the 6th floor called 'London's Living Room' (available to any Londoner) and outside viewing gallery, are open on certain weekends. Check the website for details.

### HMS BELFAST Map p126

☎ 7940 6300; [www.hmsbelfast.org.uk](http://www.hmsbelfast.org.uk); Morgan's Lane, Tooley St SE1; adult/under 16yr/senior & student £9.95/free/6.15; ☎ 10am–6pm Mar–Oct, to 5pm Nov–Feb; ☉ London Bridge; ♿ Moored in the Thames opposite the newly laid-out Potters Fields Park, HMS *Belfast* is a big toy that kids of all ages generally love. Of course, for most of its commissioned life this large, light cruiser had a rather more serious purpose than as a plaything. Launched in 1938 from the Belfast shipyard Harland & Wolff, it served in WWII, most noticeably in the Normandy landings, and during the Korean War.

It probably helps to be keen on things naval, but the HMS *Belfast* is surprisingly interesting for what it shows of the way of life on board a cruiser, laying out everything from its operations room – which has been reconstructed to show its role in the 1943 Battle of North Cape off Norway, which ended in the sinking of the German battleship *Scharnhorst* – and bridge (where you can sit in the admiral's chair) to its boiler room and living quarters. On

the open deck, there are 16 six-inch guns, whose sights you can peer through.

Your (free) audioguide will help you wend your way from one audio point to the next on five decks and four platforms.

There is some disabled access. Call ahead for more information.

### BRITAIN AT WAR EXPERIENCE Map p126

☎ 7403 3171; [www.britainatwar.co.uk](http://www.britainatwar.co.uk); 64–66 Tooley St SE1; adult/under 16yr/concession/family £9.50/4.85/5.75/20; ☎ 10am–5.30pm Apr–Sep, to 4.30pm Oct–Mar; ☉ London Bridge Under another Tooley St railway arch, the Britain at War Experience aims to educate the younger generation about the effect WWII had on daily life while simultaneously playing on the nostalgia of the war generation who sit in the mock Anderson air-raid shelter listening to the simulated sounds of warning sirens and bombers flying overhead with extraordinary detachment. In general it's a tribute to ordinary people and comes off fairly well – though the rather musty displays make it feel like you're on a low-budget TV stage-set.

You descend by lift to a reproduction of an Underground station fitted with bunks, tea urns and even a lending library (as some of the stations really were) and then progress through rooms that display wartime newspaper front pages, posters and Ministry of Food ration books. The BBC Radio Studio allows you to hear broadcasts from everyone from Winston Churchill and Edward Murrow to Hitler and Lord Haw Haw; the Rainbow Corner is a mock-up of a club frequented by American GIs 'over here'. Finally, you emerge amid the wreckage of a shop hit by a bomb, with the smoke still eddying around and the injured – or dead – being carried from the rubble.

### OLD OPERATING THEATRE MUSEUM & HERB GARRET Map p126

☎ 7188 2679; [www.thegarret.org.uk](http://www.thegarret.org.uk); 9a St Thomas St SE1; adult/child/senior & student/family £5.25/3/4.25/12.95; ☎ 10.30am–5pm; ☉ London Bridge

This unique museum, at the top of the narrow and rickety 32-step tower of St Thomas Church (1703), focuses on the nastiness of 19th-century hospital treatment. The garret was used by the apothecary of St Thomas's Hospital to store medicinal herbs and now houses an atmospheric medical museum delightfully hung with bunches of

herbs that soften the impact of the horrible devices displayed in the glass cases.

Even more interesting is the 19th-century operating theatre attached to the garret. Here you'll see the sharp, vicious-looking instruments 19th-century doctors used, and you'll view the rough-and-ready conditions under which they operated – without antiseptic on a wooden table in what looks like a modern lecture hall. Placards explain how, without anaesthetic, surgeons had to perform quickly on patients; one minute to complete an amputation was reckoned about right. A box of sawdust was placed beneath the table to catch the blood and guts and contemporary accounts record the surgeons wearing frock coats 'stiff and stinking with pus and blood'. Don't eat lunch before visiting and you probably won't want it afterwards.

## BRAMAH MUSEUM OF TEA & COFFEE

Map p126

☎ 7403 5650; [www.bramahmuseum.co.uk](http://www.bramahmuseum.co.uk); 40 Southwark St SE1; adult/child/senior & student/family £4/3/3.50/10; 🕒 10am-6pm; 📍 London Bridge; ♿

This is a pleasant, nostalgic place to while away half an hour – provided your visit does not coincide with the arrival of another tour group. Trace the route by which tea conquered the world, making its way to the sitting rooms of Holland and England and further afield from the eastern seaports of China; nearby Butler's Wharf once handled 6000 chests of tea in a single day. Or simply enjoy the chintzy cornucopia of tea-and coffee-drinking equipment, from floral

teacups and silverware to Japanese canisters of tea. In the adjoining **Tea Room** (☎ 7.30am-6pm), your cuppa is served with an egg timer so you can get the infusion just right.

## THE SOUTH BANK WALK

### Walking Tour

#### 1 County Hall

Across Westminster Bridge from the Houses of Parliament, this **monumental building** (p127) with its curved façade and colonnades was once home to the London County Council and then the renamed (1965) Greater London Council. It now houses museums and hotels.

#### 2 BFI Southbank

The long-awaited new headquarters of the **British Film Institute** (p128) in South Bank is a mecca for film buffs and historians alike. It screens thousands of films in four theatres each year, and archived films are available for watching in the new Mediatheque.

#### 3 Millennium Bridge

This pedestrian bridge (p130) linking the north and south banks of the Thames, a slender 'blade

of light' designed by Sir Norman Foster, is everything contemporary architecture should be: modern, beautiful and useful. It carries up to 10,000 pedestrians each day.

#### 4 Golden Hinde

Now that the *Cutty Sark* (p183) is on sick leave, the **Golden Hinde** (p130) is the only masted ship open to visitors in a city that was once the largest and richest port in the world. It's tiny but fascinating to visit.

#### 5 Southwark Cathedral

Sometimes referred to as the 'Cinderella of English cathedrals', **Southwark** (p131) is often

overlooked but well worth a visit, especially for its historical associations. A monument to Shakespeare, whose great works were originally written for the **Bankside playhouses**, takes pride of place here.

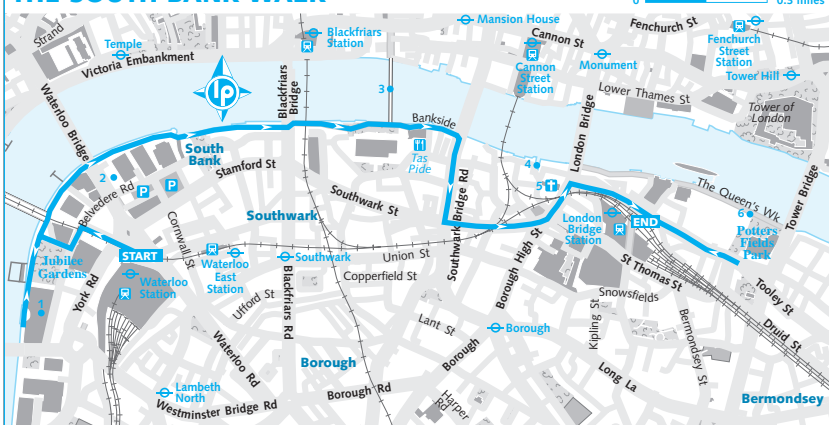
#### 6 City Hall

Nicknamed 'the egg' (or, more cheekily, 'the testicle' because of its shape), this **glass-clad building** (p133) could also be likened to a spaceman wearing a helmet. It has an interior spiral ramp ascending above the assembly chamber to the building's roof, which has now been fitted with energy-saving solar panels.

### WALK FACTS

Start Waterloo tube station  
End London Bridge tube station  
Distance 1.5 miles  
Duration Two hours  
Fuel stop Tas Pide (p275)

### THE SOUTH BANK WALK





## HYDE PARK TO CHELSEA

Eating p251; Drinking p284; Shopping p226; Sleeping p351

The area stretching from Hyde Park – the largest of London’s Royal Parks – to Chelsea is high-class territory. It’s all groomed trust-fund babes, blond boys in convertibles, multimillion-pound property and glitzy shopping, and even though South Kensington encompasses a lot of the class, it isn’t all about eye candy; thanks to Prince Albert and the 1851 Great Exhibition, the area is also home to the Natural History (p141), Science (p141) and Victoria & Albert (p139) Museums. This is also one of London’s most sophisticated stretches, with sizable English, French, Italian and Far Eastern communities all snuggled happily under the umbrella of prosperity.

Chelsea has been one of London’s most fashionable precincts ever since chancellor Thomas More moved here in the early 16th century. The ‘village of palaces’ became one of London’s most desirable neighbourhoods, as it was close to the bustle of the City and Westminster yet still concealed behind a big bend in the river. Even when it was consumed by greater London in the 20th century, it retained its aristocratic angle and managed to mix it with a bohemian vibe, with the swinging ‘60s scene starting at its main artery, King’s Rd. Chelsea didn’t miss out on a big slice of punk cred in the following decade, either. These days its residents still have among the highest incomes of any London borough (shops and restaurants think that you do, too), and the community is as cosmopolitan as the local football team.

Belgravia has had a reputation for elitism ever since it was laid out by builder Thomas Cubitt in the 19th century, with its white stuccoed squares and charming, mainly residential streets and quaint cobbled mews. It’s also home to numerous embassies and a few wonderful old-fashioned pubs.

Knightsbridge, once famous for highwaymen and raucous drinking, is now renowned for its swanky shopping and for being a playpen for moneyed and perpetually tanned middle-aged men and ditzy young rich girls (though they’re not necessarily playing together).

Kensington High St, a lively blend of upmarket boutiques and chain stores, dominates the area of Kensington itself. North of here is Holland Park, a residential district of elegant town houses built around a wooded park.

The utterly splendid Hyde Park (p145) and Kensington Gardens – think of them as one big green entity – separate the glitz of Knightsbridge and Kensington from the noise and havoc of the West End, shooing the hoi polloi away with exclusive hotels and expensive shopping.

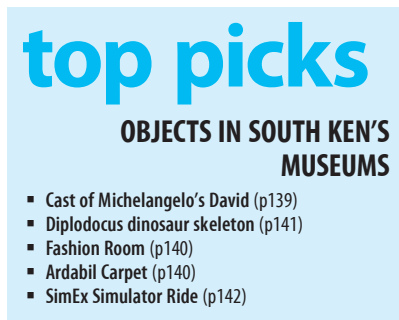
Finally, Victoria (p146). What can one say about this relatively drab neighbourhood which looks even less enticing after being grouped with the glam Kensington and Chelsea sisters? The one attraction worth pausing for in Victoria is the candy-striped Westminster Cathedral, a couple of hundred metres from the tube station. Apart from that, Victoria is best known as a transit area, via its huge train and coach stations. There’s not all that much reason for staying unless you’re a backpacker availing yourself of its cheap and predominantly cheerless accommodation. And while Victoria’s unattractiveness has a smidgen of character, Pimlico, on the other hand, while being posh in appearance, is as flat as a pancake in terms of personality. Thomas Cubitt built most of it in the 19th century, but he had obviously put all his best ideas into creating swanky Belgravia and couldn’t summon up much imagination for plain Pimlico. It does, however, have some excellent views across the river to the Battersea Power Station.

## CHELSEA & BELGRAVIA

**KING’S ROAD** Map pp138–9

☉ Sloane Sq or South Kensington

In the 17th century, Charles II set up a Chelsea love nest here for him and his mistress,



an orange-seller turned actress at the Drury Lane Theatre by the name of Nell Gwyn. Heading back to Hampton Court Palace of an evening, Charles would make use of a farmer’s track that inevitably came to be known as the King’s Rd. The street was at the

forefront of London, nay world, fashion during the technicolour ‘60s and anarchic ‘70s, and continues to be trendy now, albeit in a more self-conscious way. The street begins at Sloane Sq, to the north of which runs Sloane St, celebrated for its designer boutiques.

**CHELSEA OLD CHURCH** Map pp138–9

☎ 7795 1019; cnr Cheyne Walk & Old Church St SW3;

🕒 1.30–5.30pm Tue–Fri & Sun; ☉ Sloane Sq; ♿

This church is principally a monument to Thomas More (1477–1535), the former chancellor (and now Roman Catholic saint) who lost his head for refusing to go along with Henry VIII’s plan to establish himself as supreme head of the Church of England. Original features include the **More Chapel**, and More’s headless body is rumoured to be buried somewhere within the church. (His head, having been hung out on London Bridge according to the practice of the times, is now at rest a long way away in St Dunstan’s Church, Canterbury.)

Outside is a gold statue of More, who lived in Chelsea with his family in a property expropriated by Henry VIII after the lord chancellor’s execution.

**CHELSEA PHYSIC GARDEN** Map pp138–9

☎ 7352 5646; www.chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk;

66 Royal Hospital Rd SW3; adult/concession £7/4;

🕒 noon–5pm Wed, 2–6pm Sun Apr–Oct, noon–5pm

daily during the Chelsea Flower Show, 11am–

3pm on Snowdrop Days (1st & 2nd Sun in Feb);

☉ Sloane Sq; ♿

Talk about discovering a secret garden in the midst of an urban jungle. Established by the Apothecaries’ Society in 1673 for students working on medicinal plants and healing, this garden is one of the oldest of its kind in Europe. And what’s more, Londoners are relatively ignorant of its existence, which means that the many rare trees, shrubs and plants are yours for quiet exploration. The fascinating pharmaceutical garden grows plants used in contemporary Western medicine; the world medicine garden has a selection of plants used by tribal peoples in Australia, China, India, New Zealand and North America, and there’s a heady perfume and aromatherapy garden.

There is a statue of Sir Hans Sloane, the philanthropist who saved the garden from going under in the early 18th century. Opening hours are limited because the grounds are still used for research and

education. Tours – informative and entertaining – can be organised by appointment.

**ALBERT & BATTERSEA BRIDGES**

Map pp138–9

One of London’s most striking bridges, the Albert is a cross between a cantilever and a suspension bridge, buttressed to strengthen it as an alternative to closure in the 1960s. It was designed by Roland Mason Ordish in 1873, but later modified by the engineer Joseph Bazalgette, who then built the companion Battersea Bridge in 1890. Painted white and pink and with fairy lights adorning its cables, it looks stunning during the day and festive by night. The booths at either end survive from the days when tolls applied.

**ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA** Map pp138–9

☎ 7881 5200; www.chelsea-pensioners.co.uk;

Royal Hospital Rd SW3; admission free; 🕒 10am–

noon & 2–4pm daily Apr–Sep, 10am–noon & 2–4pm

Mon–Sat Oct–Mar; ☉ Sloane Sq; ♿

Designed by Christopher Wren, this superb structure was built in 1692 to provide shelter for ex-servicemen. Since the reign of Charles II, it has housed hundreds of war veterans, known as Chelsea Pensioners. They’re fondly regarded as national treasures, and cut striking figures in the dark-blue greatcoats (in winter) or scarlet frock coats (in summer) that they wear on ceremonial occasions.

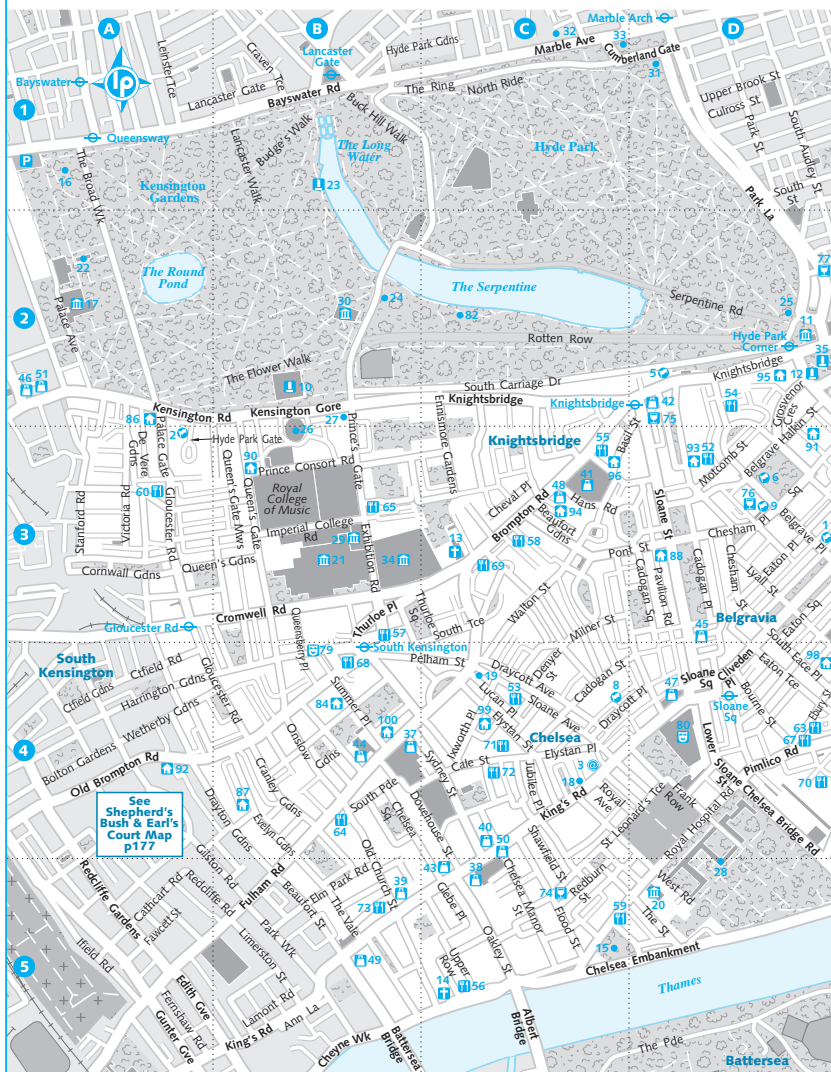
The building, however, needs refurbishing and at the time of writing the Chelsea Pensioners Appeal was trying to raise £35 million by 31 March 2008 in order to refurbish the Long Wards residential wing, as well as build a new Infirmary. If you’re passionate about the cause, you can buy a brick on the website and support the pensioners, or like Jack and Meg White of the White Stripes, hold a gig and donate all the proceeds to the fund.

It’s usually possible to visit the museum (which contains a huge collection of war medals bequeathed by former residents), as well as to look into the hospital’s Great Hall, Octagon, Chapel and courtyards. Do note, however, that the hospital is off limits to visitors when it is hosting events.

The Chelsea Flower Show takes place here in May. For more on that, see www.rhs.org.uk.

Call ahead for disabled access information.

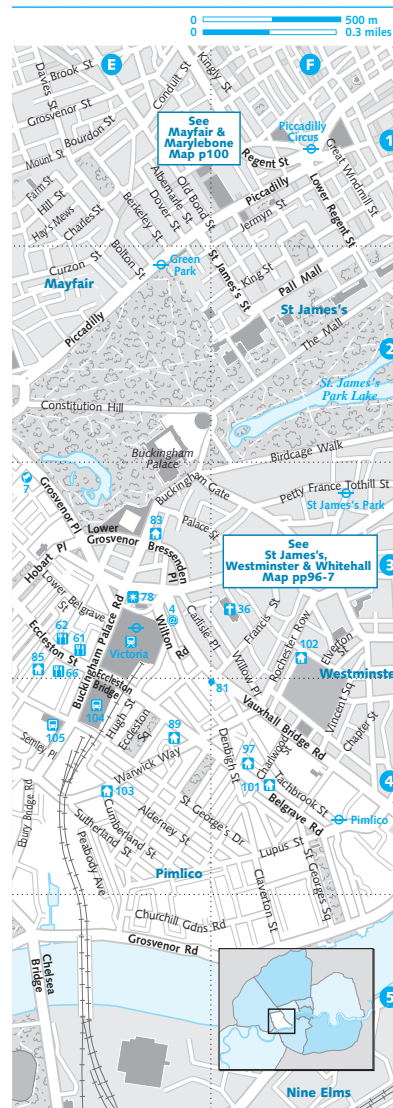
## HYDE PARK TO CHELSEA



**NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM** Map pp138–9  
 ☎ 7881 2455, 7730 0717; [www.national-army-museum.ac.uk](http://www.national-army-museum.ac.uk); Royal Hospital Rd SW3; admission free but donations requested; 🕒 10am–5.30pm; 🚶♿ Sloane Sq; ♿

Suitably located next door to the Royal Hospital, this old-fashioned museum tells the history of the British army from the perspective of the men and women who put their lives on the line for king and coun-

try, conveying the horrors and perceived glories of war with a refreshing lack of meddling by modern technology. The best pieces at the exhibition feature the life and times of the 'Redcoat' (the term for the British soldier from the Battle of Agincourt in 1415 to the American Revolution), the tactical battle at Waterloo between Napoleon and the Duke of Wellington and a display of the skeleton of Napoleon's horse.



## KNIGHTSBRIDGE, KENSINGTON & HYDE PARK

### VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM

Map pp138–9  
 ☎ 7942 2000; [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk); Cromwell Rd SW7; admission free; 🕒 10am–5.45pm, to 10pm Wed & last Fri of month; 🚶♿ South Kensington; ♿  
 When you come to see the V&A, give yourself plenty of time, because we can

guarantee that you'll spend much longer than planned in this brilliant museum. The Museum of Manufactures, as the V&A was originally known when it started in 1852, specialises in decorative art and design, with four million objects collected over the years from Britain and around the globe. It was part of Prince Albert's legacy to the nation in the aftermath of the successful Great Exhibition of 1851, and its original aims – which still hold today – were the 'improvement of public taste in Design' and 'applications of fine art to objects of utility'. It's done a fine job so far.

With so many things on display, it's wise to choose what you want to see and stick to it, otherwise it's easy to get overwhelmed. As you enter under the stunning Dale Chihuly Chandelier you can pick up a map of the museum at the information and ticket desk. (If the main entrance on Cromwell Rd is too busy, there's another around the corner on Exhibition Rd.) Consider one of the free introductory guided tours that leave the main reception area every hour from 10.30am to 4.30pm. There is also family activities information; ask at one of the desks.

Spread over nearly 150 galleries, the museum houses the world's greatest collection of decorative arts, including ancient Chinese ceramics, modernist architectural drawings, Korean bronze and Japanese swords, cartoons by Raphael, spellbinding Asian and Islamic art, Rodin sculptures, gowns from the Elizabethan era, dresses straight from this year's Paris fashion shows, ancient jewellery, a 1930s wireless set – and a lot more stuff hidden in storage.

Level 1 is mostly devoted to art and design from India, China, Japan and Korea, as well as European art. The museum has the best collection of Italian Renaissance sculpture outside Italy, as well as excellent French, German and Spanish sculpture. One of the museum's highlights are the Cast Courts in Rooms 46a and 46b, containing plaster casts collected in the Victorian era, such as Michelangelo's David, which was acquired in 1858. The fig leaf you can see around the back of the statue's plinth is said to have been used to protect Queen Victoria's sensibilities – the Queen was sufficiently shocked by the cast's nudity that the leaf was whipped out during royal visits and covered the offending anatomy by being hung on a pair of hooks. The







*Billy and Stephenson's Rocket* helped Britain become 'the workshop of the world' in the early 19th century. Animations show how the machines worked and are accompanied by detailed overall explanations, including a section on the Luddites who opposed the march of technology.

Of course, it's impossible to miss the huge **Energy Ring** that now hangs over the open atrium from the gallery, *Energy: Fuelling the Future*, on the 2nd floor. Pop up here to enter your name and answers to several energy questions onto the electronic tickertape messages that run around the inside of the ring. On the same level you will also find a re-creation of **Charles Babbage's mechanical calculator** (1832), the famous forerunner to the computer.

The 3rd floor is a favourite place for children, with its gliders, hot-air balloon and varied aircraft, including the *Gipsy Moth*, in which Amy Johnson flew to Australia in 1930. This floor also features an adapted **flight simulator** that's been turned into a 'Motionride'. Level 1 contains displays on food and time, while the 4th and 5th floors contain exhibits on medical and veterinary history.

Nostalgic parents will delight in the old cars and the **Apollo 10 command module**. However, both they and their children will probably most enjoy the hi-tech **Wellcome Wing**, which is spread over several floors at the back of the building. The **SimEx Simulator Ride** and **IMAX Cinema** are found within this wing, with the usual crop of travelogues, space adventures and dinosaur attacks in stunning 3-D. There's a superlative exploration of identity on Level 1 entitled **Who am I?**, plus other hands-on displays for children.

There are no guided tours on offer, but you can pick up trail guides for children (lighter cover for younger kids, darker cover for older ones) or get a guidebook for £2. The **Deep Blue Café** on the ground floor of the Wellcome Wing opens from 10.30am to 5.30pm daily.

### APSLEY HOUSE (WELLINGTON MUSEUM) Map pp138-9

☎ 7499 5676; [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk); 149 Piccadilly W1; adult/child/concession incl audio tour £5.30/2.70/4; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sun, last entry 4pm; 📍 Hyde Park Corner

This stunning house was the first building one saw when entering the city from the west and is therefore known as 'No 1, Lon-

don'; what other place can boast such an address? Still one of London's finest, Apsley House was designed by Robert Adam for Baron Apsley in the late 18th century, but later sold to the first Duke of Wellington, who lived here for 35 years until his death in 1852. The duke cut Napoleon down to size in the Battle of Waterloo and is well known for lending his name to a practical, if none too flattering, style of rubber boot.

In 1947 the house was given to the nation, which must have come as a surprise to the duke's descendants who still live here; 10 of its rooms are open to the public today as the Wellington Museum. The house itself is magnificent and retains many of its original furnishings and collections. Wellington memorabilia, including his medals, some entertaining old cartoons and his death mask, fill the basement gallery, while there's an astonishing collection of china, including some of the Iron Duke's silverware, on the ground floor. The stairwell is dominated by Antonio Canova's staggering 3.4m-high statue of a naked Napoleon, adjudged by the subject as 'rather too athletic'. The 1st-floor rooms are decorated with paintings by Velázquez, Rubens, Brueghel and Murillo, but the most interesting is Goya's portrait of the duke, which some years ago was discovered to have the face of Napoleon's brother, Joseph Bonaparte, beneath the duke's. Apparently, the artist had taken a punt on Napoleon winning the Battle of Waterloo and had to do a quick 'about face' when news of Wellington's victory arrived.

### WELLINGTON ARCH Map pp138-9

☎ 7930 2726; [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk); Hyde Park Corner W2; adult/student & child/senior £3.20/1.60/2.40; 🕒 10am-5pm Wed-Sun; 📍 Hyde Park Corner

Opposite Apsley House in the little bit of green space being strangled by the Hyde Park Corner roundabout is England's answer to the Arc de Triomphe (except this one commemorates France's *defeat* – specifically, Napoleon's at the hands of Wellington). The neoclassical arch, erected in 1826, used to be topped by a disproportionately large equestrian statue of Wellington, but this was removed in 1882 and replaced some years later with the biggest bronze sculpture in Britain, *Peace Descending on the Quadriga of War*.

For years the monument served as the capital's smallest police station, but it was

restored and opened up to the public as a three-level exhibition space focusing on London's arches. The balcony affords unforgettable views of Hyde Park, Buckingham Palace and the Houses of Parliament.

### MICHELIN HOUSE Map pp138-9

81 Fulham Rd SW3; 📍 South Kensington Even if you're not up for dinner at Terence Conran's wonderful restaurant **Bibendum** (p253) in Michelin House, mosey past and have a look at the superb Art Nouveau architecture. It was built for Michelin between 1905 and 1911 by François Espinasse, and completely restored in 1985. The open-fronted ground floor provides space for upmarket fish and flower stalls, the famous roly-poly Michelin Man appears in the modern stained glass, while the lobby is decorated with tiles showing early-20th-century cars. The Conran Shop is also housed here.

### KENSINGTON PALACE Map pp138-9

☎ 0870 751 5176; [www.royalresidences.com](http://www.royalresidences.com); Kensington Gardens W8; adult/child/concession £12/6/10, park & gardens free; 🕒 10am-4.30pm; 📍 Queensway, Notting Hill Gate or High St Kensington

Kensington Palace is welded in people's memory mostly as the residence of the late Diana, Princess of Wales. The palace's lawn was covered with a mountain of flowers following the death of the 'people's princess' in September 1997, an episode in history that showed the Brits significantly loosening the stiff upper lip and mourning the princess with an unprecedented sentimentality. A glimpse of Diana's fetching frocks in the **Royal Ceremonial Dress Collection** is always a highlight.

Of course, Kensington Palace already had a long history when Diana moved in after her divorce from Prince Charles in 1996. Built in 1605, it became the favourite royal residence under William and Mary of Orange in 1689, and remained so until George III became king and relocated to Buckingham Palace. Even afterwards the royals stayed occasionally, with Queen Victoria being born here in 1819.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, Kensington Palace was variously renovated by Sir Christopher Wren and William Kent, so you'll find yourself taking a self-guided audio tour through the surprisingly small,

wood-panelled State Apartments dating from William's time and then the grander apartments by Kent.

Most beautiful of all the quarters is the **Cupola Room**, where the ceremony of initiating men into the exclusive Order of the Garter took place and where Victoria was baptised; you can see the order's crest painted on the trompe l'oeil 'domed' ceiling, which is actually flat.

The **King's Long Gallery** displays some of the royal art collection, including the only known painting of a classical subject by Van Dyck. On the ceiling William Kent painted the story of Odysseus but slipped up by giving the Cyclops two eyes.

The **King's Drawing Room** is dominated by a monumentally ugly painting of **Cupid and Venus** by Giorgio Vasari (1511-74), an Italian mannerist painter who used to brag about the speed at which he worked and was better known for his historical record of the Renaissance. There are splendid views of the park and gardens from here; you can also see the **Round Pond**, once full of turtles for turtle soup but now popular for sailing model boats.

The **King's Staircase** is decorated with striking murals by William Kent, who painted himself in a turban on the fake dome.

The **Sunken Garden** near the palace is at its prettiest in summer; the nearby **Orangery**, designed by Vanbrugh and Hawksmoor as a free-standing conservatory in 1704, is a bright, if rather formal, place for tea.

1a Kensington Palace, formerly Princess Margaret's apartment, can only be visited by guided tour, which should run on the hour between 10.30am and 12.30pm and 2pm and 4pm. It features an exhibition of all the people who lived in the palace from the 18th to the 20th centuries. The space is to be used for other exhibitions, so check what's on before you go (though it's likely to be something to do with Diana).

### KENSINGTON GARDENS Map pp138-9

🕒 dawn-dusk; 📍 Queensway, High St Kensington or Lancaster Gate

Immediately west of Hyde Park, across the Serpentine lake, these gardens are technically part of Kensington Palace. The Palace and the gardens have become something of a shrine to the memory of Princess Diana since her death. If you have kids, visit the **Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Playground**, in the northwest corner of the gardens.

Art is also characteristic of these gardens: George Frampton's famous **Peter Pan statue** is close to the lake, south of the which is an attractive area known as Flower Walk and also, near the main road that runs through the park, are sculptures by Henry Moore and Jacob Epstein.

### SERPENTINE GALLERY Map pp138–9

☎ 7402 6075; [www.serpentinegallery.org](http://www.serpentinegallery.org); Kensington Gardens W8; admission free; 🕒 10am–6pm; 📍 Knightsbridge; ♿

The Serpentine Gallery may be a gentle-looking 1930s tea pavilion in the midst of the leafy Kensington Gardens, but it's one of London's edgiest contemporary art galleries. Artists including Damien Hirst, Andreas Gursky, Louise Bourgeois, Gabriel Orozco and Tomoko Takahashi have all exhibited here, and the gallery's huge windows beam natural light onto the pieces, making the space perfect for sculpture and interactive displays.

Every year a leading architect (who has never built in the UK) is commissioned to build a new pavilion between May and September, which makes it the perfect time to visit. Past architects included Alvaro Siza, Oscar Niemeyer, Daniel Libeskind and Zaha Hadid. Reading, talks and open-air screenings take place here.

### PRINCESS DIANA MEMORIAL

#### FOUNTAIN Map pp138–9

Kensington Gardens W8; 📍 Knightsbridge or South Kensington

The drama surrounding this memorial seems a predictably fraught postscript to a life that itself often hovered between the *Sun's* headlines, Greek tragedy and farce. Envisaged as a 'moat without a castle' (reflecting the Princess's supposed spiritual state?) draped 'like a necklace' (her elegance?) around Hyde Park near the Serpentine Bridge, this circular double stream had to be shut just a fortnight after it opened in 2004. The inclusive design by Kathryn Gustafson initially invited visitors, especially children, to wade in the fountain. But with fans flocking to the site in an unseasonably wet summer, the surrounding grass became muddy and slippery, leaves choked the drains causing an overflow and several people were injured when they slipped on the smooth granite basin.

A year later, the fountain was reopened with a gravel path encircling it to keep the

Glastonbury-style mud bath to a minimum, and with park wardens patrolling the area to make sure visitors only delicately dip in their toes. Today there are no wardens around and visitors are managing by themselves; even if it's not quite what Gustafson imagined, people seem to love it, mesmerised as they are by the water's flow both left and right from the fountain's highest point, or sunning themselves around it.

### ALBERT MEMORIAL Map pp138–9

☎ 7495 0916; 45min guided tours adult/concession £4.50/4; 🕒 tours 2pm & 3pm 1st Sun of the month; 📍 Knightsbridge or South Kensington

On the southern edge of Hyde Park and facing Kensington Gore, this memorial is as over the top as the subject, Queen Victoria's German husband Albert (1819–61), was purportedly humble. Albert explicitly said he did not want a monument and 'if (as is very likely) it became an artistic monstrosity like most of our monuments, it would upset my equanimity to be permanently ridiculed and laughed at in effigy'. Ah, he didn't really mean it, they reckoned, and got George Gilbert Scott to build the 52.5m-high, gaudy Gothic monument in 1872, featuring the prince thumbing through a catalogue for his Great Exhibition, and surrounded by 178 figures representing the continents (Asia, Europe, Africa and America), as well as the arts, industry and science. The monument was unveiled again in 1998 after being renovated at huge expense. It's particularly eye-catching when lit up at night.

### ROYAL ALBERT HALL Map pp138–9

☎ 7589 8212; [www.royalalberthall.com](http://www.royalalberthall.com); Kensington Gore SW7; 📍 South Kensington; ♿

This huge, domed, redbrick amphitheatre adorned with a frieze of Minton tiles is Britain's most famous concert venue. The home of the BBC's Promenade Concerts (or 'Proms'; see p312) every summer, it was ironically never meant to be a concert venue. Instead, this 1871 memorial to Queen Victoria's husband was intended as a hall of arts and sciences, and consequently it spent the first 133 years of its existence tormenting concert performers and audiences with its terrible acoustics. It was said that a piece played here was assured of an immediate second hearing, so bad was the reverberation around the oval structure. A

massive refurbishment was completed in 2004, however, installing air-conditioning, modernising the backstage areas, moving the entrance to the south of the building and fixing the acoustics. You can take a 45-minute **guided tour** (adult/concession £7.50/6.50; 🕒 tours hourly 10am–2.30pm Fri–Tue) of the hall.

If the classical Proms aren't your thing, there's pop, some rock and world music concerts here too, as well as a circus and book readings.

### ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

Map pp138–9

☎ 7591 3000; [www.rgs.org](http://www.rgs.org); 1 Kensington Gore SW7; admission free; 🕒 10am–5pm Mon–Fri; 📍 South Kensington; ♿

A short distance to the east of the Royal Albert Hall is the headquarters of the Royal Geographical Society, housed in a Queen Anne-style redbrick edifice (1874) easily identified by the statues of explorers David Livingstone and Ernest Shackleton outside. The society holds a regular talks programme (many after hours) and photography exhibitions, while the **Foyle Reading Room** (☎ 7591 3040; adult/student per day £10/free) offers access to the society's collection of more than half a million maps, photographs, artefacts, books and manuscripts. The entrance to the society is on Exhibition Rd.

### HYDE PARK Map pp138–9

🕒 5.30am–midnight; 📍 Hyde Park Corner, Marble Arch, Knightsbridge or Lancaster Gate

London's legendary park spreads itself over a whopping 145 hectares of neatly manicured gardens and wild, deserted expanses of overgrown grass. Spring prompts the gorgeous Rose Gardens into vivacious bloom, and summers are full of sunbathers, picnickers, Frisbee-throwers and general London populace who drape themselves across the green. It's the largest of London's Royal Parks and a magnificent venue for open-air concerts, demonstrations and royal occasions. Gun salutes are fired here and soldiers ride through the park each morning on their way to Horse Guards Parade in Whitehall, while people on Rollerblades and bicycles impress passers-by with their tricks.

Hyde Park is separated from Kensington Gardens by the squiggly L-shaped Serpentine lake, which was created when the Westbourne River was dammed in the 1730s; it's a good spot for pleasure boating

in summer (around £5 per half-hour). Henry VIII expropriated the park from the Church in 1536, after which it became a hunting ground for kings and aristocrats; later it became a popular venue for duels, executions and horse racing. It became the first royal park to open to the public in the early 17th century, and famously hosted the Great Exhibition in 1851. During WWII it became an enormous potato bed.

You'll either love or hate the ornate **Queen Elizabeth Gate** (designed by Giuseppe Lund and David Wynne in 1993) leading on to Park Lane near Hyde Park Corner. The pale-green granite sweep of the new **Australian War Memorial** (Map pp138–9) nearby at Hyde Park Corner is a little more restrained.

### SPEAKERS' CORNER Map pp138–9

📍 Marble Arch

The northeastern corner of Hyde Park is traditionally the spot for oratorical acrobatics and soapbox ranting. It's the only place in Britain where demonstrators can assemble without police permission, a concession granted in 1872 as a response to serious riots when 150,000 people gathered to demonstrate against the Sunday Trading Bill before Parliament. If you've got something on your chest, you can get rid of it here on Sunday, although it'll be largely loonies and religious fanatics you'll have for company. Nobody else will take much notice.

### MARBLE ARCH Map pp138–9

📍 Marble Arch

John Nash designed this huge arch in 1827. It was moved here, to the northeastern corner of Hyde Park, from its original spot in front of Buckingham Palace in 1851, when it was adjudged too small and unimposing to be the entrance to the royal manor. There's a one-room flat inside, London's grandest bedsit. If you're feeling anarchic, walk through the central portal, a privilege reserved for the royal family by law.

### TYBURN TREE Map pp138–9

📍 Marble Arch

A plaque on the traffic island at Marble Arch indicates the spot where the infamous Tyburn Tree, a three-legged gallows, once stood. An estimated 50,000 people were executed here between 1300 and 1783, many having been dragged from the Tower of London.

## TYBURN CONVENT

Map pp138–9  
☎ 7723 7262; www.tyburnconvent.org.uk; 8 Hyde Park Pl; admission free; 🗺️ tours of the crypt 10.30am, 3.30pm & 5.30pm, call beforehand; 🚶 Marble Arch; ♿

One of the buildings of this sorrowful and silent place has the distinction of being the smallest house in London, measuring just over a metre in width. A convent was established here in 1903, close to the site of the Tyburn Tree gallows where many Catholics were executed because of their faith during the 16th century, and which later became a place of Catholic pilgrimage. The crypt contains the relics of some 105 martyrs, along with paintings commemorating their lives and recording their deaths. A closed order of Benedictine sisters lives here, as they have for more than a century.

## BROMPTON ORATORY

Map pp138–9  
☎ 7808 0900; 215 Brompton Rd SW7; 🕒 6.30am–8pm; 🚶 South Kensington

Also known as the London Oratory and the Oratory of St Philip Neri, this Roman Catholic church was built in the Italian baroque style in 1884. It has marble, candles and statues galore, and Tony Blair is a regular. There are six daily Masses on weekdays, one at 6pm on Saturday, and nine between 7am and 7pm on Sunday.

## LINLEY SAMBOURNE HOUSE

Map p177  
☎ 7602 3316; www.rbkc.gov.uk/linleysambournehouse; 18 Stafford Tce W8; adult/child/concession £6/1/4; 🗺️ tours at 11.15am, 1pm, 2.15pm, 3.30pm Sat & Sun; 🚶 High St Kensington

Tucked away behind Kensington High St, this was the home of *Punch* political cartoonist and amateur photographer Linley Sambourne and his family from 1874 to 1910. It's one of those houses whose owners never redecorated or threw anything away. What you see is pretty much the typical home of a well-to-do Victorian family: dark wood, Turkish carpets and rich stained glass. Visits are by 90-minute guided tour only (with all but the first guide in period costume).

## VICTORIA & PIMLICO

WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL Map pp138–9  
☎ 7798 9055; www.westminstercathedral.org.uk; Victoria St SW1; cathedral admission free, tower adult/concession £3/1.50, audioguides £2.50;

🗺️ cathedral 7am–7pm, tower 9am–5pm Apr–Nov, 9am–5pm Thu–Sun Dec–Mar; 🚶 Victoria; ♿  
John Francis Bentley's 19th-century cathedral is a superb example of neo-Byzantine architecture: its distinctive candy-striped redbrick and white-stone tower features prominently on the West London skyline. This is the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church in Britain, and while work on it started in 1895, and worshippers began attending in 1903, the church ran out of money and the interior has never been completed. In some ways, it's London's version of Gaudí's La Sagrada Família in Barcelona – a magnificent work in progress.

Remarkably few people think to look inside, but the interior is partly a stunning variety of 100 types of marble and mosaic and partly bare brick. The highly regarded stone carvings of the *14 Stations of the Cross* (1918) by Eric Gill and the marvellously sombre atmosphere make this a welcome haven from the traffic outside. The views from the 83m-tall *Campanile Bell Tower* are impressive, and the fact that it has a lift will have you thanking the heavens.

Seven Masses are said daily from Sunday to Friday and five on Saturday. There's a gift shop and a café here, open 10am to 4.30pm daily.

## THE HYDE PARK WALK

### Walking Tour 1 Hyde Park Corner

Climb the monumental *Wellington Arch* (p142) for great views and, in the same small square of green, you will find the rather tasteful wall of eucalypt green granite of the *Australian War Memorial* (p145). Nearby, the ornate – some say too ornate – *Queen Elizabeth Gate* (p145) was commissioned to honour the late Queen Mother. The aromatic, relaxing and beautifully colourful rose garden is one of the more magical places in London.

### 2 The Serpentine

Keep to the lake's northern side and interrupt your walk by renting a paddle boat from the *Serpentine boathouse* (☎ 7262 1330; adult/child per 30min £5/2, per 1hr £7/3; 🕒 10am–4pm Feb & Mar, 10am–6pm Apr–Jun, 10am–7pm Jul & Aug, 10am–5pm Sep & Oct, 10am–5pm Sat & Sun Nov). The *Serpentine solar shuttle boat* (ticket £3/£1.50; 🗺️ shuttles every half hr from noon–5pm), uses only solar power to get you from the boathouse to the *Princess Diana Memorial*



## WALK FACTS

Start Hyde Park Corner tube station  
End Marble Arch tube station  
Distance 2.5 miles  
Duration About 1½ hours  
Fuel stops Coffee and cake at the Lido Café, end-of-walk drink at the Swan or the Island Restaurant & Bar

Fountain. Stop in at the Lido Café (🕒 9am–7.30pm Apr–Oct, 9am–4pm Nov–Mar).

### 3 Princess Diana Memorial Fountain

Despite early teething problems, this concrete 'necklace' of water (p144) sitting on perfectly manicured lawn is a popular chill-out spot today. Water flows from the highest point in both directions, into a small pool at the bottom. Bathing is forbidden, although you are allowed to dip your feet.

### 4 Serpentine Gallery

This former tea-house is now one of the city's best contemporary art galleries (p144), housing many interesting exhibitions and summer pavilions designed by world's leading architects. The space is small enough to get around before any kids accompanying you get bored.

### 5 Albert Memorial

Gilded and enormous, the grandness of the *Albert Memorial* (p144) is in stark contrast with

the humble *Prince Albert*, Queen Victoria's much-loved husband.

### 6 Royal Albert Hall

Another memorial to Queen Victoria's beloved husband, this is Britain's most famous concert hall (p144) that's seen more big names in its time than any other, including the choral version of Blake's *Jerusalem* that was held to celebrate the granting of the vote to women.

### 7 Kensington Palace

Princess Diana's former home and a long-standing royal residence (p143), this is where you can stop off and take a look at the permanent and temporary exhibitions and the stunning interior, before surrendering to one of the park's many stretches of grass.

### 8 Lancaster Gate

There's plenty more to see in the park, if you have time, stamina and the strength of will to resist merely having a snooze on the grass or stopping in at the *Swan* (☎ 7262 5204; 66 Bayswater Rd W2; 🕒 10am–11pm) or the *Island Restaurant & Bar* (☎ 7551 6070; Lancaster Tce W2; 🕒 noon–11pm). Other well-known features include the *Peter Pan Statue* (p144).

### 9 Cumberland Gate

In the northeastern corner of the park, near *Marble Arch* tube station, there's also the *Tyburn Tree* (p145) and, of course, *Speakers' Corner* (p145).



# CLERKENWELL, SHOREDITCH & SPITALFIELDS

Eating p254; Drinking p284; Shopping p227; Sleeping p354

This area of northeast London is the city's ground zero of cool, and its success at the expense of other nightlife areas such as Soho continues to astound pretty much everyone. It's made up of Clerkenwell, just north of the City; Shoreditch and its northern extension Hoxton, an area (roughly) between Old St tube station and just east of Shoreditch High St; and Spitalfields, centred around the market of that name and Brick Lane, Banglatown's main thoroughfare.

The Shoreditch/Hoxton phenomenon began in the late 1990s, when creative types chased out of the West End by prohibitive rents began buying warehouses in this then urban wasteland, abandoned after the collapse of the fabrics industry. Within a few years the area was seriously cool, boasting superslick bars, cutting-edge clubs, galleries and restaurants that catered to the new media-creative-freelance squad. The fact that it was in walking distance of the City and its high-spending, heavy-drinking denizens didn't hurt.

Yet despite the bursting of the dotcom bubble, and the general expectation that the Shoreditch scene would collapse under the weight of its own trucker hats, the regenerated area is flourishing stronger than ever. The entire neighbourhood remains rough enough around the edges to feel a bit of an adventure, but even the partial redevelopment of Spitalfields Market hasn't stopped it in its tracks, and it remains one of London's best nightlife scenes.

Historic Clerkenwell lies in the valley of the River Fleet (from where the 'clerks' well' the neighbourhood is named after sprang), although the river itself has long been bricked over (see p129). Like Shoreditch, Clerkenwell has profited enormously from redevelopment since the late 1980s, and many once-empty warehouses have been converted into expensive flats and work spaces. Clerkenwell is still a great place to see historic landmarks from throughout London's history, including magnificent Smithfield Market, St John's Gate and St Bartholomew's Church.

## CLERKENWELL

**CHARTERHOUSE** Map p150

☎ 7251 5002; Charterhouse Sq EC1; admission £10; ☞ guided tours 2.15pm Wed Apr-Sep; ☞ Barbican or Farringdon

You need to book nearly a year in advance to see inside this former Carthusian monastery, whose centrepiece is a Tudor hall with a restored hammer-beam roof. Its incredibly popular two-hour guided tours held six months a year begin at the 14th-century gatehouse on Charterhouse Sq, before going through to the Preachers' Court (with three original monks' cells in the western wall), the Master's Court, the Great Hall and the Great Chamber, where Queen Elizabeth I stayed on numerous occasions.

The monastery was founded in 1371 by the Carthusians, the strictest of all Roman Catholic monastic orders, who refrained

## top picks

### CLERKENWELL, SHOREDITCH & SPITALFIELDS

- Dennis Severs' House (p152)
- Geffrye Museum (p151)
- Spitalfields Market (opposite & p233)
- St John's Gate (opposite)
- White Cube Gallery (opposite)

from eating meat and took vows of silence, broken only for three hours on Sunday. During the Reformation, the monastery was oppressed, with at least three priors hanged at Tyburn and a dozen monks sent to Newgate, where they were chained upright and died of starvation. King Henry VIII confiscated the monastery in 1537, and it was purchased in 1611 by Thomas Sutton, known at the time as the 'richest commoner in England'. Sutton – of Sutton House (p158) fame – opened an almshouse for destitute gentlemen; some three dozen pensioners (known as 'brothers') live here today and lead the tours. To obtain tickets, send a stamped self-addressed envelope, a covering letter giving at least three dates when you would like to visit and a cheque made payable to 'Charterhouse' to Tour Bookings, Charterhouse, Charterhouse Sq, London EC1M 6AN.

**ST JOHN'S GATE** Map p150

☞ Farringdon

What looks like a toy-town medieval gate cutting across St John's Lane turns out to be the real thing. It dates from the early 16th century but was heavily restored 300 years later. During the Crusades, the Knights of St John of Jerusalem were soldiers who took on a nursing role. In Clerkenwell they established a priory that originally covered around 4 hectares. The gate was built in 1504 as a grand entrance to their church, St John's Clerkenwell in St John's Sq.

Although most of the buildings were destroyed when Henry VIII dissolved every priory in the country between 1536 and 1540, the gate lived on. It had a varied afterlife, not least as a Latin-speaking coffee house run, without much success, by William Hogarth's father during Queen Anne's reign. The restoration dates from the period when it housed the Old Jerusalem Tavern in the 19th century. A pub of (almost) that name can now be found round the corner on Britton St (see p285).

Inside St John's Gate is the small **Order of St John Museum** (☎ 7324 40005; www.sja.org.uk/museum; St John's Lane EC1; admission free; ☞ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat; ☞ Farringdon; ♿) which recounts in three galleries the history of the knights and their properties around the world, and of their successors, the modern British Order of St John and the St John Ambulance brigade. It also offers a potted history of Clerkenwell in photographs and documents.

Definitely try to time your visit for one of the **guided tours** (adult/senior £5/4; ☞ tours 11am & 2.30pm Tue, Fri & Sat) of the gate and the restored church remains. This includes the fine Norman crypt with a sturdy alabaster monument commemorating a Castilian knight (1575); a battered monument portraying the last prior, William Weston, as a skeleton in a shroud; and stained-glass windows showing the main figures in the story. You'll also be shown the sumptuous Chapter Hall where the Chapter General of the Order meets every three months.

**KARL MARX MEMORIAL LIBRARY**

Map p150

☎ 7253 1485; www.marxlibrary.net; 37a Clerkenwell Green EC1; admission free; ☞ 1-6pm Mon-Thu Feb-Dec; ☞ Farringdon

Clerkenwell has quite a radical history. An area of Victorian-era slums (the so-called Rookery), it was settled by mainly Italian immigrants in the 19th century. Modern Italy's founding father Garibaldi dropped by in 1836, and during his European exile, Lenin edited 17 editions of the Russian-language Bolshevik newspaper *Iskra* (Spark) from here in 1902-03. Copies of the newspaper have been preserved in today's library, along with a host of other socialist literature. Non-members are free to look around between 1pm and 2pm, but you need to become a member (£10 per year, £6 day fee but usually valid for up to a week) to use the library or borrow any of its 150,000 books.

## SHOREDITCH & HOXTON

**WHITE CUBE GALLERY** Map p150

☎ 7930 5373; www.whitecube.com; 48 Hoxton Sq N1; admission free; ☞ 10am-6pm Tue-Sat; ☞ Old St

Alongside Charles Saatchi, owner of the erstwhile Saatchi Gallery, the White Cube's Jay Jopling was the man responsible for bringing Britart to the public's attention in the 1990s. He worked with a young Damien Hirst before Saatchi came on the scene, showcased the works of sculptor Antony Gormley (responsible for Gateshead's huge *Angel of the North* sculpture and *Event Horizon*, in which 31 metal casts of the sculptor's naked body were perched on the edge of buildings surrounding the South Bank) and married artist Sam Taylor-Wood. White Cube is now firmly part of Britain's 'new establishment' but shows by Damien Hirst, Tracey Emin and other less well-known artists mean it's always worth coming just to have a look. There's another White Cube in St James's (see p71).

## SPITALFIELDS

Across Commercial St from the church is the late-Victorian Spitalfields Market (p233). Until 1991 this was London's main fruit and vegetable market. Its proximity to Hoxton and Shoreditch means the Sunday market here is still the market of the moment, but with young clothes designers and producers of trendy furniture and ornaments selling their wares.

**BRICK LANE** Map p150

Immortalised in Monica Ali's award-winning eponymous novel, Brick Lane is the centre-





show how the homes of the relatively affluent middle class would have looked from Elizabethan times right through to the end of the 19th century. A postmodernist extension completed in 1998 contains several 20th-century rooms (a flat from the 1930s, a room in the contemporary style of the 1950s, a 1990s converted warehouse complete with Ikea furniture) as well as a lovely herb garden, gallery for temporary exhibits, design centre with works from the local community, shop and restaurant.

Another development has been the exquisite restoration of a **historic almshouse interior** (adult/under 16yr £2/free). It's the absolute attention to detail that impresses, right down to the vintage newspaper left open on the breakfast table. The setting is so fragile, however, that this small almshouse is only open twice a month (usually on a Wednesday and Saturday).

#### DENNIS SEVERS' HOUSE Map p150

📞 7247 4013; [www.dennissevershouse.co.uk](http://www.dennissevershouse.co.uk);  
 18 Folgate St E1; Sun/Mon/Mon evening £8/5/12;  
 🕒 noon-4pm 1st & 3rd Sun of the month, noon-2pm Mon following 1st & 3rd Sun of the month, every Mon evening (times variable); 🚶 Liverpool St  
 This quirky hotchpotch of a cluttered house is named after the late American eccentric who restored and turned it into what he called a 'still-life drama'. Visitors find they have entered the home of a 'family' of Huguenot silk weavers common to the Spitalfields area in the 18th century. However, while they see the fabulous restored Georgian interiors with meals and drinks half-abandoned and rumpled sheets, and while they smell cooking and hear creaking floorboards, their 'hosts' always remain tantalisingly just out of reach. It's a unique and intriguing proposition by day, but the 'Silent Night' tours by candlelight every Monday evening (booking essential) are an even more memorable visit.

Dennis Severs' House is not the only fine Georgian house in Folgate St, north of Spitalfields market; the street is lined with them, and they too were once occupied by the Huguenots who fled religious persecution in France to settle here in the late 17th century. Bringing with them their skills as silk weavers, their presence is still recalled by such street names as Fleur-de-Lis St and Nantes Passage. There are yet more restored Georgian houses along Fournier St.

#### GREAT MOSQUE Map p150

Jamme Masjid; 59 Brick Lane E1; 🚶 Liverpool St  
 The best example of the changes in population that this area has experienced over the past several centuries is this house of worship on Brick Lane. Built in 1743 as the New French Church for the Huguenots, it served as a Methodist chapel for a time until it was transformed into the Great Synagogue for Jewish refugees from Russia and central Europe in 1899. In 1975 it changed faiths yet again, becoming the Great Mosque.

#### CHRIST CHURCH, SPITALFIELDS Map p150

📞 7247 7202; [www.christchurchspitalfields.org](http://www.christchurchspitalfields.org);  
 Commercial St E1; 🕒 11am-4pm Tue, 1-4pm Sun;  
 🚶 Liverpool St

Diagonally opposite Spitalfields market on the corner of Commercial and Fournier Sts is this restored church, where many of the weavers worshipped. The magnificent English baroque structure, with a tall spire sitting on a portico of four great Tuscan columns, was designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor and completed in 1729. Restoration of the interior was completed in 2004.

#### MUSEUM OF IMMIGRATION & DIVERSITY Map p150

📞 7375 1490; [www.19princeletstreet.org.uk](http://www.19princeletstreet.org.uk);  
 19 Princelet St E1; admission by donation; 🚶 Liverpool St

This unique Huguenot town house was built in 1719 and housed a prosperous family of weavers, before becoming home to waves of immigrants including Polish, Irish and Jewish families, the last of which built a synagogue in the back garden in 1869. In keeping with the house's multicultural past, it now houses a Museum of Immigration & Diversity, whose carefully considered exhibits are aimed at both adults and children. Unfortunately the house is in a terrible state of repair and as such opens only infrequently (usually no more than a dozen times a year). Check the website for dates.

## SUNDAYS AT SPITALFIELDS & SHOREDITCH

### Walking Tour 1 Spitalfields Market

This is London's best market (p233), and any Londoner's Sunday-morning joy. As you ap-

proach from Liverpool St, you'll see the new development, which, although trying to maintain an independent spirit and not hosting mega-chains, lacks the old market's rugged and spontaneous atmosphere. Enter the old market building and get lost among the many clothes, furniture and food stalls.

### 2 Absolute Vintage

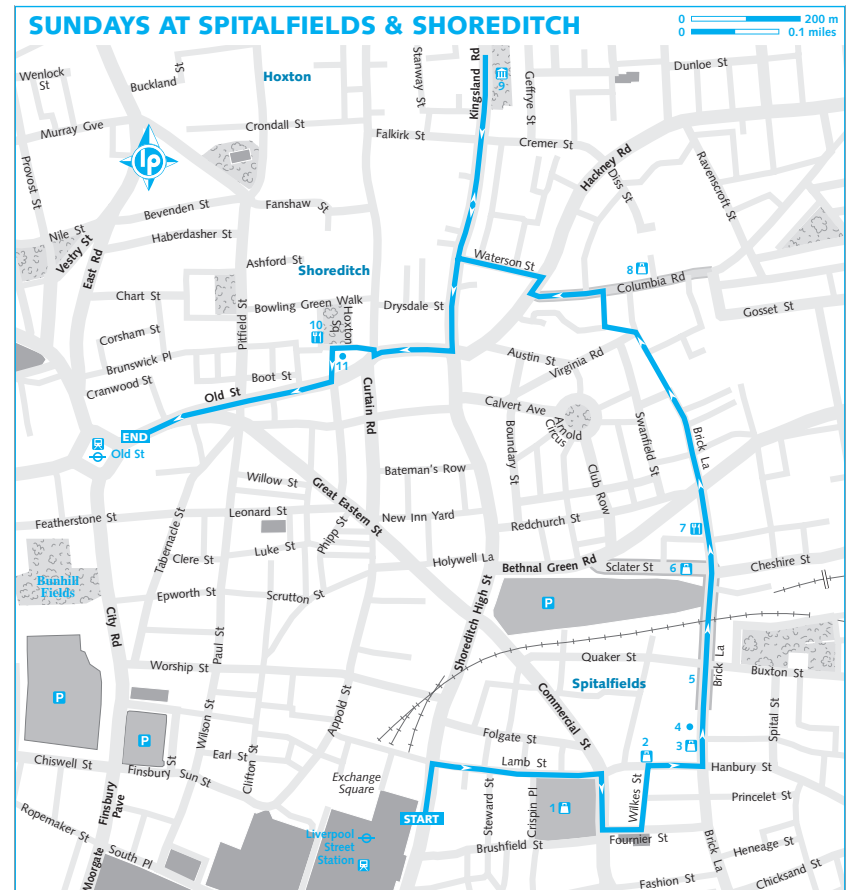
Check out the tons of vintage shoes in this excellent shop (p231). There are colours and sizes for all, with shoes ranging from designer vintage to something out of your grandma's storage. Clothes for men and women line the back of the shop.

### 3 Sunday Up Market

Having lost valuable stall space with the new development, the young designers moved their market (p233) inside the Old Truman Brewery. The new space is brilliant – not as crowded, with wonderful clothes, music and crafts, and the excellent food hall (on the Brick Lane end) has worldwide grub, from Ethiopian veggie dishes to Japanese delicacies.

### WALK FACTS

Best time Sunday mornings  
 Start Liverpool St tube station  
 End Old St tube station  
 Distance 2 miles  
 Duration One hour  
 Fuel Stops Food stalls at the back of Sunday Up Market, Brick Lane Beigel Bake (p258) drink at Hoxton Sq





#### 4 Old Truman Brewery

This was the biggest brewery in London by the mid-18th century, and the Director's House on the left dates from 1740. Next to the 19th-century old Vat House is the 1830 Engineer's House and a row of former stables. The brewery shut down in 1989 and is now part of Sunday Up Market.

#### 5 Brick Lane

In 1550 this was just a country road leading to brickyards, and by the 18th century it had been paved and lined with houses and cottages inhabited by the Spitalfields weavers. Today this vibrant street (p149) is taken up almost entirely by touristy curry houses. All the street names are in Bengali as well as English.

#### 6 Brick Lane Market

Sundays at Brick Lane around the now defunct Shoreditch tube station are the best place to find good bargains for clothes, but the market (p233) is particularly good for furniture. Saunter down Cheshire St for little boutiques featuring new designers and vintage collections.

#### 7 Brick Lane Beigel Bake

At the far end of Brick Lane, this excellent bagel business (p258) was started by some of the Jewish families who originally settled in the neighbourhood and still live here. It operates 24 hours a day and is always busy: with

market shoppers on Sunday and Shoreditch clubbers by night.

#### 8 Columbia Road Flower Market

Every Sunday from dawn market stalls sell freshly cut flowers, plants and orchids for Londoners' gardens and window sills. The earlier you arrive, the better the market (p233), though the best bargains are to be had later on (around noon). Make a beeline for the food stalls behind the main flower sellers for an exotic snack of fried king prawns and sweet chilli sauce.

#### 9 Geffrye Museum

A small estate of Victorian houses, this fascinating museum (p151) is devoted to English furniture through the ages. End your walk in the lovely glass café in the back, and have a look at the museum's aromatic herb garden.

#### 10 Hoxton Square

Walk back down Old St and pop into Hoxton Sq on the way. Check out the green and join the crowds having a drink outside if the weather is good.

#### 11 White Cube Gallery

The first (of the two) creations of Britart pioneers Jay Jopling and his wife Sam Taylor-Wood, herself one of Britain's more prominent contemporary artists, this gallery (p149) always has something fun or controversial hanging on its pristine white walls.

## THE EAST END & DOCKLANDS

Eating p258; Drinking p287; Shopping p229; Sleeping p355

The East End district of Whitechapel may lie within walking distance of the City, and neighbourhoods to the north and east such as Bethnal Green and Mile End be just one and two tube stops away respectively, but the change of pace and style is extraordinary. Traditionally this was working-class London, an area settled by wave upon wave of immigrants, giving it a curious mixture of French Huguenot, Irish, Jewish and Bangladeshi cultures, all of which can still be felt to varying degrees today. Rundown and neglected in the early 1980s, the East End is starting to look up in places. Signs of wealth have started to trickle into the areas around Whitechapel and Aldgate East. Property prices have risen enormously in Mile End, Bethnal Green and Bow, and there's even been a growing focus on ramshackle Hackney and Dalston, which will find itself with a station once the East London line extension is completed in 2010.

Anyone interested in modern, multicultural London should visit the East End. Alongside a couple of interesting museums you'll find some of London's best-value Asian cuisine in Whitechapel, as well as some of its most colourful markets. You may also want to pop into the trend-setting Whitechapel Art Gallery or take a dip in the beautifully renovated London Fields Lido.

Cobbled from the warehouses, docks and basins that made London so fabulously wealthy from the 18th century onward, the Docklands, the East End's southern extension, today is a world of contrasts. Eye-catching bridges across docks and futuristic buildings dominate the skyline; it really is today's view of London's future. But it is also an area rich in history, too, and the Museum in Docklands brings it all to life.

### WHITECHAPEL

The East End's main thoroughfare, Whitechapel High St, hums with a cacophony of Asian and African languages, its busy shops selling everything from Indian snacks to Nigerian fabrics and Middle Eastern jewellery, as the East End's multitudinous ethnic groupings rub up against each other. It's still a chaotic and poor place, but it's one full of life and should not be missed.

#### WHITECHAPEL ART GALLERY Map p156

☎ 7522 7888; [www.whitechapel.org](http://www.whitechapel.org); 80-82 Whitechapel High St E1; admission free; 🕒 11am-6pm Wed-Sun, to 9pm Thu; 📍 Aldgate East; ♿ It's all change at the Whitechapel Art Gallery as it doubles its size by expanding into a disused library next door. During that time, one of the capital's more interesting contemporary art galleries becomes the Whitechapel Laboratory, with changing exhibitions, live music, poetry, talks and film. The new space will contain three new galleries, an Education and

## top picks

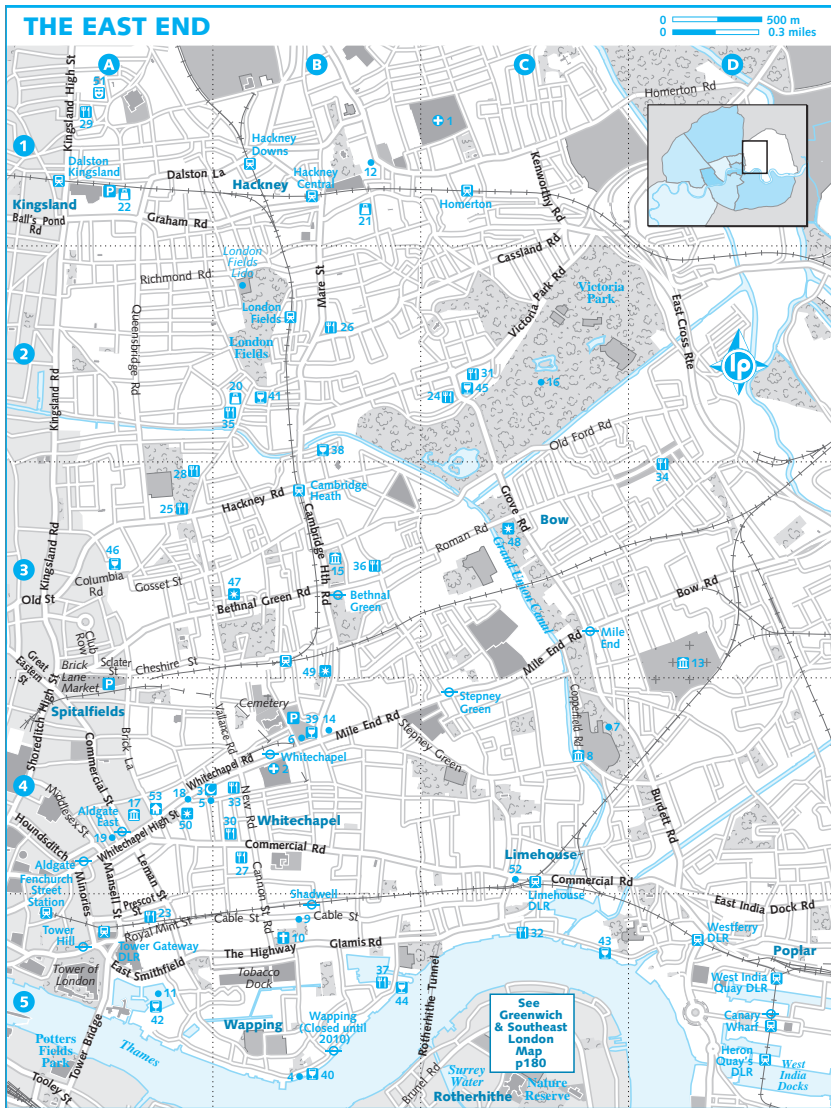
### THE EAST END & DOCKLANDS

- Canary Wharf Tower (p161)
- Museum in Docklands (p161)
- Ragged School Museum (p159)
- Tower Hamlets Cemetery (p159)
- V&A Museum of Childhood (p158)

Research Tower and a street-facing café. The Whitechapel Art Gallery was founded in 1901 by Victorian philanthropist Samuel Barnett to bring art to the people of East London and it has made its name putting on exhibitions by both established and emerging artists, cartoonists and architects, including Gary Hume, Robert Crumb and Mies van der Rohe. Its ambitiously themed shows change every couple of months; check the programme online. Enter from Angel Alley.

#### WHITECHAPEL BELL FOUNDRY

Map p156  
☎ 7247 2599; [www.whitechapelbellfoundry.co.uk](http://www.whitechapelbellfoundry.co.uk); 32-34 Whitechapel Rd E1; tours per person £8; 🕒 tours 10am & 2pm Sat, shop 9.30am-4.15pm Mon-Fri; 📍 Aldgate East  
The Whitechapel Bell Foundry been standing on this site since 1738, although an earlier foundry nearby is known to have been in business in 1570. Both Big Ben (1858) and the Liberty Bell (1752) in Philadelphia were cast here, and the foundry also cast a



new bell for New York City's Trinity Church, damaged in the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. The 1½-hour guided tours on Saturday (children under 14 years not permitted) offer a revealing insight into a distinguished old trade, but bookings are essential. During weekday trading hours you can view a few small exhibits in the foyer or buy bell-related items from the shop.

**WHITECHAPEL ROAD** Map p156  
Within a few minutes' walk of Whitechapel tube station you'll find the large **East London Mosque** (46-92 Whitechapel Rd E1) and behind it on Fieldgate St the **Great Synagogue** (1899).  
Cable St, just south of Whitechapel Rd, towards Wapping, is where you'll find the former **St George's Town Hall building** (236 Cable St E1), now a library. On the east wall of the

**THE EAST END**

<b>INFORMATION</b>					
Homerton Hospital.....	1	C1	Burberry Factory Shop.....	21	B1
Royal London Hospital.....	2	B4	Fabrications.....	(see 20)	
			Ridley Road Market.....	22	A1
<b>SIGHTS</b>	(pp155-59)		<b>EATING</b> 🍴	(pp235-75)	
East London Mosque.....	3	A4	Broadway Market.....	(see 20)	
Execution Dock.....	4	B5	Café Spice Namaste.....	23	A5
Great Synagogue.....	5	A4	Empress of India.....	24	C2
Idea Store.....	6	B4	Frizzante@City Farm.....	25	A3
Mile End Park.....	7	C4	Green Papaya.....	26	B2
Ragged School Museum.....	8	C4	Lahore Kebab House.....	27	B4
St George's Town Hall Building.....	9	B5	Little Georgia.....	28	A3
St George-in-the-East.....	10	B5	Mangal Ocakbasi.....	29	A1
St Katharine's Dock.....	11	A5	Mirch Masala.....	30	B4
Sutton House.....	12	B1	Namo.....	31	C2
Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park.....	13	D3	Narrow.....	32	C5
Trinity Green Almshouses.....	14	B4	New Tawayab.....	33	B4
V&A Museum of Childhood.....	15	B3	Ridley Road Market.....	(see 22)	
Victoria Park.....	16	C2	Roman Road Market.....	34	D3
Whitechapel Art Gallery.....	17	A4	Santa Maria del Buen Ayre.....	35	B2
Whitechapel Bell Foundry.....	18	A4	Thai Garden.....	36	B3
William Booth Statue.....	(see 14)		Wapping Food.....	37	B5
Women's Library.....	19	A4			
			<b>DRINKING</b> 🍷	(pp277-96)	
			Bistrotheque.....	38	B2
<b>SHOPPING</b> 🛍️	(pp215-34)		Blind Beggar.....	39	B4
Broadway Market.....	20	B2			
			<b>SLEEPING</b> 🛏️	(pp339-61)	
			RCA City Hotel.....	53	A4
			<b>NIGHTLIFE</b> 🎷	(pp297-310)	
			Bethnal Green Working Men's Club.....	47	B3
			Jongleurs Bow.....	48	C3
			Lee Hurst's Backyard Comedy Club.....	49	B3
			Rhythm Factory.....	50	A4
			<b>ARTS</b> 🎨	(pp311-21)	
			Arcola Theatre.....	51	A1
			<b>GAY &amp; LESBIAN</b>	(pp331-37)	
			White Swan.....	52	C4

building facing Library Pl is a large mural commemorating the Cable St riots that took place here in October 1936. The British fascist Oswald Mosley led a bunch of his Blackshirt thugs into the area to intimidate the local Jewish population, but they were resoundingly repelled by local people – Jews and non-Jews alike.

You're now also deep in Jack the Ripper territory. In fact, the serial killer's first victim (of five), Mary Ann Nichols, was hacked to death on 31 August 1888 on what is now Durward St, north of (and just behind) Whitechapel tube station.

Along Whitechapel Rd itself, the criminal connections continue through the centuries. Just before the intersection with Cambridge Heath Rd sits the **Blind Beggar Pub** (☎ 7247 6195; 337 Whitechapel Rd), where the notorious gangster Ronnie Kray shot dead George Cornell in 1966, in a turf war over control of the East End's organised crime. He was jailed for life and died in 1995.

After the intersection with Cambridge Heath Rd, this traditionally poor area's history takes a more philanthropic turn, with a statue of **William Booth**, who established his Salvation Army Christian Mission here in 1865, and the **Trinity Green Almshouses**, poor-houses built for injured or retired sailors in 1695. The two rows of almshouses run at right angles away from the street, facing a village-type green and chapel.

**WOMEN'S LIBRARY** Map p156  
☎ 7320 2222; www.thewomenslibrary.ac.uk; Old Castle St E1; admission free; 🕒 9.30am-5pm Tue, Wed & Fri, to 8pm Thu, 10am-4pm Sat; 🚶 Aldgate East; 🚶

Just round the corner from the Whitechapel Art Gallery, the Women's Library, part of the London Metropolitan University, is a unique repository for all manner of books and documents related to women's history. It contains a reading room open to the public, as well as archive and museum collections, and organises talks and special exhibitions (last seen – Prostitution: What's Going On?). The building is a modern take on the former Goulston Square Wash House, one of the oldest public baths in London.

**BETHNAL GREEN & HACKNEY**  
Bethnal Green, the poorest district of London during Victorian times, and sprawling Hackney – whose Saxon name, from *haccan* (to kill with an axe or sword) and *ey* (river), indicates a place of battle – make up the 'proper' East End and can lay claim to being among the most ethnically diverse areas of the capital with sizable populations of Afro-Caribbeans, Turks, Kurds and Orthodox Jews. While neither district is on the tourist trail, both repay a visit amply.



## COCKNEY RHYMING SLANG

Some visitors arrive in London expecting to find a city populated by people conversing in cockney à la Dick Van Dyke in *Mary Poppins*. Traditionally the cockneys were people born within earshot of the Bow Bells – the church bells of St Mary-le-Bow. Since few people live in the City, that means most cockneys are East Enders.

The term cockney is often used to describe anyone speaking what is also called estuarine English (in which 't' and 'h' are routinely dropped). In fact the true cockney language also uses something called rhyming slang, which may have developed among London's costermongers (street traders) as a code to avoid police attention. This code replaced common nouns and verbs with rhyming phrases. So 'going up the apples and pears' meant going up the stairs, the 'trouble and strife' was the wife, 'telling porky pies' was telling lies and 'would you Adam and Eve it?' was would you believe it? Over time the second of the two words tended to be dropped so the rhyme vanished. Few – if any – people still use pure cockney but many still understand it. You're more likely to come across it in residual phrases like 'use your loaf' ('loaf of bread' for head), 'ooh, me plates of meat' (feet) or 'e's me best china' ('china plate' for mate). In 2007 a TV personality described a car he had test-driven as lacking power, being 'a bit ginger beer'. 'Beer' rhymes with 'queer' and he was upbraided for using language offensive to homosexuals.

## V&A MUSEUM OF CHILDHOOD

Map p156

☎ 8983 5200, recorded information 8980 2415; [www.vam.ac.uk/moc](http://www.vam.ac.uk/moc); cnr Cambridge Heath & Old Ford Rds E2; admission free; ☎ 10am-5.45pm; ☎ Bethnal Green; ♿

Housed in a renovated Victorian-era building which has won a Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) award for outstanding design, this museum is aimed at both kids – with its activity rooms and corners of child-friendly, interactive exhibits, games and toys – and nostalgia-seeking grown-ups who come to admire the antique doll houses, model trains, teddy bears and other toys arranged thematically. In fact, the museum, part of the Victoria & Albert Museum in South Kensington and here since the 1860s, is home to one of the largest and oldest collections of toys in the world. From carved ivory figures (one – a 'paddle doll' dates back to 1300 BC) to stuffed animals, from Meccano to Lego and from peep shows to Viewmasters and video games, childhood artefacts from around the world are on display in this cheery museum.

## SUTTON HOUSE

Map p156

☎ 8986 2264; [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk); 2 & 4 Homerton High St E9; adult/child/family £2.70/60p/£6; ☎ 12.30-4.30pm Thu-Sun early Feb-late Dec; 📍 Hackney Central, 📍 38, 106 or 394 It's difficult to imagine well-heeled Tudor noblemen such as Thomas Sutton, founder of the Charterhouse almshouse (p148), living in 'ackney, but as East London's oldest surviving house proves, they did, and in some style too. Abandoned and taken over by squatters in the 1980s (who have left

behind a large mural of an eye in the attic), what was originally known as Bryk Place when built in 1535 could have been tragically lost to history, but it's since been put under the care of the National Trust and magnificently restored.

The first historic room you enter, the Linenfold Parlour, is the absolute highlight, where the Tudor oak panelling on the walls has been carved to resemble draped cloth. Other notable rooms include the panelled Great Chamber, the Victorian study, the Georgian parlour and the intriguing mock-up of a Tudor kitchen. There's a shop and pleasant café on site.

## MILE END & VICTORIA PARK

A busy junction where the Docklands meet Hackney and the inner city meets Bow and Stratford Marsh, Mile End and vicinity is an increasingly popular residential area with some decent bars and restaurants, a unique park that straddles the Mile End Rd and a more traditional one in the enormous and gorgeous expanse of Victoria Park, the East End's biggest and most attractive green lung. There's not a whole lot to attract the general traveller here, but anyone staying in the area or interested in East End history will find their time very profitably spent. Just east, over the busy A12 motorway, is Stratford and Olympic Park ([www.london2012.org](http://www.london2012.org)), where most of the events of the 2012 London Olympics will be held.

## MILE END PARK

Map p156

[www.mileendpark.co.uk](http://www.mileendpark.co.uk); ☎ Mile End The 32-hectare Mile End Park is a long, narrow green space wedged between Burdett

and Grove Rds and the Grand Union Canal. Landscaped to great effect during the millennium year, it now incorporates a go-kart track, a children's centre for under-10s, areas for public art, an ecology area, an indoor climbing wall and a sports stadium. The centrepiece, though, is architect Piers Gough's 'green bridge' linking the northern and southern sections of the park over busy Mile End Rd. The bridge itself is actually yellow – the 'green' refers to the trees and shrubs that have been planted along its walkway.

## RAGGED SCHOOL MUSEUM

Map p156

☎ 8980 6405; [www.raggedschoolmuseum.org](http://www.raggedschoolmuseum.org); 46-50 Copperfield Rd E3; admission by donation; ☎ 10am-5pm Wed & Thu, 2-5pm 1st Sun of month; ☎ Mile End

Both adults and children are inevitably charmed by the Ragged School Museum, a combination of mock Victorian school-room – with hard wooden benches and desks, slates, chalk, inkwells and abacuses – on the 1st floor, and social history museum below. 'Ragged' was a Victorian term used to refer to pupils' usually torn, dirty and dishevelled clothes, and the museum celebrates the legacy of Dr Joseph Barnardo, who founded the first free school for destitute East End children in this building in the 1860s.

During term time, the museum runs a schools programme, where pupils are taught reading, writing and arithmetic by a strict school ma'am in full Victorian regalia called Miss Perkins; and if you're very good – no talking up the back, there – you can watch and listen to these lessons from the glassed-off gallery. On the first Sunday of the month, the Victorian lesson is offered to the general public at 2.15pm and 3.30pm. It's great fun.

## TOWER HAMLETS CEMETERY PARK

Map p156

☎ 0790 418 6981; [www.towerhamletscemetery.org](http://www.towerhamletscemetery.org); Southern Grove E3; admission free; ☎ 7am-dusk; ☎ Mile End or Bow Rd

Opened in 1841, this 13-hectare cemetery was the last of the so-called Magnificent Seven, then-suburban cemeteries (including Highgate and Abney Park in Stoke Newington) created by an act of Parliament in response to London's rapid population growth and overcrowded burial grounds.

Some 270,000 souls were laid to rest here until the cemetery was closed for burials in 1966 and turned into a park and nature reserve. Today it is a quiet, restful site, its Victorian monuments slowly being consumed by creepers.

## HOUSE MILL

Map p64

☎ 8980 4626; [www.housemill.org.uk](http://www.housemill.org.uk); Three Mill Lane, Three Mills Island E3; adult/student & senior £3/1.50; ☎ 11am-4pm Sun May-Oct, 11am-4pm 1st Sun of Mar, Apr, Nov & Dec; ☎ Bromley-by-Bow The only remaining one of a trio of mills that once stood on this small island in the River Lea, the House Mill (1776) operated as a sluice tidal mill, grinding grain for a nearby distillery, until 1940. Tours, which run according to demand and last about 45 minutes, take visitors to all four floors of the mill and offer a fascinating look at traditional East End industry. There's a small café and shop on-site.

## VICTORIA PARK

Map p156

☎ dawn-dusk; ☎ Mile End If you want a little more green than Mile End Park affords, head north from Mile End tube along Grove Rd, until you reach 87-hectare Victoria Park. This leafy expanse has lakes, fountains, a bowling green, tennis courts, a deer park and much more. It was the East End's first public park when it opened in 1845 and came about after a local MP presented Queen Victoria with a petition of 30,000 signatures. During WWII the park was largely closed to the public and was used as an anti-aircraft shelling site as well as an interment camp for Italian and then German prisoners of war (POWs).

## DOCKLANDS

You'd probably never guess it while gazing up at the ultramodern skyscrapers that dominate the Isle of Dogs and Canary Wharf, but from the 16th century until the mid-20th century this area was the industrial heartland of the London docks. Here cargo from global trade was landed, bringing jobs to a tight-knit, working-class community. Even up to the start of WWII this community still thrived, but then the docks were badly firebombed during the war.

After the Blitz the docks were in no condition to cope with the postwar technological and political changes as the British Empire



evaporated. At the same time, enormous new bulk carriers and container ships demanded deep-water ports and new loading and unloading techniques. From the mid-1960s dock closures followed one another as fast as they had opened, and the number of dock workers dropped from as many as 50,000 in 1960 to about 3000 by 1980.

The financial metropolis that exists today was begun by the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC), a body established by the Thatcher government in the free-wheeling 1980s to take pressure for office space off the City. This rather artificial community had a shaky start. The low-rise toy-town buildings had trouble attracting tenants, the Docklands Light Railway – the main transport link – had teething troubles and the Canary Wharf Tower itself had to be res-

cued from bankruptcy twice. Now, however, newspaper groups and financial behemoths have moved in – with Citigroup and HSBC boasting their own buildings – and, more than a quarter-century after it was begun, the Docklands is emerging as the mini-Manhattan it was envisaged as.

### ISLE OF DOGS Map p160

Pundits can't even really agree on whether this is an island, let alone where it got its name. Strictly speaking it's a peninsula of land on the northern shore of the Thames, although without modern road and transport links it would *almost* be separated from the mainland at West India Docks. At the same time, etymologists are still out to lunch over the origin of the island's name. Some believe it's because the royal kennels

## WAPPING & LIMEHOUSE

In his 16th-century *A Survey of London*, John Stow described Wapping High St as a 'filthy strait passage, with alleys of small tenements or cottages'. It's a far cry from that today; the converted warehouses and lofts that line the brick road now contain luxury flats that are among the most desirable in East London.

The area was traditionally home to sailors and dock workers. One of the most important historic sites is **Execution Dock** (Map p156) near the old river police station at Wapping New Stairs. This is where convicted pirates were hanged and their bodies chained to a post at low tide, to be left until three tides had washed over their heads.

There isn't much to Limehouse, although it became London's first Chinatown in the late 19th century when some 300 sailors from the South China coast settled, and was also mentioned in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), when the protagonist passed by this way in search of opium. The most notable attraction is St Anne's, Limehouse (Map p160 ☎ 7987 1502; cnr Commercial Rd & Three Colt St). This was Nicholas Hawksmoor's earliest church and still boasts the highest church clock in the city. In fact, the 60m-high tower is still a 'Trinity House mark' for identifying shipping lanes on the Thames (thus the Royal Navy's White Ensign flag flying). Although the English baroque church was completed in 1725, it was not consecrated until 1730. There is a curious pyramid in the west churchyard that may be connected with the architect's supposed interest in the occult.

were located here during Henry VIII's reign. Others say it's a corruption of the Flemish *dijk* (dike), recalling the Flemish engineers who shored up the area's muddy banks.

It can be agreed, however, that the centrepiece of the Isle of Dogs is Canary Wharf. If you want to see how the island once looked, check out **Mudchute Park & Farm** (☎ 7515 5901, 7531 4334; www.mudchute.org; Pier St E14; admission free; ☎ 9.30am-4.30pm; DLR Mudchute), an urban farm with livestock, an educational centre and events to the southeast.

### CANARY WHARF Map p160

#### ☎ Canary Wharf

Cesar Pelli's 244m-high **Canary Wharf Tower**, built in 1991 at 1 Canada Sq and described as a 'square prism with a pyramidal top', presides over a toy-town, financial theme park, surrounded by more recent towers housing HSBC and Citigroup, and offices for Bank of America, Barclays, Lehmann Brothers, Morgan Stanley, Credit Suisse and more. It took a long time for the place to come this far, even. Canary Wharf Tower, still the tallest building in the UK and one of the largest property developments in Europe, had to be saved from bankruptcy twice before it reached today's levels of occupancy.

There's no public access to the tower, but on a sunny day you can head for the open-air cafés and bars of West India Quay. You can get here on the DLR but the grandeur of Sir Norman Foster's sleek Canary Wharf Underground station (Jubilee line) is a better introduction to this dynamic district.

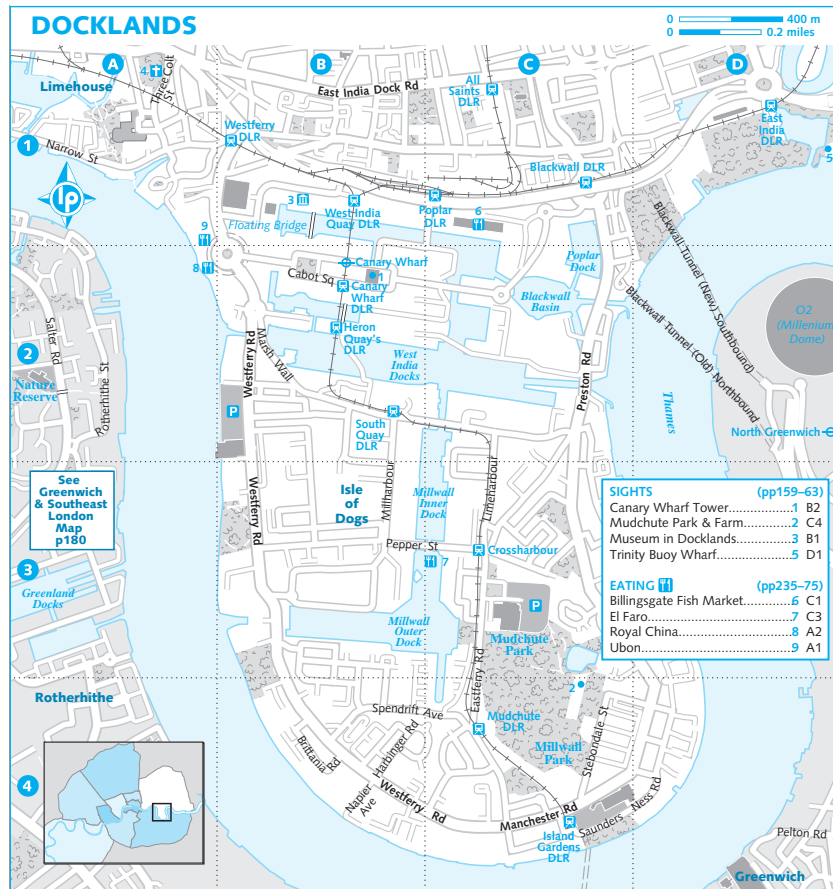
### MUSEUM IN DOCKLANDS Map p160

☎ 0870 444 3856, recorded information 0870 444 3857; www.museumindocklands.org.uk; Warehouse No 1, West India Quay E14; adult/student & under 16yr/senior £5/free/3; ☎ 10am-6pm, to 9pm 1st Thu of month; ☎ Canary Wharf or DLR West India Quay; ☎

Housed in a converted 200-year-old warehouse once used to store sugar, rum and coffee, this museum offers a comprehensive overview of the entire history of the Thames from the arrival of the Romans in AD 43. But it's at its best when dealing with specifics close by such as the controversial transformation of the decrepit docks into Docklands in the 1980s and the social upheaval and dislocation that accompanied it.

Kids, however, usually adore the place, with its exhibits such as 'sailor town' (an excellent re-creation of the cobbled streets, bars and lodging houses of a 19th-century dock-side community and nearby Chinatown) and especially the hands-on Mud-larks gallery, where five- to 12-year-olds can explore the history of the Thames, tipping the clipper, trying on old-fashioned diving helmets, learning to use winches and even constructing a simple model of Canary Wharf.

The tour begins on the 3rd floor (take the lift to the top) with the Roman settlement of Londinium and works its way downwards through the ages. Keep an eye open for the scale mode of the old London Bridge and the *Rhinebeck Panorama* (1805–10), a huge mural of the upper Pool of London that has been likened to the view from the top of the London Eye (p125).



**ST KATHARINE'S DOCK** Map p156

www.sk docks.co.uk; ☉ Tower Hill

With its cafés and restaurants, St Katharine's Dock makes an ideal spot to pause for a brief rest after a morning's sightseeing at Tower Bridge or the Tower of London. There's a row of twee shops and a popular pub called the *Dickens Inn* (p288) but it's more entertaining just admiring some of the opulent luxury yachts in the marina.

Sadly, the dock's history is rather less appealing than its appearance. Some 1250 'insanitary' houses and a brewery were razed and 11,300 people made homeless to make way for its creation in 1828. Its current incarnation, which happened after the docks closed, dates from the 1980s.

**TRINITY BUOY WHARF** Map p160

☎ 7515 7153; www.trinitybuoywharf.com; Orchard Pl E14; ☎ 10am-6pm Sat &amp; Sun; DLR East India

London's only lighthouse, built for Michael Faraday in 1863, is located at this brown field site about a mile northeast of Canary Wharf. Also here is the unusual **Container City**, a community of artists' studios made from brightly painted shipping containers, stacked side by side and one on top of the other. The web designers, architects and other creative tenants even have their own balconies. Also here is the much loved American-style **Fat Boy's Diner** (☎ 7987 4334; ☎ 9.30am-4.30pm Mon-Sat), which was moved here from Spitalfields Market in 2001.

The wharf is open to the public daily and is clearly signposted from the East India

DLR station; along the 20-minute walk you'll pass a bird sanctuary at East India Dock Basin.

**WAPPING & WHITECHAPEL WALK****Walking Tour****1 St Katharine's Dock**

If you pass under Tower Bridge from the Tower of London on foot you'll soon come to this symbolic 'entrance' to the Docklands. **St Katharine's** (opposite) was the first of the London docks to be renovated following its closure in 1968.

**2 Execution Dock**

Among the more famous people who died at this notorious site (p161) just off Wapping High St is one Captain William Kidd, hanged here in 1701 for piracy. A nearby landmark is the **Captain Kidd pub** (p288).

**3 St George-in-the-East**

All that remains of this church (Canon St Rd E1) erected by Nicholas Hawksmoor in 1726 and badly damaged in the Blitz of WWII is a shell enclosing a smaller modern core. It was closed for a time in the 1850s when the vicar introduced what was considered 'Romish' (Roman Catholic) liturgy.

**WALK FACTS**

Start Tower Hill tube station  
End Whitechapel tube station  
Distance 2.5 miles  
Duration About two hours  
Fuel stop Mirch Masala (p259)

**4 Cable Street**

This street (p156) where ropes were manufactured in the late 18th century – it was once as long as the standard English measure for cable (180m or 600ft) – was the site of the celebrated Cable St riots that evicted British fascists from the East End.

**5 Tower House**

This enormous building (41 Fieldgate St E1) recently redeveloped as an apartment block was once a hostel and then dosshouse whose residents included Lenin, Stalin and authors Jack London and George Orwell. The last describes it in detail in his *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933).

**6 Whitechapel Bell Foundry**

In business for nigh on four and a half centuries, this foundry (p155) can lay claim to have produced some of the most recognisable bells in history, including Big Ben and the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



# NORTH LONDON

Eating p261; Drinking p288; Shopping p229; Sleeping p355

North London is a vast place taking in a wealth of smaller neighbourhoods, most of which are ancient villages that have slowly been drawn into London's dark matter over the centuries as the agglomeration has expanded.

Starting north of the Euston Rd, this region of the capital includes King's Cross and Camden Town – two names both likely to elicit a response from Londoners. King's Cross has historically been one of the capitals nastiest urban blights, but a redevelopment of the tube station, the opening of the beautiful St Pancras International train terminal (p169) and the slow but thorough urban renewal going on elsewhere is making King's Cross more and more desirable, although it's fair to say it'll be a while before we're all meeting there for drinks. Camden is an even stranger beast – much reviled among Londoners for its touristic market and 'crusty' locals, outside of the Lock and away from Camden High St the area is actually a wonderful place full of great bars, restaurants and some architectural gems. It's a typical London phenomenon that two such different experiences can be had in one area.

Reactions are nearly always universally positive to the posh neighbourhoods of Primrose Hill, Belsize Park and Hampstead, in as much as very few of us can afford these lovely, leafy slices of urban village life, although many of us would like to. With their quiet, unpretentious gentility there's little surprise that these are the preferred neighbourhoods for the superstar classes. Luckily we can all visit Primrose Hill and Hampstead Heath (just don't try going for a walk in Belsize Park as there is no actual parkland there!).

Highgate, on the other side of massive Hampstead Heath, is London's highest point and possibly its most gorgeous urban village. Seriously posh, Highgate is a charming place where locals have developed freakishly large calf muscles from all that uphill walking. Nearby Crouch End and Muswell Hill are less expensive but retain a very well-off middle-class feel, while scruffier village Stoke Newington in Hackney is a wonderful blend of hippies, yuppies, gay and lesbian couples and pockets of Orthodox Jews and Turkish Muslims, all living in the most unlikely of harmonies.

North London covers a vast swathe of the city and is most easily reached from the centre of town, rather than by travelling between the separate areas. Hampstead and Highgate should be everyone's first choice for the sheer breadth of things to see and do. North London also includes one of the city's largest and most wonderful outdoor spaces, genteel Regent's Park, which features famous London Zoo and has the wonderful Regent's Canal running along its northern edge.

## REGENT'S PARK

**REGENT'S PARK** Map p166

☎ 7486 7905; 🕒 5am-dusk; 🚶 Baker St or Regent's Park

The most elaborate and ordered of London's many parks, Regent's was created around 1820 by John Nash, who planned to use it as an estate upon which he could build palaces for the aristocracy. Although the plan never quite came off – like so many at the time – you can get some idea of what Nash might have achieved from

the buildings along the Outer Circle, and in particular from the stuccoed Palladian mansions he built on Cumberland Tce.

Like many of the city's parks, this one was used as a royal hunting ground, and then as farmland, before it was used as a place for fun and leisure during the 18th century. These days it's a well-organised but relaxed, lively but serene, local but cosmopolitan haven in the heart of the city. Among its many attractions are the London Zoo, the Grand Union Canal along its northern side, an ornamental lake, an

## top picks

### NORTH LONDON

- Hampstead Heath (p170)
- British Library (p167)
- Highgate Cemetery (p170)
- Camden Market (opposite)
- Kenwood House (p171)

open-air theatre in Queen Mary's Gardens where Shakespeare is performed during the summer months, ponds and colourful flowerbeds, rose gardens that look spectacular in June, football pitches and summer games of softball.

On the western side of the park is the impressive **London Central Islamic Centre & Mosque** (☎ 7724 3363; www.iccuk.org; 146 Park Rd NW8; 🚶 Marylebone), a huge white edifice with a glistening dome. Provided you take your shoes off and dress modestly you're welcome to go inside, although the interior is fairly stark.

**LONDON ZOO** Map p168

☎ 7722 3333; www.zsl.org/london-zoo; Regent's Park NW1; adult/child/concession £14.55/11.40/13.20; 🕒 10am-5.30pm mid-Mar–Oct, to 4pm Nov-Jan, to 4.30pm Feb–mid-Mar; 🚶 Baker St or Camden Town

Established in 1828, these zoological gardens are among the oldest in the world. This is where the word 'zoo' originated and after a patchy period in the 1990s, London Zoo has become one of the most progressive in the world. The zoo is in the middle of a long-term modernisation plan and the emphasis is now firmly placed on conservation, education and breeding, with fewer species and more spacious conditions.

The newest developments have brought **Gorilla Kingdom**, a £5.3 million project that involves a gorilla conservation programme in Gabon with the aim of providing habitat for Western gorillas and protecting them by providing the local communities and former poachers with work in the programme. The zoo now has three gorillas – Bobby, Zaire and Effie – who live on their own island, and their space measures 1600 sq metres. They are fascinating and gentle creatures, with very distinct (and strong) personalities that are fantastic to observe.

The **Clare Rainforest Lookout and Nightzone** is another excellent addition, with sloths, monkeys and other creatures wandering freely among the visitors inside the humid, tropical-climate room. The monkeys are especially happy to roam – they see it as their territory, so watch out!

The elegant and cheerful **Penguin Pool**, designed by Berthold Lubetkin in 1934, is one of London's foremost modernist structures, although the penguins didn't like it and are now bathing at a more ordinary

round pool. The most popular penguin, **Roxy Rockhopper** – who likes to be picked up and cuddled – has her own Myspace page: www.myspace.com/roxyrockhopper.

Other highlights include **Butterfly Paradise, Into Africa and Meet the Monkeys**. The Victorian bird house was scheduled to open at Easter 2008, after extensive renovations, and the big cats' living area is up for renovations in 2009.

A great way to visit the zoo is by canal boat from Little Venice or Camden, but you can also reach it by walking along the canal towpath. There's a delightful **children's zoo**, which is built almost entirely from sustainable materials, and busy programmes of events and attractions (such as elephant bathing and penguin feeding) throughout the year.

## CAMDEN

**CAMDEN MARKET** Map p168

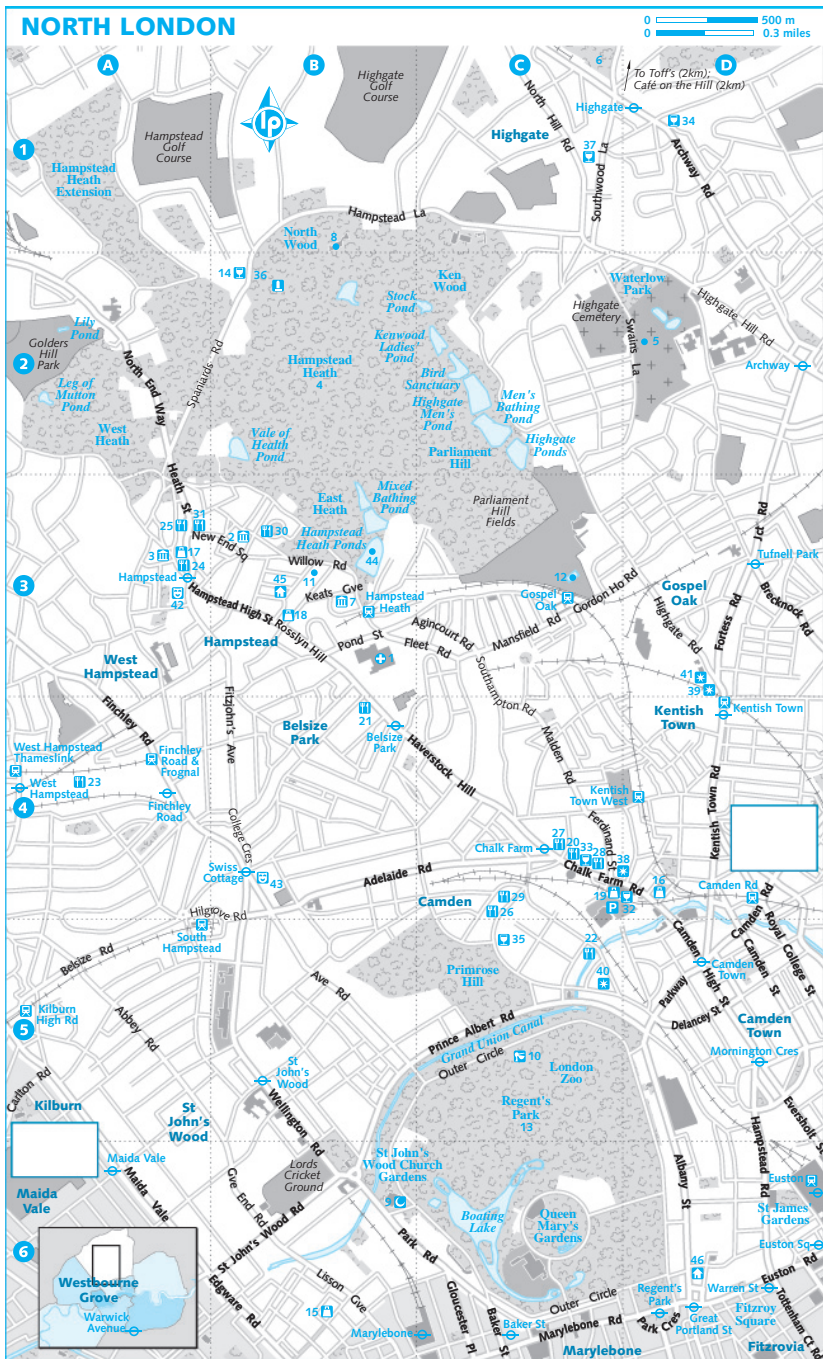
cnr Camden High & Buck Sts NW1; 🕒 9am-5.30pm Thu-Sun; 🚶 Camden Town or Chalk Farm Although – or perhaps because – it stopped being cutting-edge several thousand cheap leather jackets ago, Camden market gets a whopping 10 million visitors each year and is one of London's most popular attractions. What started out as a collection of attractive craft stalls by Camden Lock on the Grand Union Canal now extends most of the way from Camden Town tube station to Chalk Farm tube station to the north. You'll find a bit of everything but in particular a lot of tourist-oriented tat (see p232 for more information). It's completely mobbed at the weekend, and something preferably avoided on those days.

**JEWISH MUSEUM** Map p168

☎ 7284 1997; www.jewishmuseum.org.uk; Raymond Burton House, 129-131 Albert St NW1; adult £3.50, student & child £1.50, senior £2.50, family £8; 🕒 10am-4pm Mon-Thu, to 5pm Sun; 🚶 Camden Town; 📍

This branch of the Jewish Museum examines Judaism and Judaic religious practices in the prestigious **Ceremonial Art Gallery**, and the story of the Jewish community in Britain from the time of the Normans to the present day through paintings, photographs and artefacts in the **History Gallery**. There's also a gallery for temporary exhibitions.





## NORTH LONDON

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Wrestlers.....37 C1

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The Jewish Museum, Finchley (Map p64; ☎ 8349 1143; Sternberg Centre, 80 East End Rd N3; adult/child/concession £2/free/1; 🕒 10.30am-5pm Mon-Thu, 10.30am-4.30pm Sun except Aug; 🚶 Finchley Central) houses the museum's social-history collections, including the oral-history and photographic archives, and hosts changing exhibitions. Its permanent collection includes reconstructions of the tailoring and cabinet-making workshops from the East End, as well as a Holocaust exhibition focusing on the experience of one Jewish Briton who survived Auschwitz.

## KING'S CROSS & EUSTON

### BRITISH LIBRARY

Map p168  
☎ switchboard 7444 1500, visitor services 7412 7332; www.bl.uk; 96 Euston Rd NW1; admission free; 🕒 10am-6pm Mon & Wed-Fri, 9.30am-8pm Tue, 9.30am-5pm Sat, 11am-5pm Sun; 🚶 King's Cross; ♿  
The British Library moved to these spanking-new premises between King's Cross and Euston Stations in 1998, and at a cost of £500 million it was Britain's most expensive building, and not one that is universally loved; Colin St John Wilson's exterior of straight lines of red brick, which Prince Charles reckoned was akin to a 'secret-police building', is certainly not to all tastes. But even people who don't like the building from the outside can't fault the spectacularly cool and spacious interior. It is the nation's principal copyright library and stocks one copy of every British

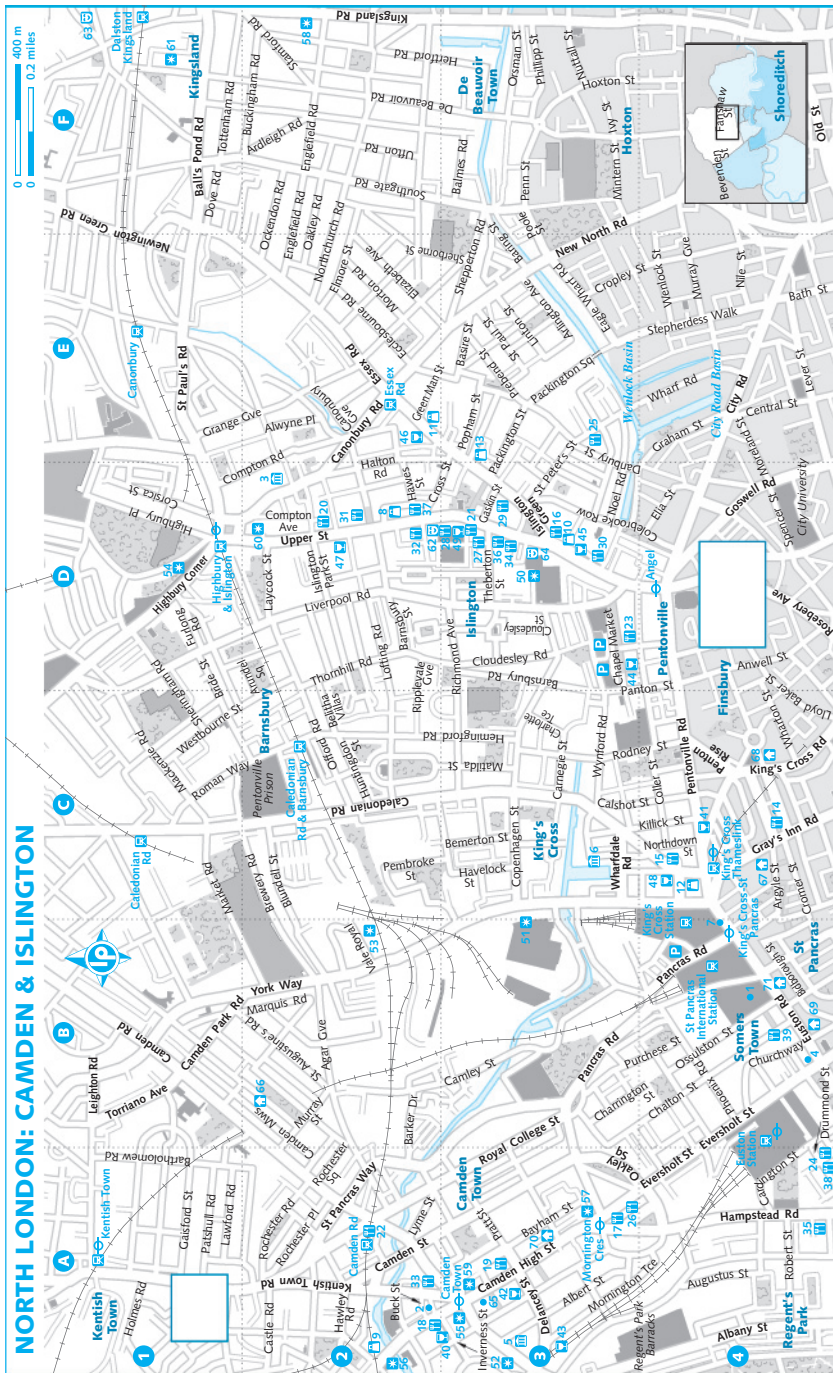
publication as well as historical manuscripts, books and maps from the British Museum. The library counts some 186 million of shelving on four basement levels and will have some 12 million volumes when it reaches the limit of its storage capacity.

At the centre of the building is the wonderful King's Library, the 65,000-volume collection of the insane George III, which was given to the nation by his son, George IV, in 1823 and is now housed in a six-storey, 17m-high glass-walled tower. To the left as you enter are the library's excellent bookshop and exhibition galleries.

Most of the complex is devoted to storage and scholarly research, but there are also several public displays including the John Ritblat Gallery: Treasures of the British Library, which spans almost three millennia and every continent. Among the most important documents here are the Magna Carta (1215); the Codex Sinaiticus, the first complete text of the New Testament, written in Greek in the 4th century; a Gutenberg Bible (1455), the first Western book printed using movable type; Shakespeare's First Folio (1623); manuscripts by some of Britain's best-known authors (eg Lewis Carroll, Jane Austen, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy); and even some of the Beatles' earliest hand-written lyrics.

You can hear historic recordings, such as the first one ever, made by Thomas Edison in 1877, James Joyce reading from *Ulysses* and Nelson Mandela's famous speech at the Rivonia trial in 1964, at the National Sound





## NORTH LONDON: CAMDEN & ISLINGTON

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Archive Jukeboxes, where the selections are changed regularly. The *Turning the Pages* exhibit allows you a 'virtual browse' through several important texts including the *Sforza Book of Hours*, the *Diamond Sutra* and a Leonardo da Vinci notebook.

The Philatelic Exhibition, next to the John Ritblat Gallery, is based on collections established in 1891 with the bequest of the Tapling Collection, and now consists of more than 80,000 items, including postage and revenue stamps, postal stationery and first-day covers from almost every country and from all periods.

The *Workshop of Words, Sounds & Images* documents the development of writing and communicating through the written word by carefully examining the work of early scribes, printers and bookbinders. The sound section compares recordings on different media, from early-20th-century wax cylinders to modern CDs. The *Pearson Gallery* hosts some sensational special exhibitions, ranging from 'Oscar Wilde: A Life in Six Acts' to 'Chinese Printing Today'.

Access to the reading rooms is by reader's pass only. See the website for details of how to apply for one and the conditions that need to be met.

There are **guided tours** (adult/child £8/6.50) at 3pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday

and at 10.30am and 3pm Saturday of the library's public areas, and another that includes a visit to one of the **reading rooms** at 11.30am and 3pm Sunday. Call the main number to make a booking.

### ST PANCRAS INTERNATIONAL Map p168

☎ 7843 4250; [www.stpancras.com](http://www.stpancras.com); Euston Rd NW1; ☎ King's Cross St Pancras

If you use the tube for any length of time, chances are you'll pass through King's Cross St Pancras station, in which case you should rise to the surface and check out this fabulously imposing Victorian Gothic masterpiece, which was built as a hotel by the renowned architect George Gilbert Scott in 1876. The train shed behind the façade has been converted into the stunning new St Pancras International, now departure point for HS1 (or Eurostar) high-speed services to Paris, Brussels and Lille.

### LONDON CANAL MUSEUM Map p168

☎ 7713 0836; [www.canalmuseum.org.uk](http://www.canalmuseum.org.uk); 12-13 New Wharf Rd N1; adult/child/student 3/1.50/2; ☎ 10am-4.30pm Tue-Sun & bank holidays; ☎ King's Cross

This quirky but very worthwhile museum is housed in an old ice warehouse (with a

deep well where the frozen commodity was stored) dating from the 1860s and traces the history of Regent's Canal, the ice business and the development of ice cream through models, photographs, exhibits and archive documentaries. The ice trade was huge in late Victorian London, and 35,000 tonnes of it were imported from Norway in 1899.

## HAMPSTEAD & HIGHGATE

### HAMPSTEAD HEATH Map p166

☎ 7485 4491; ➔ Hampstead, 📍 Gospel Oak or Hampstead Heath, 🚶 214 or C2 to Parliament Hill Fields

Sprawling Hampstead Heath, with its rolling woodlands and meadows, is a million miles away – well, approximately four – from the City of London. It covers 320 hectares, most of it woods, hills and meadows, and is home to about 100 bird species. It's a wonderful place for a ramble, especially to the top of Parliament Hill, which offers expansive views across the city and is one of the most popular places in London to fly a kite. Alternatively head up the hill in North Wood.

If walking is too pedestrian for you, another major attraction is the bathing ponds (separate beautiful ones for men and women and a slightly less pleasant mixed pond). Sections of the heath area are also laid out for football, cricket and tennis. Those of a more artistic bent should make a beeline to **Kenwood House** (opposite) but stop to admire the sculptures by Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth on the way.

If you work up a thirst, there's no better place to quench it than at the atmospheric – and possibly haunted – **Spaniard's Inn** (p290), which has a fascinating history and a terrific beer garden.

By day and night the West Heath is a gay cruising ground that is so well established that the police often pitch up in the evenings to protect the men who spend their nights here. On South Green, opposite Hampstead Heath station, is one of Britain's oldest lavatories, which was built in 1897 and restored in 2000. This was gay playwright Joe Orton's lavatory of choice for 'cottageing' (cruising for gay sex). George Orwell worked in a bookshop opposite the toilets and doubtless used them now and then for their originally intended purpose.

### HIGHGATE CEMETERY Map p166

☎ 8340 1834; [www.highgate-cemetery.org](http://www.highgate-cemetery.org); Swain's Lane N6; adults/under 16yr £2/free, plus £1 for a camera; 🕒 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-4pm Mon-Fri, 11am-4pm Sat & Sun Nov-Mar; ➔ Highgate

Most famous as the final resting place of Karl Marx and other notable mortals, Highgate Cemetery is set in 20 wonderfully wild and atmospheric hectares with dramatic and overdecorated Victorian graves and sombre tombs. It's divided into two parts. On the eastern side you can visit the grave of Marx. It's an amusing coincidence that buried opposite is the free-market economist Herbert Spencer – Marx and Spencer, does it ring a bell? This slightly overgrown and wild part of the cemetery is a very pleasant walk but it's merely the overflow area. It's the wonderfully atmospheric western section of this Victorian Valhalla that is the main draw. To visit it, you'll have to take a tour and deal directly with the brigade of sometimes stropky silver-haired ladies who run the cemetery and act like they are the home guard defending it from the Germans (eyes straight, shoulders back, chest out, march!). It is a maze of winding paths leading to the Circle of Lebanon, rings of tombs flanking a circular path and topped with a majestic, centuries-old cedar tree. The guides are engaging and gladly point out the various symbols of the age and the eminent dead occupying the tombs, including the scientist Michael Faraday and the dog-show founder Charles Cruft. 'Dissenters' (non-Church of Englanders) were buried way off in the woods. **Tours** (£3, plus per camera £1) depart 2pm Monday to Friday (book ahead by phone) and every hour 11am to 4pm Saturday and Sunday (no bookings).

The cemetery still works – the most recent well-known addition was Russian dissident Alexander Litvinenko, who was done away with under most sinister circumstances in 2006 with the radioactive isotope Polonium 210 over tea in a Mayfair hotel (see p48) – and closes during burials, so you might want to call ahead just to be sure it will be open.

### HIGHGATE WOOD Map p166

🕒 dawn-dusk; ➔ Highgate  
With more than 28 hectares of ancient woodland, this park is a wonderful spot for a walk any time of the year. It's also teeming with life, and some 70 different bird species have been recorded here, along

with five types of bat, 12 of butterfly and 80 different kinds of spider. It also has a huge clearing in the centre for sports, a popular playground and nature trail for kids and a range of activities – from falconry to bat-watching – throughout the year.

### KEATS HOUSE Map p166

☎ 7435 2062; [www.keatshouse.org.uk](http://www.keatshouse.org.uk); Wentworth Pl, Keats Grove NW3; adult/under 16yr/concession £3.50/free/1.75; 🕒 1-5pm Tue-Sun; ➔ Hampstead or 📍 Hampstead Heath  
Undergoing redevelopment at the time of writing and due to reopen in late 2008, this elegant Regency house was home to the golden boy of the Romantic poets from 1818 to 1820. Never short of generous mates, Keats was persuaded to take refuge here by Charles Armitage Brown, and it was here that he met his fiancée Fanny Brawne, who was literally the girl next door. Keats wrote his most celebrated poem, *Ode to a Nightingale*, while sitting under a plum tree in the garden (now replaced) in 1819. Original documents such as the poet's letters and the original *Bright Star* manuscript will be on display as part of the redevelopment. The house is dripping with atmosphere, thanks in part to the collection of Regency furniture amassed here in recent years. Rather than supplying pamphlets or audioguides, the staff here tell stories about Keats and the house as you wander around, perhaps examining the ring he gave Fanny (which she wore for the rest of her life) or the bust of Keats, which is set at the poet's exact height: barely 1.5m!

American visitors might like to know that the house was originally saved and opened to the public in 1925 largely due to the donations of Keats' devotees in the US.

### KENWOOD HOUSE Map p166

☎ 8348 1286; [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk); Hampstead Lane NW3; admission free; 🕒 11am-5pm Apr-Oct, to 4pm Nov-Mar, the Suffolk Collection (upstairs) 11am-4.30pm Thu-Sun; ➔ Archway or Golders Green, then 🚶 210; 📍 Hampstead's most impressive sight is this magnificent neoclassical mansion, which stands at the northern end of the heath in a glorious sweep of landscaped gardens leading down to a picturesque lake, around which classical concerts take place in summer (see p312). The house was remodelled by Robert Adam in the 18th century, and rescued from developers by Lord Iveagh Guinness, who donated it and the wonderful collection of art it contains to the nation in 1927. The Iveagh Bequest contains paint-

ings by the likes of Gainsborough, Reynolds, Turner, Hals, Vermeer and Van Dyck and is one of the finest small collections in Britain.

Robert Adam's Great Stairs and the library, one of 14 rooms open to the public, are especially fine. The Suffolk Collection occupies the 1st floor. It includes Jacobean portraits by William Larkin and royal Stuart portraits by Van Dyck and Lely.

The Brew House Café has excellent grub, from light snacks to full meals (mains around £7), and plenty of room on the lovely garden terrace.

### NO 2 WILLOW ROAD Map p166

☎ 7435 6166, 0149 475 5570; [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk); 2 Willow Rd NW3; admission £4.90; 🕒 noon-5pm Thu-Sat Apr-Oct, noon-5pm Sat Mar & Nov, guided tours at noon, 1pm & 2pm; ➔ Hampstead or 📍 Hampstead Heath  
Fans of modern architecture will want to swing past this property, the central house in a block of three, designed by the 'structural rationalist' Ernö Goldfinger in 1939 as his family home. Although the architect was following Georgian principles in creating it, many people think it looks uncannily like the sort of mundane 1950s architecture you see everywhere. They may look similar now, but 2 Willow Rd was in fact a forerunner; the others were mostly bad imitations. The interior, with its cleverly designed storage space and collection of artworks by Henry Moore, Max Ernst and Bridget Riley, is certainly interesting and accessible to all.

### BURGH HOUSE Map p166

☎ 7431 0144; [www.burghhouse.org.uk](http://www.burghhouse.org.uk); New End Sq NW3; admission free; 🕒 noon-5pm Wed-Fri & Sun, 2-5pm bank holidays, by appointment Sat; ➔ Hampstead

If you happen to be in the neighbourhood, this late-17th-century Queen Anne mansion houses the Hampstead Museum of local history, a small art gallery and the delightful **Buttery Garden Café** (🕒 11am-5.30pm Wed-Sat), where you can get a decent and reasonably priced lunch (sandwiches £5).

### FENTON HOUSE Map p166

☎ 7435 3471; [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk); Windmill Hill, Hampstead Grove NW3; adult/child £5.20/2.60; 🕒 2-5pm Wed-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun Apr-Oct, 2-5pm Sat & Sun Mar; ➔ Hampstead  
One of the oldest houses in Hampstead, this late-17th-century merchant's residence has a charming walled garden with roses and an orchard, fine collections of porce-



lain and keyboard instruments – including a 1612 harpsichord played by Handel – as well as 17th-century needlework pictures and original Georgian furniture.

## ISLINGTON

### ESTORICK COLLECTION OF MODERN ITALIAN ART

Map p168  
 ☎ 7704 9522; www.estorickcollection.com; 39a Canonbury Sq N1; adult/concession £3.50/2.50;  
 🕒 11am-6pm Wed-Sat, noon-5pm Sun; 🚗 High-bury & Islington

The only museum in Britain devoted to Italian art, and one of the leading collections of futurist painting in the world, the Estorick Collection is housed in a listed Georgian house and stuffed with works by such greats as Giacomo Balla, Umberto Boccioni, Gino Severini and Ardengo Soffici. The collection of paintings, drawings, etchings and sculpture, amassed by American writer and art dealer Eric Estorick and his wife Salome, also includes drawings and a painting by the even more famous Amedeo Modigliani. Well-conceived special exhibitions might concentrate on Italian divisionism or a collection of classic Italian film posters. The museum also encompasses an extensive library, café and shop. Highly recommended.

## MUSWELL HILL & CROUCH END

### ALEXANDRA PARK & PALACE

Map p64  
 ☎ 8365 2121; www.alexandrapalace.com; Alexandra Palace Way N22; 🏠 Alexandra Palace  
 Built in 1873 as North London's answer to Crystal Palace, Alexandra Palace suffered the ignoble fate of burning to the ground only 16 days after opening. Encouraged by attendance figures, investors decided to rebuild and it reopened just two years later. Although it boasted a theatre, museum, lecture hall, library and Great Hall with one of the world's largest organs, it was no match for Crystal Palace. It housed German POWs during WWI and in 1936 the world's first TV transmission – a variety show called *Here's Looking at You* – took place here. The palace burned down again in 1980 but was rebuilt for the third time and opened in 1988. Today 'Ally Pally' (as it is affectionately known, even though locals are paying increased council rates since it was rebuilt) is a multipurpose conference and exhibition centre with additional facilities, including an indoor ice-skating rink, the panoramic Phoenix Bar & Beer Garden and funfairs in summer.

The park in which it stands sprawls over some 196 hectares consisting of public gardens, a nature conservation area, a deer park and various sporting facilities including a boating lake, pitch-and-putt golf course and skate park, making it a great place for a family outing.

## STOKE NEWINGTON

### ABNEY PARK CEMETERY

Map p64  
 ☎ 7275 7557; Stoke Newington Church St N16; admission free; 🕒 8am-dusk; 🏠 Stoke Newington, 🚗 73, 106 or 243

Unfairly dubbed 'the poor man's Highgate' by some, this magical place was bought up and developed by a private firm from 1840 to provide burial grounds for central London's overflow. It was the first cemetery for dissenters and many of the most influential London Presbyterians, Quakers and Baptists are buried here, including the founder of the Salvation Army, William Booth, whose grand tombstone greets you as you enter from Church St. Since the 1950s the cemetery has been left to fend for itself and, these days, is as much a bird and plant sanctuary as a delightfully overgrown ruin. The derelict chapel at the heart of the park could be straight out of a horror film, and the atmosphere of the whole place is nothing short of magical.

## HAMPSTEAD & HIGHGATE WALK

### Walking Tour 1 No 2 Willow Rd

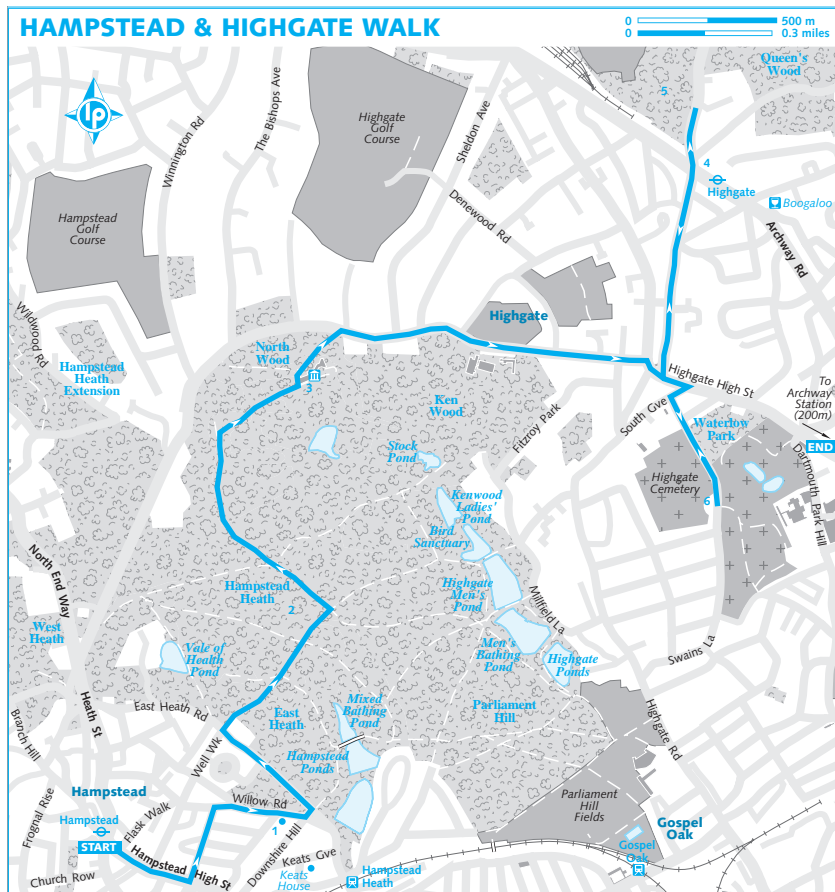
Drop into this fascinating slice of modernism on your way to nearby Hampstead Heath. Here you'll find Ernö Goldfinger's pioneering international modernist apartment block (p171), run by the formidable dames of the National Trust. Just don't say that it looks like any other modern building – it really was the first.

### 2 Hampstead Heath

One of London's most lovely open spaces, the hills and woods of this gorgeous, rambling park (p170) are enough to inspire anyone to poetry (and of course Keats lived just nearby; see p171). Enjoy the view from Parliament Hill and cool off in the swimming ponds or in the fabulous Parliament Hill Lido (p325).

### 3 Kenwood House

On the northern edge of the heath, this grand mansion (p171) houses two superb collections of British art, features some gorgeous interiors and has lovely gardens to walk in, all for free.



### 4 Highgate Village

Wandering up the hill to London's highest natural point, it's hard not to be seduced instantly by Highgate Village, with its charming shops, pubs and cafés.

### 5 Highgate Wood

Take a stroll in the thick foliage of this charming wood (p170), where you can combine a walk with plenty of other activities including bird-watching (although look out for the butterflies and even bats at dusk). Kids will especially love the nature trail, and the sports activities available at the heart of the wood are excellent.

### 6 Highgate Cemetery

Wandering down Highgate Hill – and you only ever want to walk down this hill, it was, after all the site of Europe's first cable car in

## WALK FACTS

Start Hampstead tube station  
 End Archway tube station  
 Distance 5 miles  
 Duration Three hours  
 Fuel stop Boogaloo (p289)

the late 19th century – you can walk down Swain's Lane to London's most famous burial ground (p170). Here lie Karl Marx, George Elliot, Christina Rossetti and recent arrival Alexander Litvinenko in some wonderful surroundings. Be sure to take the West Cemetery tour as while it's a pain to have to visit in a group, it's only here that you understand why Highgate is London's most desirable place to be dead.

# WEST LONDON

Eating p266; Drinking p291; Shopping p230; Sleeping p356

The sprawl west of Hyde Park in all directions is one of the most vibrant areas of London and few parts of the capital can boast the area's sheer variety: its rampant multiculturalism (the Caribbean community in Notting Hill, the Poles in Hammersmith and the Australian home from home in Earl's Court), its exciting bars (check out Portobello Rd or Westbourne Grove) and its grand parks and mansions (wander the back streets of Holland Park to see how the rich and famous *really* live).

To the west of Primrose Hill are the very well-off, more urban-feeling areas of St John's Wood and Maida Vale – both sites of gorgeous mansions, charming canals and boutique shopping.

The status of the famous Notting Hill Carnival reflects the multicultural appeal of this part of West London, into which West Indian immigrants moved in the 1950s. After decades of exploitation, strife and the occasional race riot, the community took off in the 1980s and is now a thriving, vibrant corner of the city and an emblem for multicultural London. Although there's not a lot to see in Notting Hill – and it's nothing like its portrayal in the eponymous, saccharine Richard Curtis film – there's plenty to do, with lots of highly individual shops, restaurants and pubs. Narrow Portobello Rd is its heart and soul and most well known these days for hosting one of London's best markets (see p232). The neighbourhood also gives its name to the Notting Hill Carnival, a highlight of London's summer (see p194). Trendy Westbourne Grove, roughly in the northeastern corner, is lined with distinctive shops, pubs, artists' galleries and studios.

Despite the shabby, incoherent architecture of Shepherd's Bush Green and the general chaos that rules here, this West London hub is a decent place to hang out and eat, especially since a slew of gastropubs opened in the last few years. The name reputedly comes from the fact that shepherds would graze their flocks on the common here, en route for Smithfield Market in East London, back when Shepherd's Bush was another rural village outside the city. Synonymous for many with the sprawling BBC Television Centre in nearby White City that opened in 1960, the area had actually become famous 50 years earlier as the site of the 1908 London Olympics, as well as the Great Exhibition of the same year. During the '60s, Shepherd's Bush was used as the setting for The Who's film *Quadrophenia*, so mods on pilgrimage are not an uncommon sight. Today Shepherd's Bush is a multiethnic place full of quirky cafés, bars and character.

As West London fades from the old money of Kensington into the urban sprawl of Hammersmith, the two meet seamlessly in Earl's Court, a hard-to-define no-man's-land. Its '80s nickname 'Kangaroo Valley' attests to the area's popularity with backpackers from Down Under, which is still the case today. In the 1980s Earl's Court was the original gay village, later overtaken by Soho, but still not forgotten today. Freddie Mercury lived and died at 1 Garden Pl and remains the neighbourhood's most famous resident.

West Brompton is even quieter and less remarkable, but is home to one of London's most magnificent cemeteries and is pleasant for a stroll.

Hammersmith is a different story: it's a very urban neighbourhood dominated by a huge flyover and roundabout, with little to entice the visitor save some decent restaurants and the famously arty Riverside Studios (p316).

The Underground and buses are best for moving between the sights.

## LORD'S CRICKET GROUND Map p175

☎ 7616 8595; [www.lords.org](http://www.lords.org); St John's Wood Rd NW8; tours adult/child/concession/family £10/6/7/27; 🕒 tours 10am, noon & 2pm Apr-Sep, noon & 2pm Oct-Mar when there's no play; 🚶 St John's Wood; 🚶

The 'home of cricket' is a must for any devotee of this peculiarly English game: book early for the test matches here, but also take the absorbing and anecdotal 90-minute tour of the ground and facilities, which takes in the famous Long Room,

where members watch the games surrounded by portraits of cricket's great and good, and a museum featuring evocative memorabilia that will appeal to fans old and new. Australian fans will be keen to pose next to the famous little urn containing the Ashes, which remain in English hands no matter how many times the Aussies beat them.

The ground itself is dominated by a striking media centre that looks like a clock radio, but you should also look out for





## WEST LONDON

<b>SIGHTS</b>	(pp174–76)	Green Olive.....19	D2	<b>ARTS</b>	(pp311–21)
Kensal Green Cemetery.....1	A1	Harlem.....20	C3	Electric Cinema.....41	B3
Lord's Cricket Ground.....2	E1	Jason's.....21	D2	Gate.....42	C4
		Kensington Place.....22	C4	Notting Hill Coronet.....43	C4
<b>SHOPPING</b>	(pp215–34)	Levantine.....23	E3		
Blenheim Books.....3	B3	Mandalay.....24	E2	<b>SPORTS &amp; ACTIVITIES</b>	(pp323–29)
Books for Cooks.....(see 4)		Mandarin Kitchen.....25	D4	Lord's Cricket Ground.....(see 2)	
Ceramica Blue.....4	B3	Notting Hill Farmers' Market.....26	C4	Porchester Baths.....44	D3
Coco Ribbon.....5	B3	Nyonya.....27	C4		
Honest Jon's.....6	B2	Ottolenghi.....28	C3	<b>SLEEPING</b>	(pp339–61)
Music & Video Exchange.....7	C4	Royal China.....29	D4	Cardiff Hotel.....45	E3
Paul & Joe.....8	C3	Taqueria.....30	C3	Colonnade.....46	D1
Portobello Road Market.....9	B3			Garden Court Hotel.....47	C3
Rellik.....10	B2	<b>DRINKING</b>	(pp277–96)	Gate Hotel.....48	C4
Retro Woman.....11	C4	Castle.....31	B3	Guesthouse West.....49	C3
Rough Trade.....12	B3	Earl of Lonsdale.....32	B3	Hempel.....50	D3
Travel Bookshop.....(see 3)		Lonsdale.....33	B3	Leinster Inn.....51	C3
		Prince Alfred.....34	D2	Lennox.....52	C4
<b>EATING</b>	(pp235–75)	Twelfth House.....35	C4	Miller's Residence.....53	C3
Arancina.....(see 27)		Warrington Hotel.....36	D1	New Linden Hotel.....54	C3
C&R Restaurant.....13	C3	Westbourne.....37	C2	Oxford London Hotel.....55	E3
Churreria Española.....14	D3			Pavilion Hotel.....56	F3
Costa's Fish Restaurant.....15	C4	<b>NIGHTLIFE</b>	(pp297–310)	Portobello Gold.....57	B3
Couscous Café.....16	D3	Cherry Jam.....38	D2	Portobello Hotel.....58	B4
Electric Brasserie.....(see 41)		Neighbourhood.....39	B2	Royal Park.....59	E3
Geales.....17	C4	Notting Hill		Styloet.....60	E3
Gourmet Burger Kitchen.....18	C3	Arts Club.....40	C4	Vancouver Studios.....61	C3

the famous weather vane in the shape of Father Time and the remarkable tentlike modern Mound Stand.

There's limited disabled access. Call ahead for details.

**KENSAL GREEN CEMETERY** Map p175  
Harrow Rd, Kensal Green W10; tours £5; ☎ tours 2pm Sun; ☎ Kensal Green

Thackeray and Trollope are among the eminent dead folk at this huge and handsome Victorian cemetery, which made a name for itself in the 19th century as the place where the VIPs preferred to RIP. Supposedly based on the Cimetière du Père-Lachaise in Paris, the cemetery is distinguished by its Greek Revival architecture, arched entrances and the outrageously ornate tombs that bear testimony to 19th-century delusions of grandeur. Ambitious two-hour tours start from the Anglican chapel in the centre of the cemetery.

**LEIGHTON HOUSE** Map p177

☎ 7602 3316; www.rbkc.gov.uk; 12 Holland Park Rd W14; adult/concession £3/1; ☎ 11am–5.30pm Wed–Mon; ☎ High St Kensington  
Leighton House sits on a quiet street near Holland Park, like a secret beauty that has to be sought out and appreciated. Designed in 1866 by George Aitchison, this was the home of Lord Leighton (1830–96),

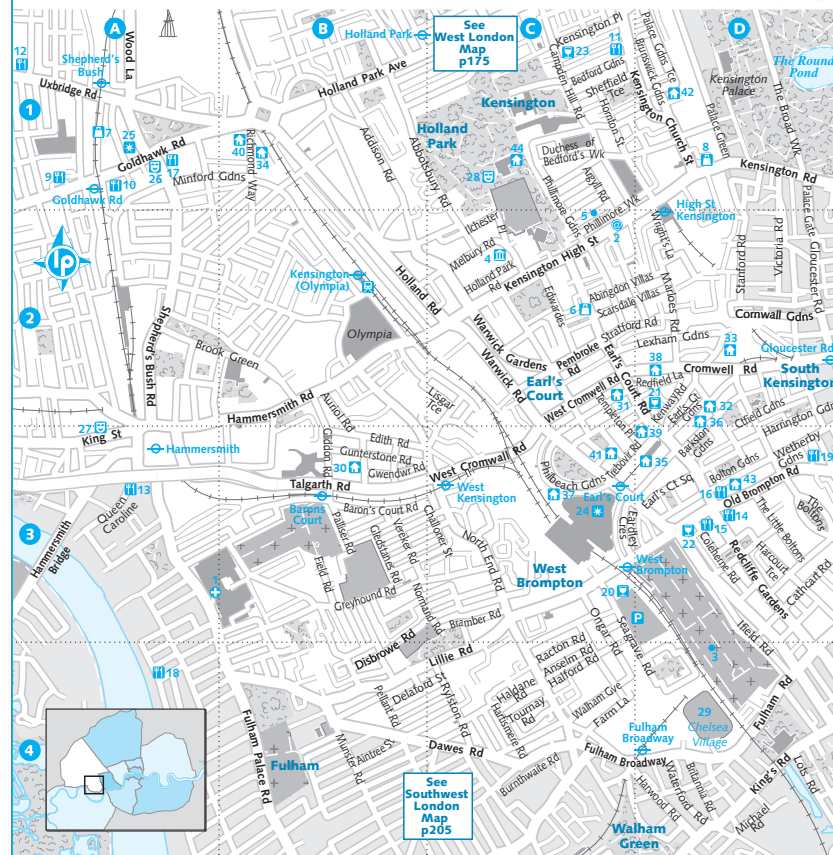
a painter belonging to the Olympian movement. The ground floor is decorated in an Arabic style, with the exquisite Arab Hall added in 1879 and densely covered with blue and green tiles from Rhodes, Cairo, Damascus and Iznik (Turkey) and a fountain tinkling away in the centre. Even the wooden latticework of the windows and gallery was brought from Damascus. The house contains notable pre-Raphaelite paintings by Burne-Jones, Watts, Millais and Lord Leighton himself. Restoration of the back garden has returned it to its Victorian splendour – as has work on the stairwell and upstairs rooms.

**BROMPTON CEMETERY** Map p177

☎ 7352 1201; www.royalparks.gov.uk; Old Brompton Rd SW5; tours £3; ☎ 8am–dusk, tours Sun; ☎ West Brompton

As London's vast population exploded in the 19th century, seven new cemeteries opened, among them Brompton Cemetery, a long expanse running between Fulham Rd and Old Brompton Rd. There is a chapel and colonnades at one end, modelled after St Peter's in Rome. While the most famous resident is Emmeline Pankhurst, the pioneer of women's suffrage in Britain, the cemetery is most interesting as the inspiration for many of Beatrix Potter's characters. A local resident in her youth before she moved to the north, Potter seems to have taken many names

## WEST LONDON: SHEPHERD'S BUSH &amp; EARL'S COURT



## WEST LONDON: SHEPHERD'S BUSH &amp; EARL'S COURT

<b>INFORMATION</b>	Krunctap.....14	D3	<b>SPORTS &amp; ACTIVITIES</b>	(pp323–29)	
Charing Cross Hospital.....1	A3	Lou Pescadou.....15	D3	Chelsea Football Club.....29	D4
easyEverything.....2	C2	Mr Wing.....16	D3	K Spa.....(see 34)	
		Patio.....17	A1		
<b>SIGHTS</b>	(pp176–78)	River Café.....18	A4	<b>SLEEPING</b>	(pp339–61)
Brompton Cemetery.....3	D4	Tendido Cero.....19	D3	Ace Hotel.....30	B3
Leighton House.....4	C2			Barmy Badger Backpackers.....31	C2
Linley Sambourne House.....5	C2	<b>DRINKING</b>	(pp276–96)	base2stay.....32	D2
		Atlas.....20	C3	easyHotel Earl's Court.....33	D2
<b>SHOPPING</b>	(pp215–34)	Prince of Teck.....21	D2	K West.....34	B1
Orsini.....6	C2	Troubadour.....22	D3	Mayflower.....35	D3
Shepherd's Bush Market.....7	A1	Windsor Castle.....23	C1	Merlyn Court Hotel.....36	D2
Troubadour Delicatessen.....(see 22)				Philbeach Hotel.....37	C3
Urban Outfitters.....8	D1	<b>NIGHTLIFE</b>	(pp297–310)	Rockwell.....38	D2
		Earl's Court Exhibition Centre.....24	C3	Rushmore.....39	D3
<b>EATING</b>	(pp235–75)	Shepherd's Bush Empire.....25	A1	St Christopher's Shepherd's Bush.....40	B1
Blah Blah Blah.....9	A1			Twenty Nevern Square.....41	C1
Bush Bar.....10	A1	<b>ARTS</b>	(pp311–21)	Vicarage Hotel.....42	D1
Churchill Thai Kitchen.....11	C1	Bush Theatre.....26	A1	YHA Earl's Court.....43	D3
Esarn Kheaw.....12	A1	Lytic Hammersmith.....27	A3	YHA Holland House Hostel.....44	C1
Gate.....13	A3	Opera Holland Park.....28	C1		

from the deceased of Brompton Cemetery and immortalised them in her world-famous books. Names to be found include Mr Nutkin, Mr McGregor, Jeremiah Fisher, Tommy Brock – and even a Peter Rabbett.

Tours depart 2pm Sunday from the South Lodge, near the Fulham Rd entrance.

### BBC TELEVISION CENTRE Map p64

☎ 0870 603 0304; Wood Lane W12; **tour admission adult/student & child over 10yr £9.50/8.50;**

↻ White City; ♿

If you're interested in TV production, this is the perfect chance to visit the vast complex of studios and offices that bring the BBC's TV programmes to the world. TVC, as it's known to BBC staff, is a pretty monstrous

1960s concrete structure. Visit is by two-hour guided tour only and bookings of two days in advance are essential (no children under 10 years, nine tours daily). You'll see BBC News and Weather Centres as well as studios where shows are being made, and keep your eyes peeled all the while, because you're very likely to spot a celebrity wandering around the corridors – we saw Yoko Ono, Alice Cooper (!) and Jonathan Ross. You can also go and watch the recording of certain shows for free at one of the BBC's many London studios, though you'll have to book in advance. Log on to [www.bbc.co.uk/whatson/tickets](http://www.bbc.co.uk/whatson/tickets) to see what's on during your stay. You'll also need to book for disabled access.

## GREENWICH & SOUTHEAST LONDON

Eating p269; Drinking p292; Shopping p234; Sleeping p360

Southeast London by and large feels like a succession of small villages, and that's exactly what many of these suburbs were until as recently as the late 19th century. Although there's evidence of early prehistoric settlements in areas such as Forest Hill, Greenwich and Woolwich, for millennia this area was merely on the fringes of the big city.

Greenwich, right on the banks of the Thames, is something of an exception in this. Packed with splendid architecture, it has strong connections with the sea, science, sovereigns and – of course – time. Ever since it was decided to make Greenwich the prime meridian of longitude, Greenwich Mean Time has dictated how clocks and watches around the globe are set.

Now a Unesco World Heritage Site, Greenwich's leafy green expanses and white wedding-cake buildings give it an air of semirural gentility. This tranquil aura continues, although to a lesser degree, as you venture further southeast, into a London that few out-of-towners see: places such as Blackheath, with its 110-hectare expanse of open common; Eltham, which boasts an Art Deco palace alongside one of a slightly more elite pedigree, dating back to the 14th century; and Dulwich, site of Britain's oldest public art gallery.

A lot edgier are the areas of Deptford and New Cross just west of Greenwich. Here you'll find a district in transition as was, say, Shoreditch a decade ago. Music studios are opening up in what used to be garages, galleries and art centres are squeezing between pie 'n' mash and kebab shops, and pubs are turning into bars.

## GREENWICH

Greenwich (*gren-itch*) lies to the southeast of central London, where the Thames widens and deepens, and there's a sense of space that is rare elsewhere in the city. Quaint, villagelike and boasting the Royal Observatory and the fabulous National Maritime Museum, Greenwich has been on Unesco's list of World Heritage Sites (as Maritime Greenwich) since 1997. A trip there will be one of the highlights of any visit to London, and you should certainly allow a day to do it justice, particularly if you want to head down the river to the Thames Flood Barrier.

Greenwich is home to an extraordinary interrelated cluster of classical buildings; all the great architects of the Enlightenment made their mark here, largely due to royal patronage. In the early 17th century, Inigo Jones built one of England's first classical Renaissance homes, the Queen's House, which still stands today. Sir Christopher Wren built the Royal Observatory in 1675–76 and, with his acolyte Nicholas Hawksmoor, began work 20 years later on the Royal Hospital for Seamen, which became the Royal Naval College in

## top picks

### GREENWICH & SOUTHEAST LONDON

- Horniman Museum (p185)
- National Maritime Museum (below)
- Red House (p186)
- Royal Observatory (p181)
- Thames Flood Barrier (p184)

1873. Considerately, Wren altered his plans, splitting the college into two perfectly formed halves, to allow uninterrupted views of the Thames from the Queen's House.

Virtually everything in Greenwich can be easily reached from the Cutty Sark DLR station. A quicker way to get here from central London, however, is via one of the mainline trains from Charing Cross or London Bridge. An alternative from Docklands is to use the historic 390m-long foot tunnel running under the Thames, built in 1902. The lifts down to the tunnel are open from 7am to 7pm Monday to Saturday and from 10am to 5.30pm on Sunday. Otherwise you're facing between 88 and 100 steps down and – shudder – up (open 24 hours).

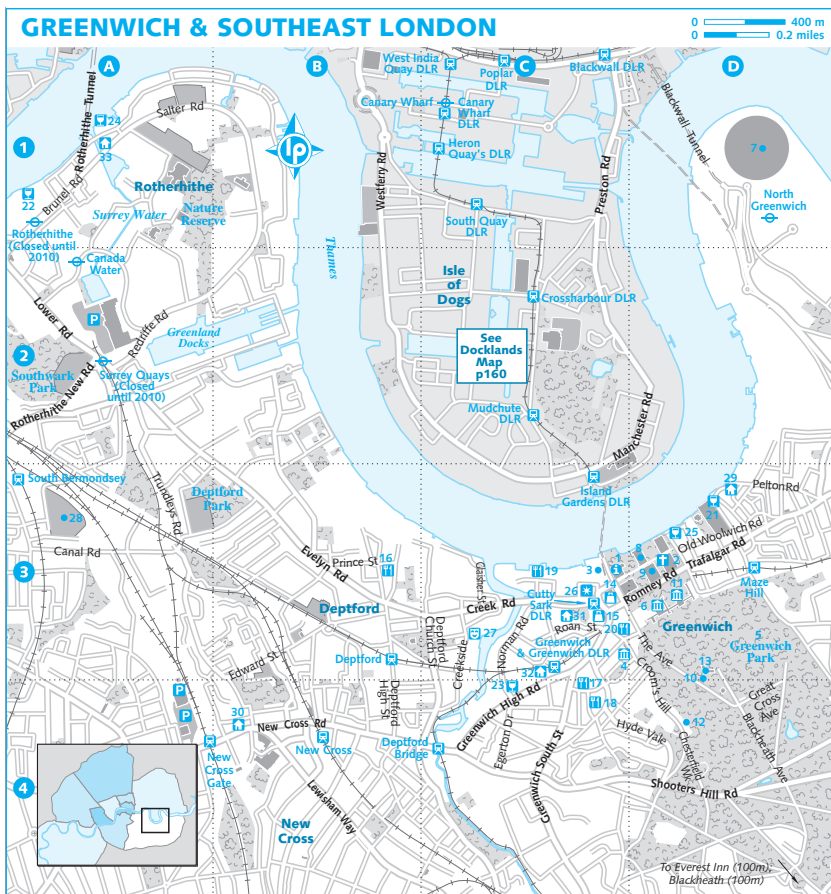
### NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM

Map p180

☎ 8858 4422, recorded information 0870 781 5189; [www.nmm.ac.uk](http://www.nmm.ac.uk); Romney Rd SE10; admission free; ⏰ 10am–5pm Sep–Jun, to 6pm Jul & Aug; 📍 Greenwich or DLR Cutty Sark; ♿

Though it hardly sounds like a crowd-pleaser, this museum designed to tell the





## GREENWICH & SOUTHEAST LONDON

### INFORMATION

Greenwich Tourist Office.....1 C3

### SIGHTS (pp179–88)

Chapel at Old Royal Naval College.....2 D3  
Cutty Sark.....3 C3  
Fan Museum.....4 C3  
Greenwich Park.....5 D3  
National Maritime Museum.....6 D3  
Nelson Room.....(see 9)  
O2 (Millennium Dome).....7 D1  
Old Royal Naval College.....8 D3  
Painted Hall.....9 D3  
Peter Harrison Planetarium.....10 D3  
Queen's House.....11 D3  
Ranger's House.....12 D4  
Royal Observatory.....13 D3

### SHOPPING

(pp215–34)  
Compendia.....14 C3  
Emporium.....15 C3  
Flying Duck Enterprises.....(see 15)  
Greenwich Market.....(see 14)

### EATING

(pp235–75)  
Dog & Bell.....16 B3  
Inside.....17 C4  
Royal Teas.....18 C4  
SE10 Restaurant & Bar.....19 C3  
Spread Eagle.....20 C3

### DRINKING

(pp277–96)  
Cutty Sark Tavern.....21 D3  
Mayflower.....22 A1  
North Pole.....23 C4  
Spice Island.....24 A1  
Trafalgar Tavern.....25 D3

### NIGHTLIFE

(pp297–310)  
O2 (Millennium Dome).....(see 7)  
Up the Creek.....26 C3

### ARTS

(pp311–21)  
Laban.....27 C3

### SPORTS & ACTIVITIES

(pp323–29)  
Millwall Football Club.....28 A3

### SLEEPING

(pp339–61)  
Harbour Master's House.....29 D3  
New Cross Inn.....30 B4  
St Alfeges.....31 C3  
St Christopher's Inn  
Greenwich.....32 C3  
YHA London  
Thameside.....33 A1

long and convoluted history of Britain as a seafaring nation is the most impressive sight in Greenwich. From the moment you step through the entrance to this magnificent neoclassical building you'll be won over. And it just gets better as you progress through the glass-roofed Neptune Court into the rest of this three-storey building.

The exhibits are arranged by theme, focusing on Explorers, Maritime London, Art and Sea and much more. Visual highlights include the golden state barge built in 1732 for Frederick, Prince of Wales, and the huge ship's propeller installed on level 1. The museum also owns the tunic that Britain's greatest sea-faring hero, Horatio Nelson, was wearing when he was fatally shot (including the actual bullet), plus a replica of the lifeboat *James Caird* used by explorer Ernest Shackleton and a handful of his men on their epic mission for help in Antarctica.

The environmentally minded are catered for with the Your Ocean exhibit on level 2, examining the science, history, health and future of the sea. Kids will love firing a cannon in the All Hands exhibit or manoeuvring a tanker into port by using the state-of-the-art bridge simulator on level 3. Even fashionistas will be wowed by Rank and Style (uniforms) and the Passengers exhibit (classic travel posters and the mock-up of the cocktail bar of a cruise ship).

### ROYAL OBSERVATORY

Map p180  
☎ 8858 4422, recorded information 0870 781 5189; www.rog.nmm.ac.uk; Greenwich Park SE19; admission free; 🕒 10am–5pm Sep–Jun, to 6pm Jul & Aug; 🚉 Greenwich or DLR Cutty Sark; ♿  
In 1675 Charles II had the Royal Observatory built on a hill in the middle of Greenwich Park, intending that astronomy be used to establish longitude at sea (see p182). The Octagon Room, designed by Wren, and the nearby Sextant Room are where John Flamsteed (1646–1719), the first astronomer royal, made his observations and calculations.

The globe is divided between east and west at the Royal Observatory, and in the Meridian Courtyard you can place one foot either side of the meridian line and straddle the two hemispheres.

Every day at 1pm the red time ball at the top of the Royal Observatory continues to drop as has done since 1833. You can still get great views of Greenwich and spy on your fellow tourists at the same time by

visiting the unique Camera Obscura. An ambitious £15 million project has added four new galleries exploring astronomy and time, including one on the search for longitude.

The 120-seat state-of-the-art Peter Harrison Planetarium (☎ 8312 8565; adult/child £6/4; 🕒 hourly shows 1–4pm Mon–Fri, 11am–4pm Sat & Sun), which opened just south of the Royal Observatory in June 2007, has a £1 million digital laser projector that can show entire heavens on the inside of its bronze-clad roof and is the most advanced in Europe. Along with these shows, there are galleries tracing the history of astronomy and interactive displays on such subjects the effects of gravity.

### O2 (MILLENNIUM DOME)

Map p180  
www.millennium-dome.co.uk; Drawdock Rd SE10; 🚉 North Greenwich

Since it closed at the end of 2000, having failed miserably in its bid to attract 12 million visitors, the huge circus tent-shaped O2 (renamed from the Millennium Dome in 2005) was, until recently, for the most part unemployed. It has now hosted Bon Jovi and Barbara Streisand concerts and a massive exhibition called Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs, but that was little consolation (or cash) for developers Anschutz Entertainment Group, whose bid for it to house Britain's first regional supercasino had been rejected by the government that year. The future of the 380m-wide white elephant on Greenwich Peninsula that cost £750 million to build (and more than £5 million a year just to keep it erect) does look a lot brighter than it did, and it is now scheduled to host the 2009 World Gymnastics Championships and the artistic gymnastics and basketball events of the 2012 Olympic.

If you want to get a good view of what was the latest in tent technology at the turn of the millennium, you can see it from Docklands or Trinity Buoy Wharf (p162), or by taking a River Thames cruise to the Thames Flood Barrier (p184).

### OLD ROYAL NAVAL COLLEGE

Map p180  
☎ 8269 4747; www.oldroyalnavalcollege.org; King William Walk SE10; admission free; 🕒 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 12.30–5pm Sun; 🚉 Greenwich or DLR Cutty Sark

There are two main rooms open to the public at the college – the Painted Hall and

## THE LONG ROAD TO LONGITUDE

It was the challenge of the century. Establishing latitude – the imaginary lines that girdle the earth from north to south – was child's play; any sailor could do that by looking at the height of the sun or the Pole Star on the horizon. Finding longitude, however, was an entirely different matter and had stumped astronomers from the Greeks to Galileo.

As it takes 24 hours for the earth to complete one revolution of 360°, one hour is one twenty-fourth of a revolution – or 15°. By the 16th century astronomers knew that longitude could be found by comparing local time with the reading of a clock set at the time of home port or another place of known longitude. But that meant two *reliable* clocks, ones that would keep accurate time as the ship pitched and shook and the temperature rose or fell. Such technology was unavailable until the 18th century.

Reading longitude inaccurately lengthened sea voyages, cost shipping companies money and increased the number of sailors' deaths due to scurvy and accidents, as islands, rocks and reefs appeared almost out of nowhere. In 1714 Parliament offered a prize of £20,000 – a king's ransom in the 18th century – to anyone who could discover a method of finding longitude accurate to within 30 miles. It's a long story – one wonderfully (and briefly) told by Dava Sobel in her book *Longitude* – but Yorkshire clockmaker John Harrison was eventually awarded the prize for a marine chronometer tested from 1761 to 1762 by the Royal Observatory at Greenwich.

In 1884 the observatory's contribution in solving the longitude riddle was acknowledged when an international conference in Washington designated 'the meridian passing through the centre of the transit instrument at the Observatory of Greenwich as the initial meridian for longitude', or the prime meridian. Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) was then accepted worldwide as the universal measurement of standard time.

the chapel – which are accessed through the new visitors centre and adjoining Greenwich Tourist Information Centre in the Pepys Building. They're in separate buildings because when Christopher Wren was commissioned by William and Mary to build a naval hospital here in 1692, he designed it in two separate halves so as not to spoil the view of the river from the **Queen's House** (right), Inigo Jones' miniature masterpiece to the south.

Built on the site of the Old Palace of Placentia, where Henry VIII was born in 1491, the hospital was initially intended for those wounded in the victory over the French at La Hogue. In 1869 the building was converted to a Naval College. Now even the navy has left and the premises are home to the University of Greenwich and Trinity College of Music.

The **Painted Hall** is one of Europe's greatest banquet rooms. In the King William Building, it has been covered in decorative 'allegorical Baroque' murals by artist James Thornhill, who also painted the cupola of St Paul's Cathedral. The mural above the Lower Hall show William and Mary enthroned amid symbols of the Virtues. Beneath William's feet, you can see the defeated French king Louis XIV grovelling with a furled flag in hand. Up a few steps is the Upper Hall, where George I is depicted with his family on the western wall. In the bottom right-hand corner Thornhill drew himself into the picture, pointing towards his work.

Off the Upper Hall is the **Nelson Room**, originally designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor, then used as a smoking room and recently refurbished. For a week over Christmas 1805, this is where the brandy-soaked (for embalming purposes, of course) body of the great naval hero lay, before his state funeral at St Paul's. Today the room boasts a replica of the statue atop Nelson's column in Trafalgar Sq plus other memorabilia. If you want to view this room you must join one of the 90-minute **guided tours** (☎ 8269 4799; adult/under 16yr £4/free; 🕒 tours 11.30am & 2pm) of the Jacobean undercroft of the former palace of Placentia leaving from the Painted Hall.

The **chapel** in the Queen Mary Building, opposite, is decorated in a lighter rococo style. The eastern end of the chapel is dominated by a painting by the 18th-century American artist Benjamin West showing *The Preservation of St Paul after Shipwreck at Malta*. It's certainly a beautiful room, but it's more famous for its organ and acoustics. If possible come on the first Sunday of the month, when there's a free 50-minute organ recital at 3pm, or time your visit for sung Eucharist, every Sunday at 11am.

### QUEEN'S HOUSE Map p180

☎ 8858 4422, recorded information 0870 781 5189; www.nmm.ac.uk; Romney Rd SE10; admission free; 🕒 10am-5pm Sep-Jun, to 6pm Jul & Aug; 📍 Greenwich or DLR Cutty Sark

This building was first called the 'House of Delight' and that's certainly still true. The first Palladian building by architect Inigo Jones after he returned from Italy, it's far more enticing than the art collection in it, even though that contains some Turners, Holbeins, Hogarths and Gainsboroughs. The house was begun in 1616 for Anne of Denmark, wife of James I. However, it wasn't completed until 1635, when it became the home of Charles I and his queen, Henrietta Maria. The **Great Hall** is the principal room – a lovely cube shape, with a helix-shaped Tulip Staircase and a gallery on level 3, where marine paintings and portraits from the National Maritime Museum's fine art collection are shown.

### RANGER'S HOUSE Map p180

☎ 8853 0035; www.english-heritage.org.uk; Greenwich Park SE10; adult/under 5yr/5-15yr/senior & student £5.50/free/2.80/4.10; 🕒 10am-5pm Sun-Wed Apr-Sep; 📍 Greenwich or DLR Cutty Sark

This elegant Georgian villa in the southwest corner of Greenwich Park was built in 1723 and once housed the park's ranger. It now contains a collection of 650 works of art (medieval and Renaissance paintings, porcelain, silverware, tapestries etc) amassed by one Julius Wernher, a German-born railway engineer's son who struck it rich in the diamond fields of South Africa in the 19th century.

### CUTTY SARK Map p180

☎ 8858 2698; www.cuttysark.org.uk; Cutty Sark Gardens SE10; 📍 Greenwich or DLR Cutty Sark

Rust and rot had been eating away at this Greenwich landmark, the last of the great clipper ships to sail between China and England in the 19th century, and she was undergoing £25 million repair work when disaster struck in May 2007. A fire, believed to have been deliberately set, damaged about 50% of the vessel. Luckily half of the ship's furnishings and equipment, including the mast, had been removed for conservation and were safe. The tragedy struck a chord among the citizens of the capital of this traditionally seagoing nation and contributions to bring the ship back to life began to pour in. We are assured that the *Cutty Sark* will rise, phoenixlike, from the ashes but it will take time and lots more money. All donations are gratefully accepted; see www.justgiving.com/cuttysark fire for details.

### FAN MUSEUM Map p180

☎ 8305 1441; www.fan-museum.org; 12 Crooms Hill SE10; adult/7-16yr & senior £4/3; 🕒 11am-5pm Tue-Sat, noon-5pm Sun; 📍 Greenwich or DLR Cutty Sark; 📍

The world's only museum entirely devoted to fans has a wonderful collection of ivory, tortoiseshell, peacock-feather and folded-fabric examples alongside kitsch battery-powered versions and huge ornamental Welsh fans. The 18th-century Georgian town house in which the collection resides also has a Japanese-style garden with an **Orangery** (half/full tea £3.50/4.50; 🕒 3-5pm Tue & Sun) serving afternoon tea.

### GREENWICH PARK Map p180

☎ 8858 2608; www.royalparks.gov.uk; 🕒 dawn-dusk; 📍 Greenwich or Maze Hill, DLR Cutty Sark

This is one of London's largest and loveliest parks, with a grand avenue, wide-open spaces, a rose garden, picturesque walks and impressive views across the River Thames to the Docklands from the top of the hill. Covering a full 74 hectares, it is the oldest enclosed royal park and is partly the work of Le Nôtre, who landscaped the palace gardens of Versailles for Louis XIV. It contains several historic sights, a tea house, a café and a deer park called the Wilderness in the southeast corner.

### DEPTFORD & NEW CROSS Map p180

Like most world-class cities where property is more valuable than bullion, London has a plethora of 'up-and-coming' areas and neighbourhoods, many of which simply end up going away. That doesn't seem to be the case with Deptford and its southern extension, New Cross, just over the Deptford Creek west of Greenwich. In recent years it's become something of a 'Shoreditch South' and nicknamed Rocklands due to its many music studios and shops, art galleries, the celebrated **Laban** (p313) dance institute and other cultural centres and creative outlets. But this neighbourhood's sights – most famously the Elizabethan playwright Christopher Marlowe was stabbed to death here during a drunken brawl – are best seen on foot (see p186).

### BLACKHEATH

📍 Blackheath

Though it might appear on the map as a southern extension of Greenwich Park, Blackheath and the 'village' of that name



to the southeast is very much a world of its own. Known locally as the 'Hampstead of the south', this 110-hectare expanse of open common has played a greater role in the history of London than its much bigger sister to the north. The Danes camped here in the early 11th century after having captured Alfege, the archbishop of Canterbury, as did Wat Tyler before marching on London with tens of thousands of Essex and Kentish men during the Peasants' Revolt in 1381. Henry VII fought off Cornish rebels here in 1497, and the heath was where Henry VIII met his fourth wife, Anne of Cleves, in 1540 (he had agreed to marry her based on a portrait by Holbein, but disliked her immediately in the flesh and divorced her six months later). Later it became a highwaymen's haunt, and it was not until the area's development in the late 18th century – the lovely **Paragon**, a crescent of Georgian mansions on the southeastern edge of the heath, was built to entice 'the right sort of people' to move to the area – that Blackheath was considered safe. The name of the heath is derived from the colour of the soil, not from its alleged role as burial ground during the Black Death, the bubonic plague of the late 14th century.

Today the windswept heath is a pleasant place for a stroll, a spot of kite-flying or a drink at one of a pair of historic pubs to the south. The heath is also the starting point for the London Marathon in April.

To reach Blackheath from Greenwich Park, walk southward along Chesterfield Walk and past the Ranger's House (or southward on Blackheath Ave and through Blackheath Gate) and then cross Shooters Hill Rd.

## CHARLTON & WOOLWICH

From early Iron Age hill forts to mammoth gates in the Thames designed to prevent flooding, humankind has been determined to leave a mark on these areas over the centuries. One of the most enduring landmarks has been the Royal Arsenal, which followed Henry VIII's royal dockyards out here in the 16th and 17th centuries. When it was finally closed in 1994, it made way for a museum.

### THAMES FLOOD BARRIER Map p64

➔ North Greenwich or 🚉 Charlton, then 🚗 161, 177, 180 or 472

The sci-fi-looking Thames Flood Barrier is in place to protect London from flood-

ing, and with global warming increasing the city's vulnerability to rising sea levels and surge tides, the barrier is likely to be of growing importance in coming years. Under construction for a decade and completed in 1982, the barrier consists of 10 movable gates anchored to nine concrete piers, each as tall as a five-storey building. The silver roofs on the piers house the operating machinery to raise and lower the gates against excess water. They make a surreal sight, straddling the river in the lee of a giant warehouse. Just opposite on the north bank of the Thames is the 7-hectare **Thames Barrier Park**.

The reason why London needs such a flood barrier is that the water level has been rising by as much as 60cm per century, while the river itself has been narrowing; in Roman times it was probably around 800m wide at the site of today's London Bridge while now it's barely 250m, with constant pressure to develop the foreshores. The Thames tide rises and falls quite harmlessly twice a day, and once a fortnight there's also a stronger 'spring' tide. The danger comes when the spring tide coincides with an unexpected surge, which pushes tons of extra water upriver. The barrier has been built to prevent that water pouring over the riverbanks and flooding nearby houses. Some 300 people were drowned on the east coast and the Thames Estuary in 1953 when the Thames burst its banks. Today environmentalists are already talking about a bigger, wider damming mechanism further towards the mouth of the river, before the current barrier comes to the expected end of its design life in 2030.

The barrier looks best when it's raised, and the only guaranteed time this happens is once a month, when the mechanisms are checked. For exact dates and times, ring or check the website of the **Thames Barrier Information Centre** (☎ 8305 4188; www.environment-agency.gov.uk; 1 Unity Way SE18; admission to barrier free, admission to downstairs information centre adult/child/senior £2/1/1; 🕒 11am-3.30pm Oct-Mar, 10.30am-4.30pm Apr-Sep).

If you're coming from central London, take a train to Charlton from Charing Cross or London Bridge. Then walk along Woolwich Rd to Eastmoor St, which leads northward to the centre. If you're coming from Greenwich, you can pick up bus 177 or 180 along Romney Rd and get off at the Thames Barrier stop (near the Victoria Pub, 757 Woolwich Rd). The closest tube station

is North Greenwich, from where you can pick up bus 472 or 161.

Boats also travel to and from the barrier, although they don't land. From Westminster it's a three-hour round trip; from Greenwich it takes just one hour. From April to October direct services run by **Thames River Services** (☎ 7930 4097; www.westminsterpier.co.uk; adult/child/senior/family one way £8.70/4.35/7/24, return £115.50/9/30.25) leave Westminster Pier on the hour from 10am to 3pm (leaving Greenwich from 11am to 4pm), passing the O2 (Millennium Dome) along the way. From November to March there's a reduced service from Westminster between 10.40am and 3.20pm. See the website for exact times.

### FIREPOWER, THE ROYAL ARTILLERY MUSEUM Map p64

☎ 8855 7755; www.firepower.org.uk; Royal Arsenal, Woolwich SE18; adult/5-15yr/senior & student/family £5/2.50/4.50/12; 🕒 10.30am-5pm Wed-Sun Apr-Oct, 10.30am-5pm Fri-Sun Nov-Mar; ➔ North Greenwich then 🚗 161, 422 or 472, 🚉 Woolwich Arsenal

Not a place for pacifists or those of a nervous disposition, Firepower is a shoot-'em-up display of how artillery has developed through the ages. The History Gallery traces the story of artillery from catapults to nuclear warheads, while a multimedia exhibit called Field of Fire tries to convey the experience of artillery gunners from WWI to Bosnia in a 15-minute extravaganza. There's a Gunnery Hall packed with weapons from the 20th century and a Medals Gallery with 7000 pieces. The Command Post at the end of the tour includes both a climbing wall and paintball range (£1.50 each, or £2.50 for both). The whole place is loud and reeking of adrenaline – and the kids just can't get enough of it. Reach the Royal Arsenal by rail from Charing Cross or London Bridge or on bus 161, 422 or 472 from the North Greenwich tube station.

### DULWICH & FOREST HILL

Tucked away in the wide expanse of South London that the tube fails to reach, Dulwich (*dull*-itch) and Forest Hill are leafy, quiet suburbs with some fine architecture and an air of gentility. Both boast outstanding museums well worth a trip out here.

### DULWICH PICTURE GALLERY Map p64

☎ 8693 5254; www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk; Gallery Rd SE21; adult/student & child/senior

£4.40/free/3.30; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun; 🚉 West Dulwich; 🚗

The UK's oldest public art gallery, the Dulwich Picture Gallery was designed by the idiosyncratic architect Sir John Soane between 1811 and 1814 to house Dulwich College's collection of paintings by Raphael, Rembrandt, Rubens, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Poussin, Lely, Van Dyck and others. It's a wonderful, atmospheric place but with scarcely a dozen rooms to hang the artwork, wall space is limited and it is difficult to view some of the paintings properly. Unusually, the collectors, Noel Desenfans and painter Sir Peter Francis Bourgeois, chose to have their mausoleums, lit by a moody *lumière mystérieuse* (mysterious light) created with tinted glass, placed among the pictures. An annex (additional £3) contains space for temporary exhibitions – last seen: Canaletto in England 1746-1755. Free guided tours of the museum are available at 3pm on Saturday and Sunday.

The museum is a 10-minute walk northwards along Gallery Rd, which starts almost opposite West Dulwich station. Bus P4 links the gallery with the Horniman Museum (below).

### HORNIMAN MUSEUM Map p64

☎ 8699 1872, 8699 2339; www.horniman.ac.uk; 100 London Rd SE23; admission free; 🕒 10.30am-5.30pm Mon-Sat, 2-5.30pm Sun; 🚉 Forest Hill; 🚗 This museum is an extraordinary place, comprising the original collection of wealthy pack rat tea merchant Frederick John Horniman, who had the Art Nouveau building with clock tower and mosaics specially designed to house it in 1901. Today it encompasses everything from a dusty stuffed walrus and voodoo altars from Haiti and Benin to a mock-up of a Fijian reef and a wonderful collection of concertinas.

On the ground and 1st floors is the Natural History Gallery, the core of the Horniman collection with the usual animal skeletons and pickled specimens. In the basement you'll find African Worlds, the first permanent gallery of African and Afro-Caribbean art and culture in the UK. The Music Gallery next door has instruments from 3500-year-old Egyptian clappers and early English keyboards to Indonesian gamelan and Ghanaian drums, with touch screens so you can hear what they sound like and videos to see them being played *in situ*. The Centenary Gallery traces the history of the museum's first 100 years. The

new aquarium is small but state of the art. The café, with seating in the stunning conservatory, is a delight as are the surrounding hillside gardens with views of London.

To get here from Forest Hill station, turn left out of the station along Devonshire Rd and then right along London Rd. The museum is about 500m on the right.

## ELTHAM

Eltham was the favoured home of the Plantagenet kings. But after the Tudors switched the royal favours to Greenwich, the palace they built here lay neglected for more than five hundred years. Only when the wealthy Courtauld family arrived in the 1930s to build their fabulous home were the remains of the original Eltham Palace restored.

### ELTHAM PALACE Map p64

☎ 8294 2548; [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk); off Court Rd SE9; adult/under 5yr/5-15yr/concession £7.90/free/4/5.90; 🕒 10am-5pm Sun-Wed Apr-Oct, 11am-4pm Sun-Wed Nov, Dec, Feb & Mar, closed Jan; 📍 Eltham; 🚗

No fan of Art Deco should miss a trip to Eltham Palace, not so much for the remnants of the palace building itself but for the fabulous Courtauld House on its grounds.

The house was built between 1933 and 1937 by the well-to-do textile merchant Stephen Courtauld and his wife Virginia; from the impressive entrance hall with its dome and huge circular carpet with geometric shapes to the black-marble dining room with silver-foil ceiling and burlwood-veneered fireplace it appears the couple had taste as well as money. They also, rather fashionably for the times, had a pet lemur, and the heated cage, complete with tropical murals and a bamboo ladder leading to the ground floor, for the spoiled (and vicious) 'Mah-jongg' is also on view.

Little remains of the 14th- to 16th-century palace where Edward IV entertained and Henry VIII spent his childhood before decamping for Greenwich, apart from the restored Great Medieval Hall. Its hammer-beam roof is generally rated the third best in the country, behind those at Westminster Hall and Hampton Court Palace.

## BEXLEYHEATH

Formerly known as Bexley New Town and dominated by an expanse of open space, this attractive suburban development east of Eltham contains two important historic houses.

### DANSON HOUSE Off Map p64

☎ 8303 6699; [www.dansonhouse.com](http://www.dansonhouse.com); Danson Park, Bexleyheath DA6; adult/senior & student £5/4.50; 🕒 11am-5pm Wed, Thu, Sun & Mon & bank holidays late Mar-Oct; 📍 Bexleyheath, then 20min walk southwest

This Palladian villa was built by one John Boyd, the son of a sugar trader and himself an East India Company director, in 1766. A 10-year restoration to bring the house back to its original Georgian style was completed in 2005, aided by the discovery of a series of fine watercolours of the interiors by the second owner's daughter in 1805. Highlights include the dining room's numerous reliefs and frescoes celebrating love and romance, the library and music room with its functioning organ, the dizzy-making spiral staircase accessing the upper floors and the Victorian kitchens (open occasionally). The English Garden is a delight, and on the large lake in Danson Park, which is flanked by some splendid Art Deco houses along Danson Rd to the east, you can rent rowing boats (☎ 8303 2228; 30/60min £5/7.50; 🕒 9.30am-5pm Sat & Sun Sep-Jun, daily Jul & Aug) and kayaks (15/30min £1.50/2.50).

### RED HOUSE Off Map p64

☎ 8304 9878; [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk); 13 Red House Lane, Bexleyheath DA6; adult/5-15yr/family £6.40/3.20/16; 🕒 10.45am-4.15pm Wed-Sun Mar-Dec; 📍 Bexleyheath, then 20min walk south

From the outside, this redbrick house built by Victorian designer William Morris in 1860 conjures up a gingerbread house in stone. The nine rooms open to the public bear all the elements of the Arts and Crafts style to which Morris adhered – a bit of Gothic art here, some religious symbolism there. Furniture by Morris and the house's designer Philip Webb are in evidence, as are paintings and stained glass by Edward Burne-Jones. Entry is by guided tour only, which must be prebooked. The surrounding gardens were designed by Morris 'to clothe' the house. Don't miss the well with a conical roof inspired by the oast houses of Kent.

## DEPTFORD & NEW CROSS WALK

### Walking Tour 1 Creekside

This cobbled street running parallel to Deptford Creek is lined with galleries and artists'

studios with regularly changing art exhibitions, including *Art in Perpetuity* (☎ 8694 8344; [www.apststudios.org](http://www.apststudios.org); 6 Creekside SE8) and *Creekside Artists* (☎ 8297 2053; [www.creeksideartists.co.uk](http://www.creeksideartists.co.uk); 8-12 Creekside SE8).

### 2 Laban

What is acknowledged as the largest and best equipped contemporary dance school (p313) in Europe is housed in an award-winning £23-million plastic-clad building (2003) at the northern end of Creekside designed by the same architects who did Tate Modern. Highly innovative are the turf-covered mounds of debris cleared from the site in the forecourt.

### 3 Statue of Peter the Great

This intriguing statue (end of Glaiser St SE8) commemorates the four-month stay of Tsar Peter I of Russia, who in 1698 came to Deptford to

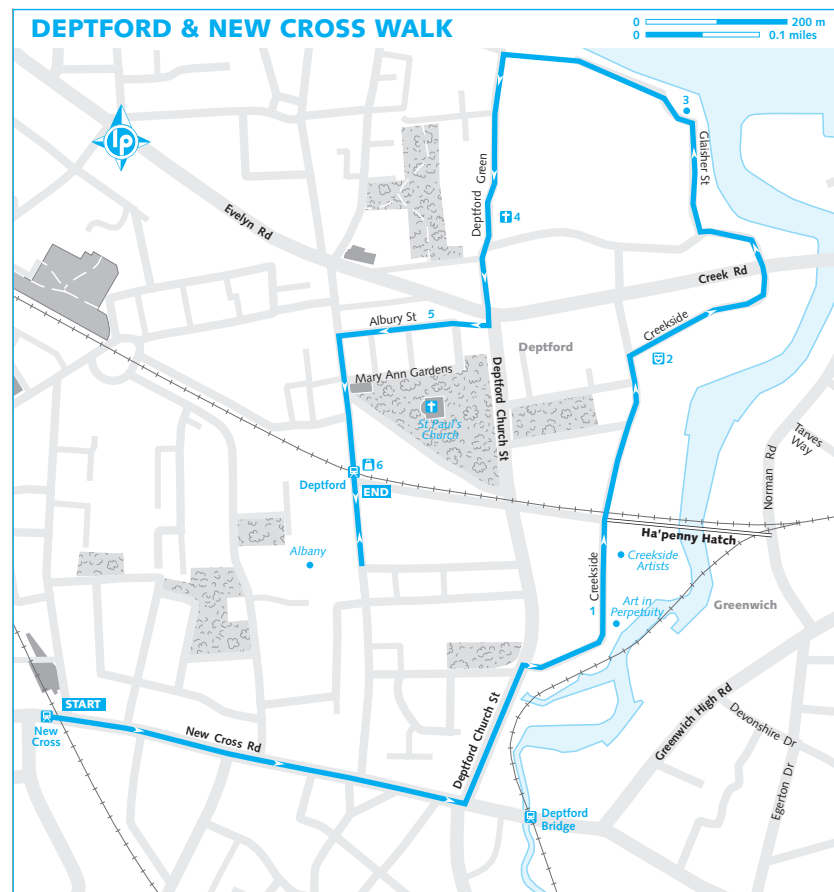
learn more about new developments in shipbuilding. The original party dude, Peter stayed with diarist John Evelyn and his drunken parties badly damaged the writer's house.

### 4 St Nicholas Church

This late-17th-century church (☎ 8691 3161; Deptford Green SE8) contains a memorial to playwright Christopher Marlowe, who was murdered in Deptford in a tavern brawl at the age of 29 in 1593. The fight supposedly broke out over

## WALK FACTS

Start New Cross rail station  
End Deptford rail station  
Distance 1.5 miles  
Duration Two hours





who was to pay the bill but it is generally believed that Marlowe was in the employ of the Elizabethan intelligence service.

### 5 Albury Street

This delightful street is lined with Georgian buildings that once housed Deptford's naval officers, including (it is said) Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton. Notice the exquisite wood carvings decorating many of the doorways. To

the south is the baroque **St Paul's Church** (☎ 8692 7449; Mary Ann Gardens SE8), built in 1730.

### 6 Deptford Market

This colourful market (☎ 8691 8725; Deptford High St SE8; 🕒 8.30am-3pm Wed, Fri & Sat) is held in the centre of Deptford three days a week. Southwest is the **Albany** (☎ 8692 4446; www.thealbany.org.uk; Douglas Way SE8), a busy arts and community centre with comedy, music and theatre productions.

## SOUTH LONDON

Eating p270; Drinking p293; Shopping p234

Londoners still talk as if the Thames was the huge barrier between north and south that it was in the Middle Ages. In fact, the psychological gulf between the two banks is as wide as ever; most people in North London (and that's most Londoners) refuse to believe there's anything of importance across the river. But it really isn't so grim down south. In recent years even former North Londoners have discovered there's something rather pleasant about the more affordable property prices and relaxed lifestyle of the river's former B-list side (referring, of course, to the number of place names beginning with that letter such as Battersea, Brixton, Balham and so on).

Anarchic and artistic Brixton is without a doubt the most interesting area. Besides coming here to go clubbing, to attend a gig at the Carling Academy Brixton (p308) or to catch a film at the historic Ritzy (p316), probably the best way to taste the area's Afro-Caribbean flavour is to visit Brixton Market (p242).

Clapham has long been the flag-bearer for South London style, with upmarket restaurants and bars lining its High Street since the 1980s. Attention has started to focus more recently on Battersea, with its magnificent park and the announced conversion of the monolithic Battersea Power Station. Kennington has some lovely streets lined with Georgian terraced houses, so it can only be a matter of time before the gentrification of 'Little Portugal' – its southern extension of Stockwell – begins.

Lambeth can boast both the episcopal seat of the Church of England and one of London's finest museums.

## LAMBETH

The name Lambeth translates as 'muddy landing place', attesting to the fact that this, like nearby Waterloo, was largely marsh land and polder dams until the 18th century. Apparently, the only notables brave enough to live here earlier were archbishops of Canterbury, who began coming and going in barges from waterside Lambeth Palace in the 13th century. It was the arrival of bridges and the railways centuries later that finally connected Lambeth to London.

### IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM Map p198

☎ 7416 5320; www.iwm.org.uk; Lambeth Rd SE1; admission free; 🕒 10am-6pm; 🚶 Lambeth North; ♿

Despite the threatening pair of 15in naval guns outside the front entrance to what was once Bethlehem Royal Hospital, commonly known as Bedlam, this is for the most part a very sombre, thoughtful museum. Most of its exhibits are given over to exploring the human and social cost of conflict.

## top picks

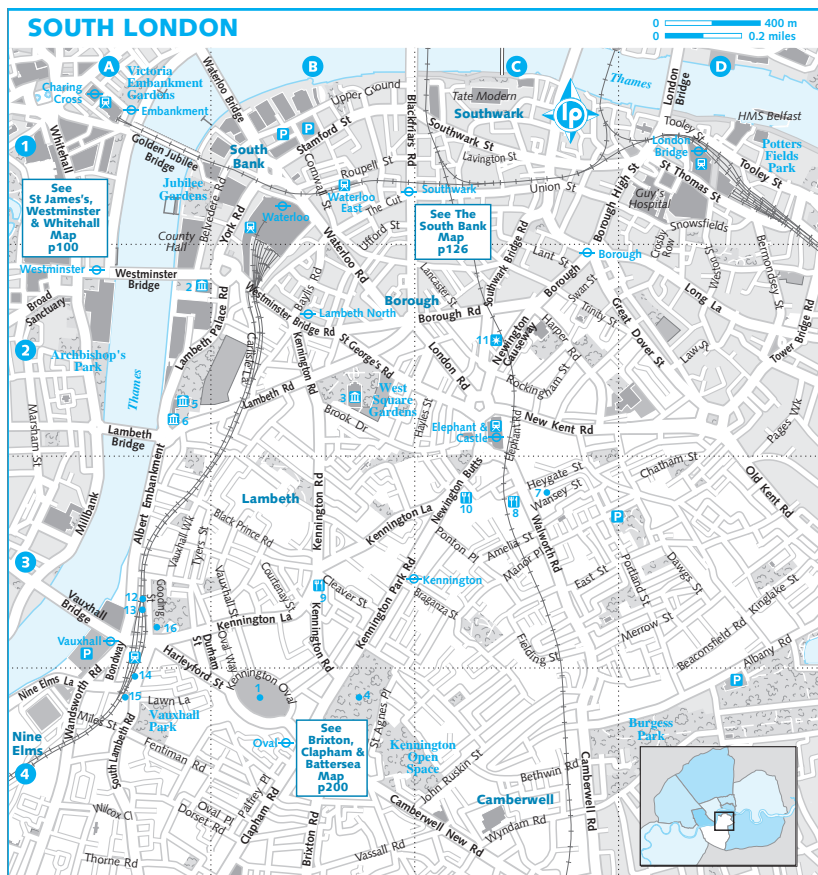
### SOUTH LONDON

- Battersea Park (p201)
- Battersea Power Station (p201)
- Carling Academy Brixton (p308)
- Imperial War Museum (below)
- Lambeth Palace (p198)

Although the museum's focus is officially on military action involving British or Commonwealth troops during the 20th century, it gives 'war' a wide interpretation. So it not only has serious discussion of the two world wars, Korea and Vietnam, but also covers the Cold War, 'secret' warfare (ie spying) and even the war on apartheid in South Africa.

The core of the six-floor museum is a chronological exhibition on the two world wars on the lower ground floor. In the Trench Experience you walk through the grim day-to-day reality of life on the Somme front line in WWI, and in the more hair-raising Blitz Experience you cower inside a mock bomb shelter during a WWII air raid and then emerge through ravaged East End streets.

On the upper floors you find the two most outstanding – and moving – sections: the extensive **Holocaust Exhibition** (not recommended for under 14s) on the 3rd floor, and a stark gallery called **Crimes against Humanity** devoted to genocide in Cambodia,



## SOUTH LONDON

SIGHTS	(pp197–202)	EATING	(pp235–75)	SPORTS & ACTIVITIES	(pp323–29)
Brit Oval.....	1 B4	Dragon Castle.....	8 C3	Brit Oval.....	(see 1)
Florence Nightingale Museum.....	2 A2	Kennington Tandoori.....	9 B3		
Imperial War Museum.....	3 B2	Lobster.....			
Kennington Park.....	4 B4	Pot.....	10 C3		
Lambeth Palace.....	5 A2				
Museum of Garden History.....	6 A2				
Wansley St Housing.....	7 C3				
		NIGHTLIFE	(pp297–310)		
		Ministry of Sound.....	11 C2		

Yugoslavia and Rwanda (not recommended for under 16s). The 2nd floor features war paintings by the likes of Stanley Spencer and John Singer Sargent.

**Audioguides** to the permanent collection cost adult/concession £3.50/3. Temporary exhibits, which charge an admission fee, cover such topics as war reporting, camouflage and modern warfare and – our

favourite – the role of animals in conflicts from WWI to the present day.

### LAMBETH PALACE Map p198

**Lambeth Palace Rd SE1; ↻ Lambeth North**  
The redbrick Tudor gatehouse beside the church of St Mary-at-Lambeth leads to Lambeth Palace, the London residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Although

the palace is not usually open to the public, the gardens occasionally are; check with a tourist office for details (see p400).

### MUSEUM OF GARDEN HISTORY

Map p198

☎ 7401 8865; [www.museumgardenhistory.org](http://www.museumgardenhistory.org); **St Mary-at-Lambeth, Lambeth Palace Rd SE1; admission free, requested donation £3; ☎ 10.30am–5pm Tue–Sun; ↻ Lambeth North**

In a city holding out the broad attractions of Kew Gardens, the modest Museum of Garden History housed in the church of St Mary-at-Lambeth is mainly for the seriously green-thumbed. Its trump card is the charming knot garden, a replica of a 17th-century formal garden, with topiary hedges clipped into an intricate, twirling design. Keen gardeners will enjoy the displays on the 17th-century Tradescant *père* and *fils* – a father-and-son team who were gardeners to Charles I and Charles II, globe-trotters and enthusiastic collectors of exotic plants (they introduced the pineapple to London). Nongardeners might like to pay their respects to Captain William Bligh (of mutinous *Bounty* fame), who is buried here (he lived and died nearby at 100 Lambeth Rd). The excellent café has vegetarian food.

### FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE MUSEUM

Map p198

☎ 7620 0374; [www.florence-nightingale.co.uk](http://www.florence-nightingale.co.uk); **St Thomas's Hospital, 2 Lambeth Palace Rd SE1; adult/senior, student & child/family £5.80/4.80/16; ☎ 10am–5pm Mon–Fri, to 4.30pm Sat & Sun; ↻ Westminster or Waterloo; ♿**  
Attached to St Thomas's Hospital, this small museum tells the story of feisty war heroine Florence Nightingale (1820–1910), who led a team of nurses to Turkey in 1854 during the Crimean War. There she worked to improve conditions for the soldiers before returning to London to set up a training school for nurses at St Thomas's in 1859. So popular did she become that baseball card-style photos of the gentle 'Lady of the Lamp' were sold during her lifetime. There is no shortage of revisionist detractors who dismiss her as a 'canny administrator' and 'publicity hound'; Nightingale was, in fact, one of the world's first modern celebrities. But the fact remains she improved conditions for thousands of soldiers in the field and saved quite a few lives in the process. We can hardly think of a more glorious achievement.

## BRIXTON

'We gonna rock down to Electric Avenue,' sang Eddy Grant optimistically in 1983, about one of London's first shopping streets (1888) to be lit by electricity. (It's just to the left as you exit Brixton tube station.) But the Clash's 'Guns of Brixton' took a much darker tone when referring to community discontent with the police that provoked the riots of the 1980s. Historically, those are just two sides to this edgy, vibrant, multicultural potpourri of a neighbourhood.

There was a settlement on the site of today's Brixton as early as a year after the Norman invasion. But Brixton remained an isolated, far-flung village until the 19th century, when the new Vauxhall Bridge (1810) and the railways (1860) linked it with central London.

The years that most shaped contemporary Brixton, however, were the post-WWII 'Windrush' years, when immigrants arrived from the West Indies in reply to the British government's call for help in solving the labour shortage of the time. (*Windrush* was the name of one of the leading ships that brought these immigrants to the UK.) A generation later the honeymoon period was over, as economic decline and hostility between the police and particularly the black community (who accounted for only 29% of the population of Brixton at the time) led to the riots in 1981, 1985 and 1995. These centred on Railton Rd and Coldharbour Lane.

Since then the mood has been decidedly more upbeat. Soaring property prices have sent house-hunters foraging in these parts, and pockets of gentrification sit alongside the more run-down streets (see p202).

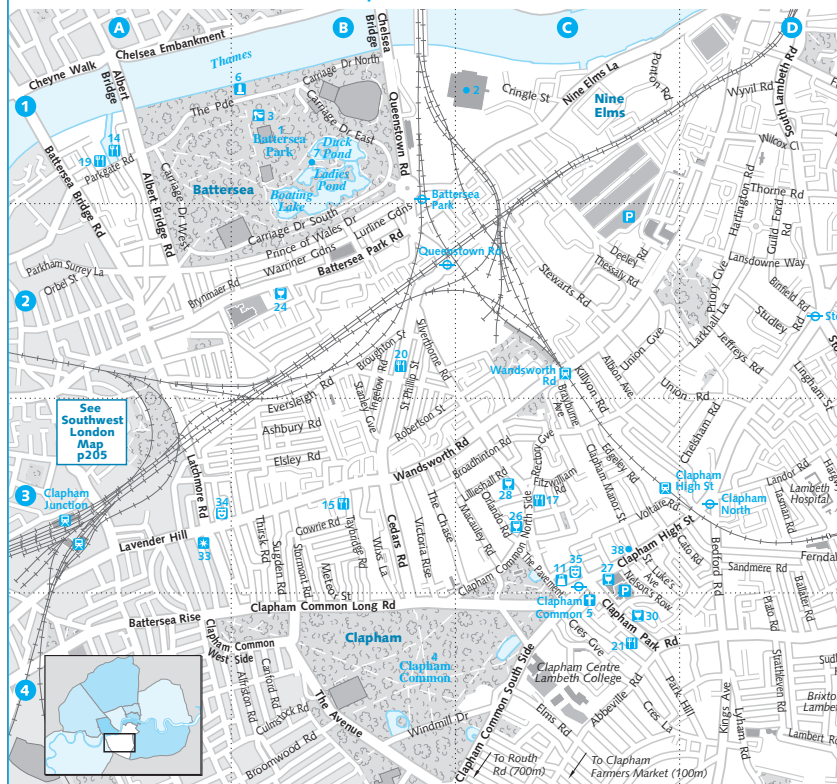
## BATTERSEA & WANDSWORTH

Against the looming shell of the Battersea Power Station, this area southwest along the Thames was a site of industry until the 1970s. Now its abandoned factories and warehouses have been replaced by luxury flats. Even residents from well-heeled Chelsea are defecting across the Thames to what estate agents like to call 'Chelsea South'.

Wandsworth, the poorer working-class sibling of more affluent Battersea immediately downriver, has similarly gentrified in recent years. You'll hear the area repeatedly referred to as 'nappy valley'. Apparently Wandsworth has the highest birth rate of any borough in London.



## SOUTH LONDON: BRIXTON, CLAPHAM &amp; BATTERSEA



## SOUTH LONDON: BRIXTON, CLAPHAM &amp; BATTERSEA

<b>SIGHTS</b>	(pp199–202)	Butcher & Grill.....14	A1	White House.....30	C4
Battersea Park.....1	B1	Cinnamon Cay.....15	B3		
Battersea Power Station.....2	C1	Fujiyama.....16	E3	<b>NIGHTLIFE</b> (pp297–310)	
Children's Zoo.....3	B1	Grafton House.....17	C3	Carling Academy Brixton.....31	E3
Clapham Common.....4	B4	Lounge Café.....18	E3	Dogstar.....(see 16)	
Holy Trinity Church.....5	C4	Ramsome's Dock.....19	A1	Fridge.....32	E4
Peace Pagoda.....6	B1	Santa Maria del Buen Ayre.....20	B2	Jongleurs Battersea.....33	A3
Pump House Gallery.....7	B1	Satay Bar.....(see 36)		Mass.....(see 22)	
		Verso.....21	C4		
<b>SHOPPING</b> (pp215–34)				<b>ARTS</b> (pp311–21)	
Brixton Market.....8	E3	<b>DRINKING</b> (pp277–96)		Battersea Arts Centre.....34	A3
Brixton Village.....9	E3	Babalou.....22	E4	Clapham Picture House.....35	C3
Bullfrogs.....(see 11)		Brixton Bar & Grill.....23	E3	Ritzzy.....36	E4
Joy.....10	E3	Dogstar.....(see 16)			
Oliver Bonas.....11	C3	Dusk.....24	B2	<b>SPORTS &amp; ACTIVITIES</b> (pp323–29)	
		Plan B.....25	E3	Brockwell Park	
<b>EATING</b> (pp235–75)		Prince of Wales.....26	C3	Lido.....37	E4
Asmara.....12	E3	So.uk.....27	C3		
Bamboula.....13	E3	Tim Bobbin.....28	C3	<b>GAY &amp; LESBIAN</b> (pp331–37)	
Brixton Market.....(see 8)		White Horse.....29	D4	Two Brewers.....38	C3

**BATTERSEA POWER STATION** Map p200  
[www.batterseapowerstation.com](http://www.batterseapowerstation.com); Battersea Park  
 Familiar to an entire generation from Pink Floyd's 1977 *Animals* album cover, with the four smokestacks that somewhat resemble a table turned upside down, Battersea Power Station is a building both loved and reviled. Built by Giles Gilbert Scott with two chimneys in 1933 (the other two were added in 1955), it ceased operations in 1983 and since then there have been innumerable proposals to give it a new life. In November 2006 it was sold to yet another group of developers; the previous ones, Parkview International, had owned it more than a dozen years from 1993 and had wanted to demolish the chimneys and turn the 'nave' of the structure into a 24-hour entertainment complex with restaurants, hotels, retail shops, cinemas etc. The power station's future seems as uncertain as ever as a new 'master plan' is redrawn, though one sensible proposal suggests that it house the government's new Energy Technologies Institute, established to research new technologies into combating climate change.

**BATTERSEA PARK** Map p200  
 8871 7530; [www.batterseapark.org](http://www.batterseapark.org); dawn-dusk; Battersea Park  
 These 50 hectares of greenery stretch between Albert and Chelsea Bridges. With its Henry Moore sculptures and Peace Pagoda, erected in 1985 by a group of Japanese Buddhists to commemorate Hiroshima Day, its tranquil appearance belies a bloody past. It was once the site of an assassination attempt on King Charles II in 1671

and of a duel in 1829 between the Duke of Wellington and an opponent who accused him of treason.

A recent refurbishment has seen the 19th-century landscaping reinstated and the grand riverside terraces spruced up. At the same time, the Festival of Britain pleasure gardens, including the spectacular Vista Fountains, have been restored. There are lakes, plenty of sporting facilities, an art space called the Pump House Gallery ( 8871 7572; [www.wandsworth.gov.uk/gallery](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/gallery); Battersea Park SW11; admission free; 11am–5pm Wed–Sun) and a small Children's Zoo ( 7924 5826; [www.batterseaparkzoo.co.uk](http://www.batterseaparkzoo.co.uk); adult/2–15yr/family £5.95/4.50/18.50; 10am–5pm Apr–Oct, to 4pm Nov–Mar).

**WANDSWORTH COMMON** Map p205  
 Wandsworth Common or Clapham Junction  
 Wilder and more overgrown than the nearby common in Clapham, Wandsworth Common is full of couples pushing prams on a sunny day. On the common's western side is a pleasant collection of streets known as the **toast rack**, because of their alignment. Baskerville, Dorlcote, Henderson, Nicosia, Patten and Routh Rds are lined with Georgian houses. There's a blue plaque at 3 Routh Rd, home to the former British prime minister David Lloyd George.

## CLAPHAM

The so-called 'man on the Clapham omnibus' – English civil law's definition of the hypothetical reasonable person since the turn of the 20th century – has largely left this

neighbourhood. Today Clapham is the home of well-heeled young professionals in their 20s and 30s, who eat in the area's many restaurants, drink in its many bars and generally drive up property prices. It was the railways that originally conferred on Clapham its status as a home for everyday commuters from the late 19th century. Clapham Junction is still the largest rail interchange in Britain, and in 1988 the tragic site of one of Britain's worst rail disasters.

Reaching further back in history, the area was first settled after the Great Fire of London in 1666, when noted diarist Samuel Pepys and later explorer Captain James Cook, among others, escaped the desecration of the City to build homes here. Its name dates back much further still; it's from Anglo-Saxon for 'Clap-pa's farm'.

## CLAPHAM COMMON Map p200

### 📍 Clapham Common

This large expanse of green is the heart of the Clapham neighbourhood. Mentioned both by Graham Greene in his novel *The End of the Affair* and Ian McEwan in his brilliant *Atonement*, it's now a venue for many outdoor summer events (see <http://claphamhighstreet.co.uk>). The main thoroughfare, Clapham High St, starts at the common's northeastern edge and is lined with many of the bars, restaurants and shops for which people principally come to Clapham. However, for a simple stroll it's much more pleasant to explore the more upmarket streets of **Clapham Old Town**, a short distance northwest of the tube station, and **Clapham Common North Side** at the common's northwesternmost edge.

On the corner of Clapham Park Rd and Clapham Common South Side you'll find the **Holy Trinity Church** (1776). This was home to the Clapham Sect, a group of wealthy evangelical Christians that included William Wilberforce, a leading antislavery campaigner, active between 1790 and 1830. The sect also campaigned against child labour and for prison reform.

## KENNINGTON, OVAL & STOCKWELL

Only cricket-lovers and those who set up home here will really venture into this neck of the woods. It centres on Kennington Park, which isn't that much to look at but has an interesting

history. Off Kennington Lane, just west of its intersection with Kennington Rd, lies a lovely enclave of leafy streets – Cardigan St, Courtney St and Courtney Sq – with neo-Georgian houses. They're not really worth travelling to see, but make a nice diversion should rain interrupt play at the Oval just south.

## KENNINGTON PARK Map p198

### 📍 Oval

This unprepossessing space of green has a great rabble-rousing tradition. Originally a common, where all were permitted entry, it acted as a speakers' corner for South London. During the 18th century, Jacobite rebels trying to restore the Stuart monarchy were hanged, drawn and quartered here, and in the 18th and 19th centuries, preachers used to deliver hellfire-and-brimstone speeches to large audiences here; John Wesley, founder of Methodism and an antislavery advocate, is said to have attracted some 30,000 followers. After the great Chartist rally on 10 April 1848, where millions of working-class people turned out to demand the same voting rights as the middle classes, the royal family promptly fenced off and patrolled the common as a park.

## BRIT OVAL Map p198

☎ 0871 246 1100; [www.surreyccricket.com](http://www.surreyccricket.com); Surrey County Cricket Club SE11; test matches £45, last day £10, county fixtures £5-10; 📞 booking office 9.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-4pm Mon-Fri Apr-Sep; 📍 Oval

Home to the Surrey County Cricket Club, the Brit Oval is London's second cricketing venue after Lord's (p174). As well as Surrey matches, it also regularly hosts international test matches. The season runs from April to September.

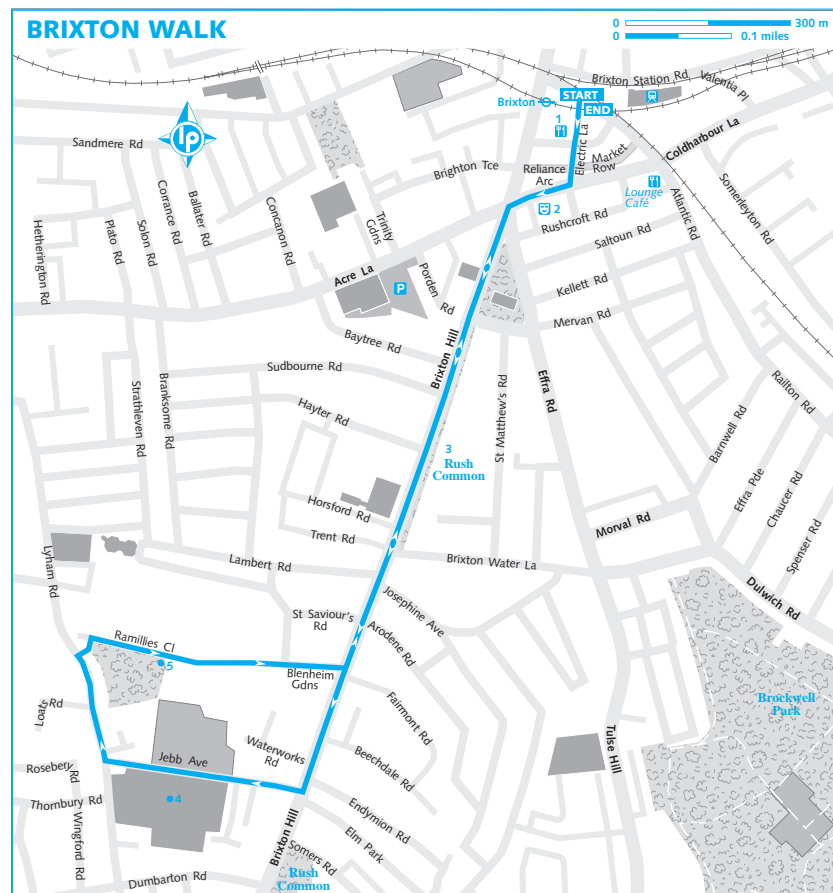
## BRIXTON WALK

### Walking Tour 1 Brixton Market

At London's most exotic market (p242), you can drink in the heady mix of incense and the smells of the exotic fruits, vegetables, meat and fish on sale. It's also a good place to splash out on African fabrics and trinkets.

### 2 Ritzy

London's second-oldest movie house (after the Electric Cinema in Camden), the **Ritzy** (p316) opened as the Electric Pavilion in 1911. Next



door is the **Brixton Library** (☎ 7926 1056; Brixton Oval SW2) built in 1892 by industrialist/philanthropist Sir Henry Tate, the man who gave London the Tate Gallery and the world the sugar cube.

### 3 Rush Common

An act of Parliament in 1806 declared a wide strip along the eastern side of Brixton Hill to be 'proscribed land' on which nothing could be built. Over the years, however, tracts of it were illegally walled off to create private front gardens. It is now being restored as common land (Brixton Hill SW2) but remains patchy in areas.

### 4 Brixton Prison

Serving a number of courts in South London, **Brixton Prison** (☎ 8588 6000; Jebb Ave SW2) started life as the Brixton House of Correction in 1819 and has done time as everything from a jail for

## WALK FACTS

Start Brixton tube station  
End Brixton tube station  
Distance 2.75 miles  
Duration 2½ hours  
Fuel stop Lounge Café (p270)

women to a military prison. It now houses a mixture of remand and sentenced prisoners.

### 5 Brixton Windmill

Built for one John Ashby in 1816, this is the closest windmill (Blenheim Gardens SW2) to central London still in existence. It was later powered by gas and milled as recently as 1934. It's been refitted with sails and machinery for a wind-driven mill but is not open to the public at present.



# SOUTHWEST LONDON

Eating p272; Drinking p294; Shopping p234; Sleeping p361

Although southwest London is a little far out if you're only in London for a long weekend, it's the perfect place to base yourself for a longer stay. Anyone wanting to get out of London for the day without too much trouble or expense should take a trip here, and for people who aren't big-city fans but need to be in London, it's a great place to stay.

During the day much of southwest London is a quiet residential area; you'll see lots of young mothers out pushing prams and doing their shopping. This is the best time to enjoy the area's many green spaces: walk along the Thames Path from Putney Bridge to Barnes, sup on a pint by Parson's Green or picnic on Barnes Common.

It's at night that the area comes alive. Fulham is a very popular place to go out in town, with a plethora of good pubs, bars and restaurants. Putney and Barnes like to think that they're a little more refined, though a trip to any of the pubs on the High Street on a Saturday night will put paid to that notion.

Further afield the well-to-do have been retreating from the city to the palaces and villas of London's riverside boroughs for more than 500 years, and its appeal to those wishing to escape the more frenetic pace of life in zones 1 and 2 is still very much apparent. Chiswick, Richmond and Kew in particular offer an expensive slice of village life far removed from the crowds of central London. Twickenham is the home of English rugby while Hampton boasts what is arguable the most ambitious palace in the country. Wimbledon and its enormous common is another place for an afternoon idyll.

## FULHAM

Fulham and Parson's Green merge neatly into one neighbourhood that sits comfortably in a curve of the Thames between Chelsea and Hammersmith. While the attractive Victorian terraces and riverside location have drawn a very well-to-do crowd, Fulham's blue-collar roots are still evident in the strong tradition of support for Fulham Football Club.

### FULHAM PALACE

Map p205  
☎ 7736 8140; [www.fulhampalace.org](http://www.fulhampalace.org); Bishop's Ave SW6; admission free; 🏰 palace & museum noon-4pm Mon & Tue, 11am-2pm Sat, 11.30am-3.30pm Sun, garden dawn-dusk daily; 🚶 Putney Bridge; ♿

Summer home of the bishops of London from 704 to 1973, Fulham Palace is an interesting mix of architectural styles set in beautiful gardens and, until 1924, enclosed by the longest moat in England. The oldest part to survive is the little redbrick Tudor gateway, but the main building you see today dates from the mid-17th century and was remodelled in the 19th century. There's

## top picks

### SOUTHWEST LONDON

- **Buddhapadipa Temple** (p213)
- **Hampton Court Palace** (p211)
- **Kew Gardens** (p209)
- **The Thames** (p209)
- **London Wetland Centre** (opposite)

a pretty walled garden and, detached from the main house, a Tudor Revival chapel designed by Butterfield in 1866.

You can learn about the history of the palace and its inhabitants in the palace museum. Guided tours (☎ 7736 3233; tickets £5; 🕒 tours 2pm 2nd & 4th Sun, 3rd Tue), which depart a couple of times a month on Sunday, usually take in the Great Hall, the Victorian chapel, Bishop Sherlock's Room and the museum and last about 1¼ hours. The palace has been undergoing extensive refurbishments in recent years so there may be some changes in the tour.

The surrounding land, once totalling almost 15 hectares but now reduced to just over five, forms Bishop's Park, and consists of a shady promenade along the river, a bowling green, tennis courts, a rose garden, a café and even a paddling pond with fountain for cooling off in on a hot day.

## PUTNEY & BARNES

Putney is best known as the starting point of the annual Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race (p192), held each spring. There are references

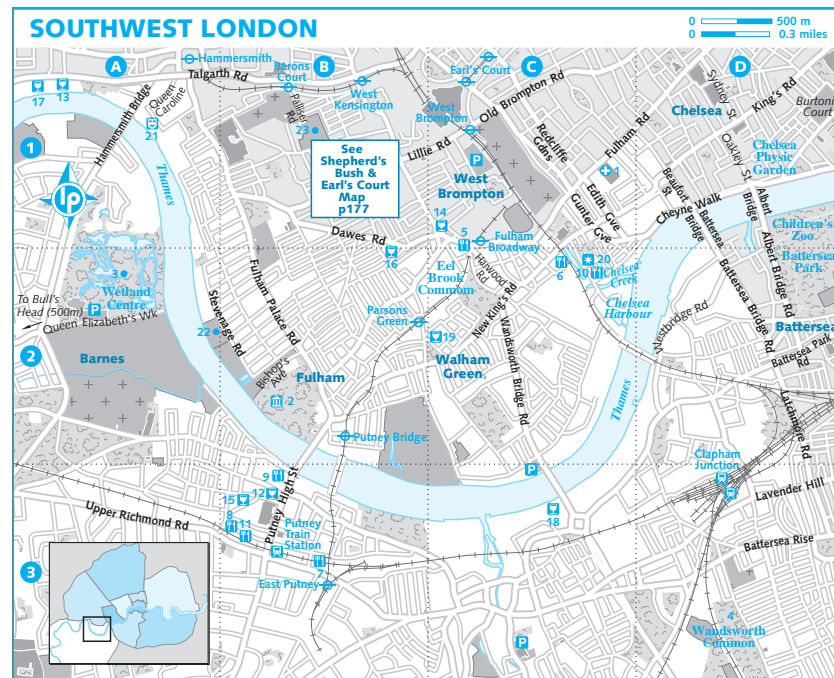
to the race in the pubs and restaurants in the area and along the Thames Path. Barnes is less well known and more villagey in feel. Its former residents include author Henry Fielding.

The best way to approach Putney is to follow the signs from Putney Bridge tube station for the footbridge (which runs parallel to the rail track), admiring the gorgeous riverside houses, with their gardens fronting the Thames, and thereby avoiding the tatty High Street until the last minute. Alternatively, catch the train from Vauxhall or Waterloo to Putney or Barnes stations.

## LONDON WETLAND CENTRE

Map p205  
☎ 8409 4400; [www.wwt.org.uk](http://www.wwt.org.uk); Queen Elizabeth's Walk SW13; adult/4-16yr/senior & student/family £7.95/4.50/6/19.95; 🕒 9.30am-6pm Mar-Oct, 9.30am-5pm Nov-Feb, to 8pm Thu Jun-late Sep; 🚶 Hammersmith then 🚶 283 (Duck Bus), 33, 72 or 209, or 🚶 Barnes; ♿

One of Europe's largest inland wetland projects, this 43-hectare centre run by the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust was transformed from four Victorian reservoirs in 2000 and attracts some 140 species of birds as well as 300 types of moths and butterflies. From the Visitor Centre and glassed-in Observa-



## SOUTHWEST LONDON

### INFORMATION

Chelsea & Westminster Hospital...1 C1	Enoteca Turi.....9 B3	White Horse.....19 B2
	Lots Road Pub & Dining Room...10 C2	
	Ma Goa.....11 B3	<b>NIGHTLIFE</b> 🍷 (pp297-310)
	Olé.....(see 11)	606 Club.....20 C2

### SIGHTS

Fulham Palace.....2 B2	<b>DRINKING</b> 🍷 🍺 (pp277-96)	<b>ARTS</b> 🎨 (pp311-21)
London Wetland Centre.....3 A2	Coat & Badge.....12 B3	Riverside Studios.....21 A1
Wandsworth Common.....4 D3	Dove.....13 A1	

### EATING

Blue Elephant.....5 C1	Fiesta Havana.....14 C1	<b>SPORTS &amp; ACTIVITIES</b> (pp323-29)
Blue Kangaroo.....6 C2	Jolly Gardeners.....15 B3	Fulham Football.....22 A2
Chakalaka.....7 B3	Mitre.....16 B2	Club.....23 B1
Chosan.....8 B3	Old Ship.....17 A1	Queen's.....23 B1
	Ship.....18 C3	Club.....23 B1

tory overlooking the ponds, meandering paths and boardwalks lead visitors around the grounds, taking in the habitats of its many residents, including ducks, swans, geese and coots and the rarer bitterns, herons and kingfishers. There's even a large colony of parakeets, that may or may not be the descendants of caged pets. By no means miss the Peacock Tower, a three-storey hide on the main lake's eastern edge. Though there are half-a-dozen hides sprinkled elsewhere around the reserve, the tower is the mecca for the more serious birders, who will be happy to point out what they've spotted. Free daily tours, which are led by knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff members and are highly recommended, depart at 11am and 2pm daily.

## CHISWICK

Notwithstanding the abomination of the A4 motorway, which cuts off the riverside roads from the centre, Chiswick (*chiz-ick*) is still a pleasant southwest London suburb that does not deserve the flak it gets for its well-heeled residents and unfeasibly grand mansions.

Chiswick High Rd itself is an upmarket yet uninspiring main drag, full of pubs and twee shops with the odd decent restaurant. There will be little to waylay you here, so best head straight over to the park and Chiswick House, up to Hogarth Lane and Hogarth House or down Church St to the riverfront.

### CHISWICK HOUSE Map p64

☎ 8995 0508; [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk); Chiswick Park, Burlington Lane W4; adult/child/senior & student £4.20/2.10/3.20; 🕒 10am-5pm Wed-Fri &

Sun, to 2pm Sat Apr-Oct; 📍 Chiswick or ☞ Turnham Green; 📍

This is a fine Palladian pavilion with an octagonal dome and colonnaded portico. It was designed by the third Earl of Burlington (1694-1753) when he returned from his grand tour of Italy, fired up with enthusiasm for all things Roman. Lord Burlington used it to entertain friends and to house his library and art collection.

Inside, some of the rooms are so grand as to be almost overpowering. The dome of the main salon has been left unglazed and the walls are decorated with eight enormous paintings. In the Blue Velvet Room look for the portrait of Inigo Jones, the architect much admired by Lord Burlington, over one of the doors. The ceiling paintings are by William Kent, who also decorated the Kensington Palace State Apartments.

Lord Burlington also planned the house's original gardens, now Chiswick Park surrounding the house, but they have been much altered since his time. The restored Cascade waterfall is bubbling again after being out of action for years.

The house is about a mile southwest of the Turnham Green tube station and 750m northeast of the Chiswick train station.

### HOGARTH'S HOUSE Map p64

☎ 8994 6757; [www.hounslow.info/hogarthshouse](http://www.hounslow.info/hogarthshouse); Hogarth Lane W4; admission free; 🕒 1-5pm Tue-Fri, 1-6pm Sat & Sun Apr-Oct, 1-4pm Tue-Fri, 1-5pm Sat & Sun Nov, Dec, Feb & Mar; ☞ Turnham Green Home between 1749 and 1764 to artist and social commentator William Hogarth, this house now showcases his caricatures and engravings, including such famous

## THAMES PATH

The Thames Path National Trail is a long-distance trail stretching from the river's source at Thames Head near Kemble in the Cotswolds to the Thames Flood Barrier, a distance of some 184 miles. It's truly magnificent, particularly in its upper reaches, but tackling the entire course is for the truly ambitious (and indefatigable). The rest of us walk sections of it, such as the 16-mile section from Battersea to the barrier, which takes about 6½ hours of wading). A much more manageable section for afternoon strollers, taking about 1½ hours, is the 4-mile one between Putney Bridge and Barnes Footbridge. The initial stretch along the Embankment that runs north from Putney Bridge on the southern bank of the river is always a hive of activity, with rowers setting off and returning to their boat clubs and punters from nearby pubs lazing by the water. The majority of the walk, though, is intensely rural – at times the only accompaniment is the call of songbirds and the gentle swish of old Father Thames (yes, we are still in London). From the footbridge Chiswick train station is about three quarters of a mile to the northwest.

Full details of these and other sections of the Thames Path can be found in Lonely Planet's *Walking in Britain* (3rd edition) or visit the **National Trails** ([www.nationaltrail.co.uk/thamespath](http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/thamespath)) website. Another useful source is the River Thames Alliance's **Visit Thames** ([www.visitthames.co.uk](http://www.visitthames.co.uk)) site.

## OF RAKES & HARLOTS: HOGARTH'S WORLD

William Hogarth (1697-1764) was an artist and engraver who specialised in satire and what these days might be considered heavy-handed moralising on the wages of sin. His plates were so popular in his day that they were actually pirated, leading Parliament to pass the Hogarth Act of 1735 to protect copyright. They provide us with an invaluable look at life (particularly among the lowly) in Georgian London.

The *Marriage-à-la-Mode* series satirises the wantonness and marriage customs of the upper classes, while *Gin Lane* was produced as part of a campaign to have gin distillation made a crime (as it did under the Gin Act of 1751). It shows drunkards lolling about in the parish of St Giles in Soho, with the church of St George's Bloomsbury clearly visible in the background. His eight-plate series *A Harlot's Progress* traces the life of a simple woman from her arrival in London as country lass to convicted (and imprisoned) whore; some of the plates are set in Drury Lane. In *A Rake's Progress*, the debauched protagonist is seen at one stage being entertained in a Russell St tavern by a bevy of prostitutes, one of whom strokes his chest while the other relieves him of his pocket watch. The women's faces are covered with up to a half-dozen artificial beauty marks, which were all the rage at the time.

Hogarth's works can also be seen at Hogarth's House as well as the National Gallery, Tate Britain and in Sir John Soane's Museum in Holborn, which owns the original of *A Rake's Progress*.

works as the haunting *Gin Lane*, *Marriage-à-la-mode* and a copy of *A Rake's Progress* (see the boxed text, above). Here you'll also find the private engravings *Before and After* (1730), commissioned by the Duke of Montagu and bearing Aristotle's immortal aphorism *Omne Animal Post Coitum Triste* (Every creature is sad after intercourse). Although the house and grounds are attractive, very little original furniture remains so this is really a destination for ardent Hogarth fans.

### FULLER'S GRIFFIN BREWERY Map p64

☎ 8996 2063; [www.fullers.co.uk](http://www.fullers.co.uk); Chiswick Lane South W4; adult/14-18yr (no tasting) £6/4.50; 🕒 tours 11am, noon, 1pm & 2pm Mon & Wed-Fri; ☞ Turnham Green or 📍 Chiswick

Of interest to anyone who enjoys bitter and/or wants to see it being made and/or would like to engage in a comprehensive tasting session, Fuller's is now the last working brewery extant in London. You can visit only on the 1½-hour guided tour, which must be booked in advance by phone.

## RICHMOND

If anywhere in London could be described as a village, Richmond – with its delightful green and riverside vistas – is it. Centuries of history, some stunning Georgian architecture and the graceful curve of the Thames has made this one of London's swankiest locales, home to ageing rock stars and city high-flyers alike.

Richmond was originally named Sheen, but Henry VII, having fallen in love with the place, renamed the village after his Yorkshire

earldom. This started centuries of royal association with the area; the most famous local, Henry VIII, acquired nearby Hampton Court Palace from Cardinal Wolsey after the latter's fall from grace in 1529, while his daughter Elizabeth I died here in 1603.

### RICHMOND GREEN Map p208

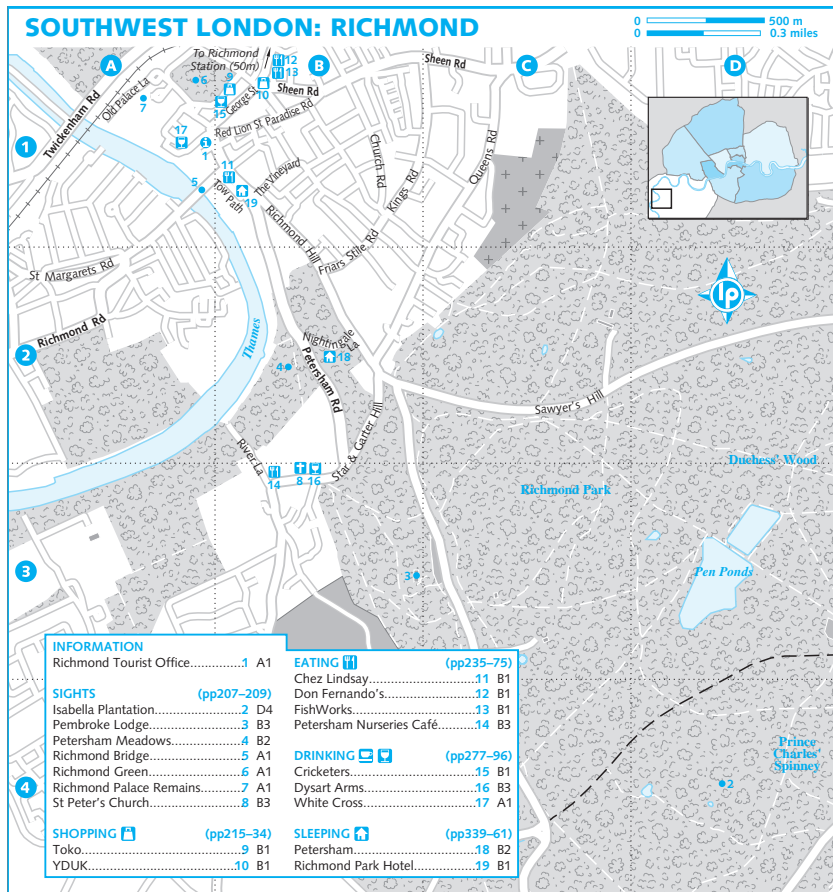
A short walk west of the Quadrant where you'll emerge from the tube is the enormous open space of Richmond Green with its mansions and delightful pubs. Crossing the green diagonally will take you to what remains of Richmond Palace, just the main entrance and redbrick gatehouse, built in 1501. You can see Henry VII's arms above the main gate: he built the Tudor additions to the edifice, although the palace had been in use as a royal residence since 1125.

### RICHMOND PARK Map p208

☎ 8948 3209; [www.royalparks.gov.uk](http://www.royalparks.gov.uk); admission free; 🕒 7am-dusk Mar-Sep, from 7.30am Oct-Feb; ☞ / 📍 Richmond, then 📍 65 or 371

At just over 1000 hectares (the largest urban parkland in Europe), Richmond Park offers everything from formal gardens and ancient oaks to unsurpassed views of central London 12 miles away. It's easy enough to escape the several roads that cut up the rambling wilderness, making the park an excellent spot for a quiet walk or picnic, even in summer when Richmond's riverside can be heaving. Such is the magic of the place, it somehow comes as no surprise to happen upon herds of more than 600 red and fallow deer basking under the trees. Be advised that the creatures can be less





than docile in rutting season (May to July) and when the does bear young (September and October). It's a great place for bird-watchers too, with a wide range of habitats, from neat gardens to woodland and assorted ponds.

Coming from Richmond, it's easiest to enter via Richmond Gate or from Petersham Rd. Take a map with you and wander around the grounds; flower-lovers should make a special trip to **Isabella Plantation**, a stunning woodland garden created after WWII, in April and May when the rhododendrons and azaleas are in bloom.

**Pembroke Lodge** (☎ 10am-5.30pm summer, to 4.30pm winter), the childhood home of Bertrand Russell, is now a café set in a beautiful 13-hectare garden and affording great views of the city from the back terrace.

### ST PETER'S CHURCH Map p208

☎ 8940 8435; Church Lane, Petersham TW10; admission free; ☎ 3-5pm Sun; ☎ / 🚫 Richmond, then 🚶 65

This wonderful Norman church has been a place of worship for 1300 years and parts of the present structure date from 1266. It's a fascinating place, not least for its curious Georgian box pews, which local landowners would rent while the serving staff and labourers sat in the open seats in the south transept. Against the north wall of the chancel is the **Cole Monument**, which depicts barrister George Cole, his wife and child, all reclining in Elizabethan dress – an unusual design for an English church. Of interest to Canadians, St Peter's is the burial place of Captain George Vancouver, who was laid to rest here in 1798; his sim-

ple tomb is on the southern boundary wall of the cemetery.

### THE THAMES

The stretch of the riverbank from Twickenham Bridge down to Petersham and Ham is one of the prettiest in London. The action is concentrated around **Richmond Bridge**, an original structure from 1777 and London's oldest surviving crossing, only widened for traffic in 1937. The lovely walk to Petersham is often overcrowded in nice weather; best to cut across **Petersham Meadows** and continue on to Richmond Park if it's peace and quiet you seek. There are several companies near Richmond Bridge, including **Richmond Boat Hire** (☎ 8948 8270), that offer skiff hire (adult/child £4/2 per hour, £12/6 per day).

### HAM HOUSE Map p64

☎ 8940 1950; www.nationaltrust.org.uk; Ham St, Ham TW10; adult/5-15yr/family £9/5/22, gardens only £3/2/7; ☎ house 1-5pm Mon-Wed, Sat & Sun late Mar-Oct, gardens 11am-6pm Mon-Wed, Sat & Sun; ☎ / 🚫 Richmond, then 🚶 371; 🚫

Known as 'Hampton Court in miniature', Ham House was built in 1610 and became home to the first Earl of Dysart, an unlucky individual who had been employed as 'whipping boy' to Charles I, taking the punishment for all the king's wrongdoings. Inside it's furnished with all the grandeur you might expect; the Great Staircase is a magnificent example of Stuart woodworking. Look out for ceiling paintings by Antonio Verrio, who also worked at Hampton Court Palace, and for a miniature of Elizabeth I by Nicholas Hilliard. Other notable paintings are by Constable and Reynolds. The grounds of Ham House slope down to the Thames, but there are also pleasant 17th-century formal gardens. Just opposite the Thames and accessible by small ferry is **Marble Hill Park** and its splendid mansion. There is partial disabled access. Call for more information.

### KEW & BRENTFORD

Kew will be forever associated with World Heritage-listed Botanic Gardens, headquarters of the Royal Botanical Society and boasting one of the world's finest plant collections. A day at Kew Gardens will appeal even to those with no knowledge of plants and flowers. This smart Southwest London suburb is

also a pleasant place for an idle wander; watch out for cricket matches played on central Kew Green in summer.

Across a mighty bend in the Thames is Brentford, essentially nondescript except for sprawling Syon Park and its magnificent house.

### KEW GARDENS Map p64

☎ 8332 5655; www.kew.org; Kew Rd TW9; adult/under 17yr/senior & student £12.25/free/10.25; ☎ gardens 9.30am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, to 7.30pm Sat & Sun Apr-Aug, 9.30am-6pm Sep & Oct, 9.30am-4.15pm Nov-Feb, glasshouses 9.30am-5.30pm April-Oct, 9.30am-3.45pm Nov-Feb; ☎ / 🚫 Kew Gardens; 🚫

Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew is one of the most popular visitors' attractions in London, which means it can get very crowded during summer, especially at weekends. Spring is probably the best time to visit, but at any time of year this 120-hectare expanse of lawns, formal gardens and greenhouses has delights to offer. As well as being a public garden, Kew is an important research centre, and it maintains its reputation as the most exhaustive botanical collection in the world.

Its wonderful plants and trees aside, Kew has several specific sights within its borders. Assuming you come by tube and enter via Victoria Gate, you'll come almost immediately to a large pond overlooked by the enormous **Palm House**, a hothouse of metal and curved sheets of glass dating from 1848 and housing all sorts of exotic tropical greenery; the aerial walkway offers a birds'-eye view of the lush vegetation. Just northwest of the Palm House is the tiny but irresistible **Water Lily House** (☎ Mar-Dec), dating from 1852 and the hottest glasshouse at Kew.

Further north is the stunning **Princess of Wales Conservatory**, opened in 1987 and housing plants in 10 different computer-controlled climatic zones – everything from a desert to a mangrove swamp. In the tropical zone you'll find the most famous of Kew's 38,000-odd plant species, the 3m-tall *titan arum*, or 'corpse flower', which is overpoweringly obnoxious-smelling when it blooms in April. Just beyond the conservatory is **Kew Gardens Gallery** bordering Kew Green, which houses exhibitions of paintings and photos mostly of a horticultural theme.

Heading westwards from the gallery you'll arrive at the redbrick **Kew Palace** (adult/under 17yr/senior & student £5/2.50/4; ☎ 10am-5.30pm late Mar-late Oct), a former royal residence once known as Dutch House and built in 1631. It was the favourite home of George III and his family; his wife, Queen Charlotte, died here in 1818. The palace underwent extensive renovations for almost a decade and reopened in 2006; don't miss the Georgian rooms restored to how they would look in 1804 and Princess Elizabeth's wonderful doll's house.

Other highlights include the **Temperate House**, the world's largest ornamental glass-house, and nearby **Evolution House**, tracing plant evolution over 3500 million years; the idyllic **Queen Charlotte's Cottage** (☎ 10am-4pm Sat & Sun Jul & Aug) was another place popular with 'mad' George III and his wife. Don't forget to see the **Japanese Gateway** and the celebrated 10-storey **Pagoda** (1761), designed by William Chambers.

Just north is the **Marianne North Gallery** featuring paintings on a botanical theme. Marianne North was one of those indomitable Victorian female travellers who roamed the continents from 1871 to 1885, painting plants and trees along the way. The results of her labour now cover the walls of this small purpose-built gallery. The **Orangery** near Kew Palace contains a restaurant, café and shop.

If you want a good overview of the gardens, jump aboard the **Kew Explorer minitrain** (adult/under 17yr £3.50/1), which allows you to hop on and off at stops along the way. The full circuit takes about 40 minutes.

You can get to Kew Gardens by tube or train. Come out of the station and walk straight (west) along Station Ave, cross Kew Gardens Rd and then continue straight along Lichfield Rd. This will bring you to Victoria Gate. Alternatively, from April to October, boats run by the **Westminster Passenger Services Association** (☎ 7930 2062; www.wpsa.co.uk) sail from Westminster Pier to Kew Gardens up to four times a day (see p387).

### SYON HOUSE Map p64

☎ 8560 0881; www.syonpark.co.uk; Syon Park, Brentford TW7; adult/5-16yr/student & senior/family £8/4/7/18, gardens only adult/concession/family £4/2.50/9; ☎ 11am-5pm Wed, Thu & Sun late Mar-Oct, gardens 10.30am-4pm or 5pm; ☎ Gunnersbury or ☎ Gunnersbury, then ☎ 237 or 267

Just across the Thames from Kew Gardens, Syon House started life as a medieval abbey named after Mt Zion, but in 1542 Henry VIII dissolved the order of Bridgettine nuns who were peacefully established here and had the abbey rebuilt into a handsome residence. (In 1547, they say, God got his revenge when Henry's coffin was brought to Syon en route to Windsor for burial and burst open during the night, leaving the king's body to be set upon by the estate's hungry dogs.)

The house from where Lady Jane Grey ascended the throne for her nine-day reign in 1553 was remodelled in the neoclassical style by Robert Adam in the 18th century and has plenty of Adam furniture and oak panelling. The interior was designed along gender-specific lines, with pastel pinks and purples for the ladies' gallery, and mock Roman sculptures for the men's dining room. The estate's 16-hectare gardens, including a lake and the landmark Great Conservatory (1820), were landscaped by Capability Brown. Syon Park is filled with all kinds of attractions for children, including an adventure playground, aquatic park and trout fishery.

## TWICKENHAM

As Wimbledon is to tennis, so Twickenham is to rugby, and you'll find one of the few museums in the world devoted to the sport here. Otherwise there's not much to detain you in this quiet and pretty Middlesex suburb aside from the delights of fine Marble Hill House overlooking the Thames.

### MUSEUM OF RUGBY Map p64

☎ 0870 405 2001; www.rfu.com/microsites/museum/index.cfm; Twickenham Stadium, Rugby Rd TW1; stadium guided tour & museum adult/child/family £10/7/34, museum only on match days (match ticket holders only) £3; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sat, 11am-5pm Sun; ☎ Hounslow East, then ☎ 281, or ☎ Twickenham; ♿

This museum, which will clearly appeal only to rugby-lovers, is tucked behind the eastern stand of the stadium. Relive highlights of old matches in the video theatre, take a tour of the grounds and visit the museum collection. **Tours** depart at 10.30am, noon, 1.30pm and 3pm Tuesday to Saturday and at 1pm and 3pm on Sunday. NB: there are no tours on match days. The museum itself is very rich, exhib-

iting or storing some 10,000 items related to the sport.

### MARBLE HILL HOUSE Map p64

☎ 8892 5115; www.english-heritage.org.uk; Richmond Rd TW1; adult/under 15yr/senior & student £4.20/2.10/3.20; ☎ 10am-2pm Sat, to 5pm Sun, guided tours noon & 3pm Tue & Wed Apr-Oct; ☎ St Margaret's, Richmond; ♿

This is an 18th-century Palladian love nest, originally built for George II's mistress Henrietta Howard and later occupied by Mrs Fitzherbert, the secret wife of George IV. The poet Alexander Pope had a hand in designing the park, which stretches down to the Thames. Inside you'll find an exhibition about the life and times of Henrietta, and a collection of early-Georgian furniture.

To get there from St Margaret's station, turn right along St Margaret's Rd. Then take the right fork along Crown Rd and turn left along Richmond Rd. Turn right along Beaufort Rd and walk across Marble Hill Park to the house. It is also easily accessible by pedestrian ferry from **Ham House** (p209). It's a 25-minute walk from Richmond station.

There is partial disabled access. Call for more information.

## HAMPTON

Out in London's southwestern outskirts, the wonderful Hampton Court Palace is pressed up against 445-hectare **Bushy Park** (www.royalparks.gov.uk), a semiwild expanse with herds of red and fallow deer.

### HAMPTON COURT PALACE

☎ 0870 751 5175; www.hrp.org.uk/HamptonCourtPalace; Hampton Court Rd, East Molesey KT8; all-inclusive ticket adult/5-15yr/senior & student/family £13/6.50/10.50/36; ☎ 10am-6pm late March-Oct, to 4.30pm Nov-late Mar; ☎ Hampton Court; ♿

London's most spectacular Tudor palace is the 16th-century Hampton Court Palace, located in the city's suburbs and easily reached by train from Waterloo Station. Here history is palpable, from the kitchens where you can see food being prepared and the grand living quarters of Henry VIII to the spectacular gardens complete with a 300-year-old maze. This is one of the best days out London has to offer and should not be missed by anyone with any interest in British history. Set aside plenty of time

to do it justice, bearing in mind that if you come by boat from central London the trip will have already eaten up half the day.

Like so many royal residences, Hampton Court Palace was not built for the monarchy at all. In 1515 Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, Lord Chancellor of England, built himself a palace in keeping with his sense of self-importance. Unfortunately, even Wolsey couldn't persuade the pope to grant Henry VIII a divorce from Catherine of Aragon and relations between king and chancellor soured. Against that background, you only need to take one look at the palace to understand why Wolsey felt obliged to present it to Henry, a monarch not too fond of anyone trying to muscle in on his mastery, some 15 years later. The hapless Wolsey was charged with high treason but died before he could come to trial in 1530.

As soon as he acquired the palace, Henry set to work expanding it, adding the **Great Hall**, the exquisite **Chapel Royal** and the sprawling kitchens. By 1540 this was one of the grandest and most sophisticated palaces in Europe, but Henry only spent an average three weeks a year here. In the late 17th century, William and Mary employed Sir Christopher Wren to build extensions. The result is a beautiful blend of Tudor and 'restrained baroque' architecture.

Tickets are on sale in the shop to the left as you walk up the path towards the main **Trophy Gate**. Be sure to pick up a leaflet listing the daily program, which will help you plan your visit. This is important as some of the free guided tours require advance booking.

Passing through the main gate you arrive first in the **Base Court** and then the **Clock Court**, named after the fine 16th-century astronomical clock that still shows the sun revolving round the earth. The second court is your starting point; from here you can follow any or all of the six separate sets of rooms in the complex. Here behind the colonnade you'll also find the useful **Introductory Exhibition**, explaining what's where and how the compound functions.

The stairs inside Anne Boleyn's Gateway lead up to **Henry VIII's State Apartments**, including the **Great Hall**, the largest single room in the palace, decorated with tapestries and what is considered the country's best hammer-beam roof. The **Horn Room**, hung with impressive antlers, leads to the **Great Watching Chamber** where guards



controlled access to the king. Leading off from the chamber is the smaller Pages' Chamber and the Haunted Gallery. Arrested for adultery and detained in the palace in 1542, Henry's fifth wife Catherine Howard managed to evade her guards and ran screaming down the corridor in search of the king. Her woeful ghost is said to do the same thing to this day.

Further along the corridor you'll come to the beautiful Chapel Royal, built in just nine months and still a place of worship after 450 years. The blue-and-gold vaulted ceiling was originally intended for Christ Church, Oxford, but was installed here instead, while the 18th-century reredos was carved by Grinling Gibbons.

Also dating from Henry's day are the delightful Tudor kitchens, again accessible from Anne Boleyn's Gateway and originally able to rustle up meals for a royal household of some 1200 people. The kitchens have been fitted out to look as they might have done in Tudor days and palace 'servants' turn the spits, stuff the peacocks and frost the marzipan with real gold leaf. Don't miss the Great Wine Cellar, which handled the 300 barrels each of ale and wine consumed here annually in the mid-16th century.

To the west of the colonnade in the Clock Court is the entrance up to the Wolsey Rooms and the Young Henry VIII Exhibition. To the east of the colonnade you'll find the stairs to the King's Apartments, completed by Wren for William III in 1702. A tour of the apartments takes you up the grand King's Staircase, painted by Antonio Verrio in about 1700 and flattering the king by comparing him to Alexander the Great. Highlights here include the King's Presence Chamber, which is dominated by a throne backed with scarlet hangings. The King's Great Bedchamber, with a bed topped with ostrich plumes and the King's Closet (where His Majesty's toilet has a velvet seat) should also not be missed.

William's wife, Mary II, had her own separate Queen's State Apartments, which are accessible up the Queen's Staircase, decorated by William Kent. When Mary died in 1694, work on these rooms was incomplete; they were finished during the reign of George II. The rooms are shown as they might have been when Queen Caroline used them for entertaining between 1716 and 1737. In comparison with the King's Apartments, those for the queen seem rather austere, al-

though the Queen's Audience Chamber has a throne as imposing as that of the king.

Also worth seeing are the Georgian Rooms used by George II and Queen Caroline on the court's last visit to the palace in 1737. The first rooms you come to were designed to accommodate George's second son, the Duke of Cumberland, whose bed is woe-fully tiny for its grand surroundings. In the Cartoon Gallery, the real Raphael Cartoons (now in the Victoria & Albert Museum; p139) used to hang; nowadays you have to make do with late-17th-century copies.

Beyond the Cartoon Gallery are the Queen's Private Apartments: her drawing room and bedchamber, where she and the king would sleep if they wanted to be alone. Particularly interesting are the Queen's Bathroom, with its tub set on a floor cloth to soak up any spillage, and the Oratory, an attractive room with its exquisite 16th-century Persian carpet.

Once you're finished with the palace interior there are still the wonderful gardens to appreciate. Carriage rides for up to five people around the gardens are available; they cost £10 and last 20 minutes. Look out for the Real Tennis Court, dating from the 1620s and designed for real tennis, a rather different version of the game from that played today. In the restored 24-hectare Riverside Gardens, you'll find the Great Vine. Planted in 1768, it's still producing just under 320kg of grapes per year; it's an old vine, no doubt about it, but not the world's oldest, as they say it is here (that one is in Slovenia). The Lower Orangery in the gardens houses Andrea Mantegna's nine *Triumphs of Caesar* paintings, bought by Charles I in 1629; the Banqueting House was designed for William III and painted by Antonio Verrio. Look out, too, for the iron screens designed by Jean Tijou.

No-one should leave Hampton Court without losing themselves in the famous (and recently renovated) 800m-long maze, which is made up of hornbeam and yew and planted in 1690. The average visitor takes 20 minutes to reach the centre. The maze is included in entry, although those not visiting the palace can enter the maze for £3.50 (£2/10 for children/families). Last admission is at 5.15pm in summer and 3.45pm in winter.

There are trains every half-hour from Waterloo direct to Hampton Court station (30 minutes), from where it's a three-minute

walk to the palace entrance. The palace can also be reached from Westminster Pier in central London twice daily on riverboats operated by Westminster Passenger Services Association (☎ 7930 2062; www.wpsa.co.uk) from April to October. This is a great trip if the weather is good, but be aware that it takes three hours. For details see p387.

## WIMBLEDON

For a few weeks each June the sporting world's attention is fixed on the quiet southern suburb of Wimbledon, as it has been since 1877 (see p328). Then the circus leaves town and Wimbledon returns to unremarkable normality. That said, it's a pleasant little place, and the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum will excite any tennis fan, even in darkest December.

### WIMBLEDON COMMON

www.wpcc.org.uk; ☎ Wimbledon, then 93 Running on into Putney Heath, Wimbledon Common covers 460 hectares of South London and is a wonderful expanse of open space for walking, nature trailing and picnicking. There are a few specific sights on Wimbledon Common, however, including Wimbledon Windmill (☎ 8947 2825; www.wimbledonwindmillmuseum.org.uk; Windmill Rd SW19; adult/child £1/50p; ☎ 2-5pm Sat, 11am-5pm Sun late Mar-Oct; ☎ Wimbledon), a fine smock mill (ie octagonal-shaped with sloping weatherboarded sides) dating from 1817 which now contains a museum with working models on the history of windmills and milling. It was during a stay in the mill in 1908 that Robert Baden-Powell was inspired to write parts of his *Scouting for Boys*.

On the southern side of the common, the misnamed Caesar's Camp is what's left of a roughly circular earthen fort built in the 5th century BC, which proves that Wimbledon was settled before Roman times.

### WIMBLEDON LAWN TENNIS MUSEUM

☎ 8946 6131; www.wimbledon.org; Gate 3, Church Rd SW19; adult/child/concession £8.50/4.75/7.50, museum & tour £14.50/11/13; ☎ 10.30am-5pm, spectators only during championships; ☎ Wimbledon, then 93 This museum is of specialist interest, dwelling as it does on the minutiae of the history of tennis playing, traced back here to the invention of the all-important lawnmower

in 1830 and of the India-rubber ball in the 1850s. It's a state-of-the-art presentation, with plenty of video clips to let fans of the game relive their favourite moments. The museum houses a tearoom and a shop selling all kinds of tennis memorabilia.

### BUDDHAPADIPA TEMPLE

☎ 8946 1357; www.buddhapadipa.org; 14 Calonne Rd SW19; admission free; ☎ temple 1-6pm Sat, 8.30-10.30am & 12.30-6pm Sun, grounds 8am-9.30pm summer, to 6pm winter; ☎ Wimbledon, then 93

A surprising sight in a residential neighbourhood half a mile from Wimbledon Village, this is as authentic a Thai temple as ever graced this side of Bangkok. The Buddhapadipa Temple was built by an association of young Buddhists in Britain and opened in 1982. The *wat* (temple compound) boasts a *bot* (consecrated chapel) decorated with traditional scenes by two leading Thai artists. Remember to take your shoes off before entering.

To get to the temple take the tube or train to Wimbledon and then bus 93 up to Wimbledon Parkside. Calonne Rd leads off it on the right.

## RICHMOND WALK

### Walking Tour

#### 1 Richmond Green

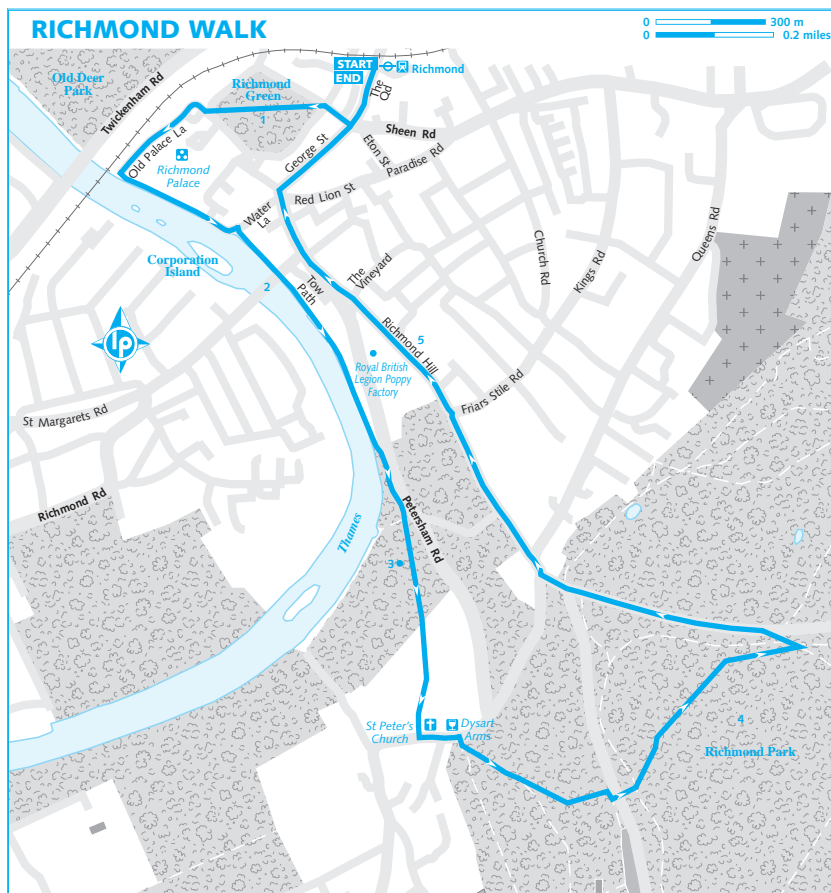
With its lovely houses and crowds of families playing ball games, it's easy to imagine this beautiful stretch of grass as the site of jousting contests during the Middle Ages. The path across the green (p207) takes you to the meagre remains of Richmond Palace, where Queen Elizabeth I spent her final years.

#### 2 Richmond Bridge

London's oldest river crossing still in use and dating back to 1777, this five-span masonry bridge (p209) gracefully curves over the Thames towards Twickenham. Just before it, along one of the loveliest stretches of the Thames, is tiny Corporation Island, which has been colonised by flocks of feral parakeets (see London Wetland Centre, p205).

#### 3 Petersham Meadows

These meadows fronting the Thames and at the foot of Richmond Hill are still grazed by cows. At the southern end is St Peter's Church (p208), a Saxon place of worship since the 8th



century, which contains an unusually laid out Georgian interior.

#### 4 Richmond Park

Petersham Gate leads to London's most sumptuous green space. Established by Edward I in the 13th century, this **royal park** (p207) has changed little since that time. There are unbroken views to the centre of London.

#### 5 Richmond Hill

The view from the top of Richmond Hill has inspired painters and poets for centuries and still beguiles. It is the only view – which includes St Paul's Cathedral about 10 miles away – in the country to be protected by an act of Parliament.

### WALK FACTS

**Start** Richmond tube station  
**End** Richmond tube station  
**Distance** 2.5 miles  
**Duration** About two hours  
**Fuel stop** Dysart Arms (p296)

#### 6 Royal British Legion Poppy Factory

This rather unusual **factory** (☎ 8940 3305; www.britishlegion.org.uk; 20 Petersham Rd TW10; admission free; ♿ tours 10am Mon-Fri, 1.30pm Mon-Thu) turns out 34 million poppies and 107,000 wreaths and sprays that are worn and displayed on Remembrance Day (11 November) each year. Guided tours (only) take about two hours.

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