

SECRET LONDON



There are a lot of places of interest in London. Some of them are familiar to us.

But there are always plenty of places we haven't heard about.

In this project you can get acquainted with some of them.

After watching this project you can answer some questions about the sights.



THE LIGHTS OF PICCADILLY CIRCUS



Piccadilly Circus is a road junction and public space of London's West End in

the City of Westminster. In this context, a circus, from the Latin word meaning "circle", is a round open space at a street junction. Piccadilly Circus

is famous for its illuminated advertisements. The fronts of some buildings are

now almost entirely covered by ever changing walls of colored lights spelling out the names of well-known products and even the temperature.

But why are the lights there at all and why are they only in one part of the

Circus?



Once upon a time Piccadilly
Circus was
a true circus, in other words a
circular
interchange linking Regent Street
with
Lower Regent Street and Waterloo
Place.
Then in 1886 a new road was
created
leading off from the north-east. To
improve access into this road –
Shaftesbury Avenue – buildings on
the
north side facing directly on to
the
Circus. The occupants of these
buildings were suddenly
presented
with fantastic advertising
possibilities.
Taking advantage of the new
technology of electrically
illuminated
advertisements, particularly the
intermittent or flashing variety
which
attracted attention, some of them
quickly put up large signs on the



Piccadilly Circus in 1896



If you go to the Piccadilly Circus today, you will see that the lights – the subject of countless picture postcards – are mainly concentrated in one section of the Circus. The simple reason for this is that the freehold of the rest of the Circus is owned by the Crown Estate. Like the old London County Council, they were opposed to the signs, but they had the advantage of better leases which could be, and since have been, successfully enforced to prevent the erection of any signs they disapproved of. For this reason there have never been any



THE STATUE OF EROS



Piccadilly Circus's other claim to fame is the Statue of Eros. First, it is not a statue at all but a memorial fountain commemorating the great Victorian philanthropist, the Earl of Shaftesbury, after whom Shaftesbury Avenue is named. Secondly, the figure so delicately poised atop the fountain is not the God of Love but the Angel of Christian Charity. At least, that is what the experts say.





Given the nature of Lord Shaftesbury's work, it is extraordinary how much rancor his memorial managed to excite. Interference with the design by both the Memorial Committee and the London County Council led to squabbles between these two bodies and even more bitter arguments between them and the ultra-sensitive Gilbert. The memorial was also meant to function as a public drinking fountain and Gilbert claimed that, if the basin were made too small, drinkers would get soaked in their attempts to get a drink of water. After the unveiling he was pilloried for it in the press even though he was in no way to blame.



There is one final intriguing mystery about Eros. Is the statue a clever pun on Shaftesbury's name? If you look at Eros's bow closely you will notice that it has no arrow in it and that it is pointing downwards. Are we meant to conjecture from this that the arrow or 'shaft' has been fired downwards and that it now lies 'buried' in the ground? There would certainly appear to be some kind of connection, but whether Gilbert ever intended it or not we shall never know for sure.



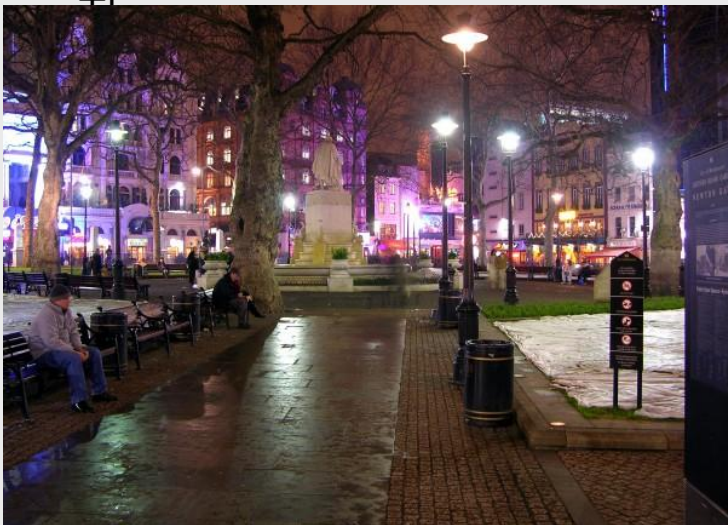
LEICESTER SQUARE

Leicester Square is a pedestrianised square in the West End of London.
Leicester

Square is the centre of London's cinema land, and one of the signs marking the

Square bears the legend "Theatreland". The Square is also the home for tkts,

formerly known as the Official London Half Price Theatre Ticket Booth.



THE COADE STONE LION



A London landmark no doubt well known to cabbies is the magnificent lion guarding the entrance to Westminster Bridge opposite the Houses of Parliament. This noble beast is not the stone sculpture you might think it is a from a casual glance but a piece of pottery made from a mould and fired in a kiln. It is , moreover, over 160 years old, yet it shows not a trace of its age, a testimony to the strength and weather-resistant property of the material from which it is made. This material is an artificial stone called Coade stone, named after its inventor, Eleanor Coade. Following her merchant father into business, she set up her own linen drapery before, in 1769, taking over an artificial - stone factory beside the Thames where the Royal Festival Hall now stands.





There is some doubt as to whether she simply improved the existing artificial – stone formula employed at the factory or whether she did actually invent a completely new type of material. Whatever the truth, her own artificial stone was so superior to anything else on the market that it was soon much in demand for architectural ornaments and details of every kind. The lion was made in 1837 , 16 years after Coade's death. The sculptor of the model W.F. Woodington , inscribed both his initials and the exact date (24 May 1837) on one of the paws.



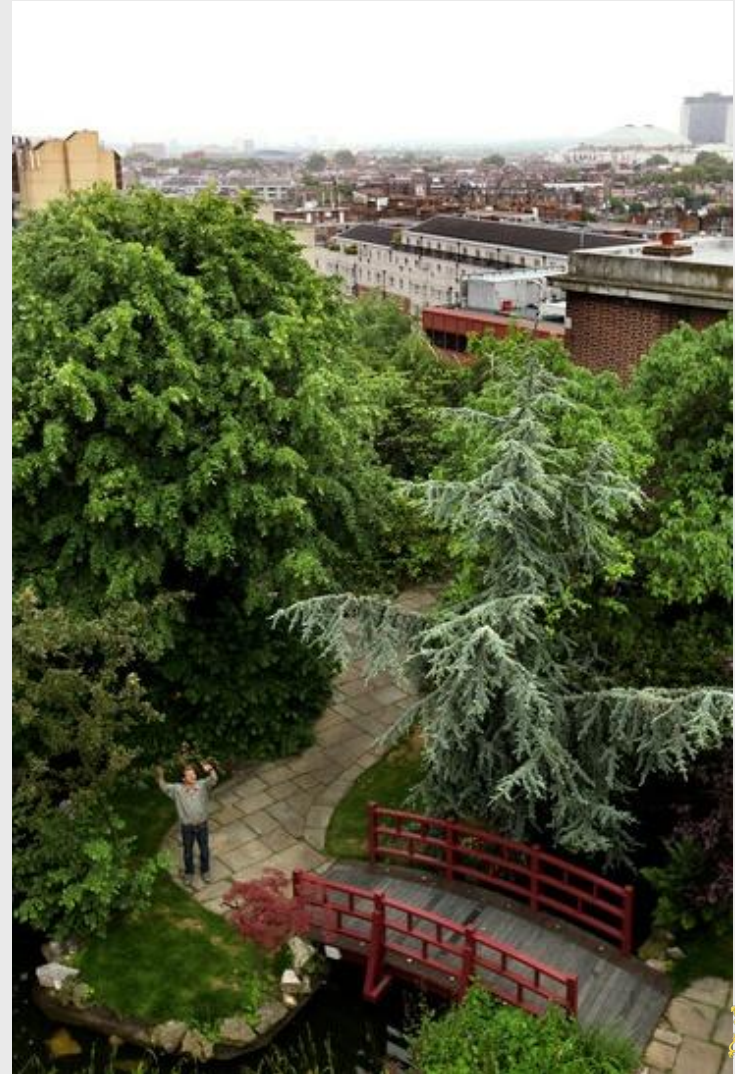
The lion was painted red and erected, along with two smaller companions, over the gate of The Lion brewery next door to the Coade factory.

During the Second World War the brewery was blitzed, but miraculously the great lion survived. In the 1970s the British Museum Research Laboratory successfully worked out the composition of the stone. In 1987, having postulated the probable firing time, a skilled kilnman produced a very respectable piece of Coade modelled by sculptress Mollie Adams.



KENSINGTON ROOF GARDENS

Among all the private roof terraces and roof gardens in London, there is none quite like the Kensington Roof Gardens. Covering 1,5 acres, making them the largest in Europe, they are laid out on top of a department-store building in Kensington High Street. Because the store for which they were originally constructed, Derry & Toms, has been closed for many years, their existence has been largely overlooking the High Street and a larger one on the south side. The larger one is the English woodland garden, an informal area of curving lawn and trees up to 40 feet (12 metres) high, through which runs a stream crossed by two little bridges. At one end of a stream a little lake is home to a pair of pink flamingos and a dozen or so clipped-wing ducks.



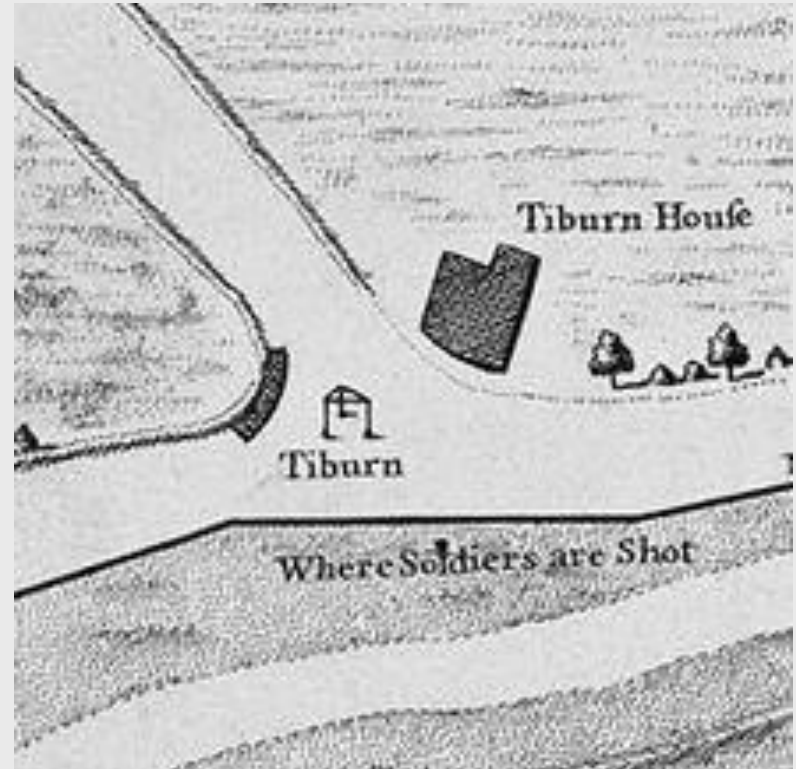


Walking past the lake you come to the Tudor garden, a series of three little walled courtyards with creeper-covered walls. In the centre a fountain plays, fostering the illusion of a rural idyll far from the madding crowd. From the Tudor garden, a paved walk through a series of roughly carved Tudor arches salvaged from some unidentified stately home leads to the piece de resistance of the whole garden: the formal Spanish garden with its clipped lawns, neat paths lined with coloured tiles, palm trees and whitewashed red-tiled mock convent complete with campanile and well. The Spanish garden is much more open and feels more spacious than the others and on a sunny day looks quite stunning, the white walls setting off the colours of the trees and shrubs and flowering plants. The spire of St Mary Abbots rising gracefully into the sky beyond makes the whole scene even more picturesque.



THE TYBURN RIVER WALK

The Tyburn starts at Baker Street, going through Regent's Canal, Regent's Park and finishes at Pimlico Bridge. It stretches for 5,5 km. It will take you two and half hours to go along it. If you are at the Tyburn river walk you will not miss Oxford Street, Green Park, and ofcourse, Buckingham Palace and Queen's Gallery. This walk consists of many turns, turnings and loops, so if you don't want to get lost take a good and detailed map of London. To make your walking more pleasant, there are plenty of pubs, restaurants, wihe bars and sandwich bars along the whole length of this attractive little sights, always presents you a good selection of all types of eating and drinking places.



MARYLEBONE

Marylebone High Street goes along Marylebone Lane and it was the centre of the old village of Marylebone. The Street got its name from St Mary-le-Bourne and connected the village with London. During walking on Marylebone Lane you will see a fork with a shop called The Button Queen. Also you can stop at James Street, a popular place to eat out in summer. At the end of the trip you will find yourself at the junction with Oxford Street and the river valley. In 1941 the river was seen flowing through the bottom of a bomb crater here.



GOVERNMENT ART COLLECTION



The United Kingdom's Government Art Collection (GAC) places works of art in major Government buildings in the UK and around the world to promote British art, culture and history.

Dating from 1898, the GAC now holds approximately 13,000 works of art by British artists in a variety of media including paintings, sculpture, prints, drawings, photographs, textiles and video works, from the sixteenth century to the present day.



Bagnigge Wells



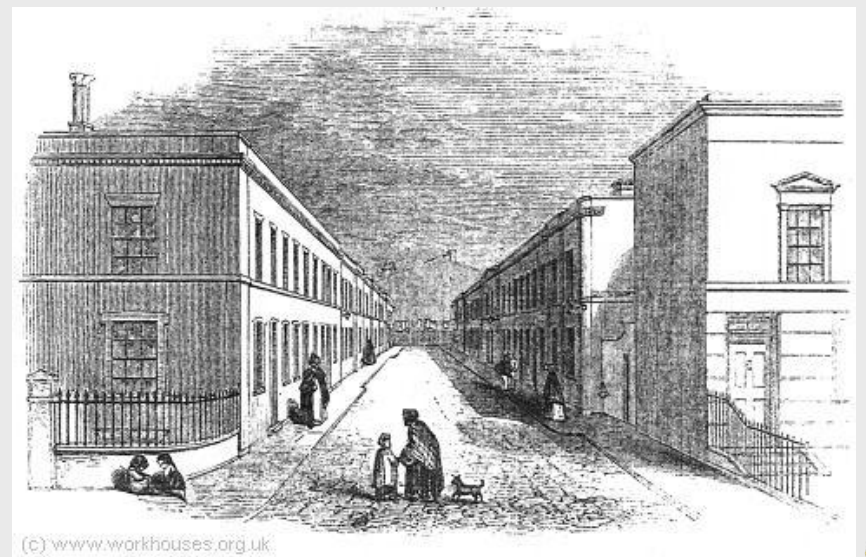
Just beyond the garage on the right there is a terrace of houses, all with balconies at first-floor level. Here stood Bagnigge Wells, the other famous spa mentioned earlier and one of the best-attended of all the spas surrounding London during the spa-crazy 18th century. The Fleet itself flowed through the spa gardens and there were seats on the bank “for such as chuse to smoke or drink cider, ale etc. which are not permitted in other parts of the garden”.



Today the only relic of the spa (besides the name of nearby Wells Square) is the inscribed stone set into the front wall of the first house in the terrace, thought to mark the north western boundary of the gardens.

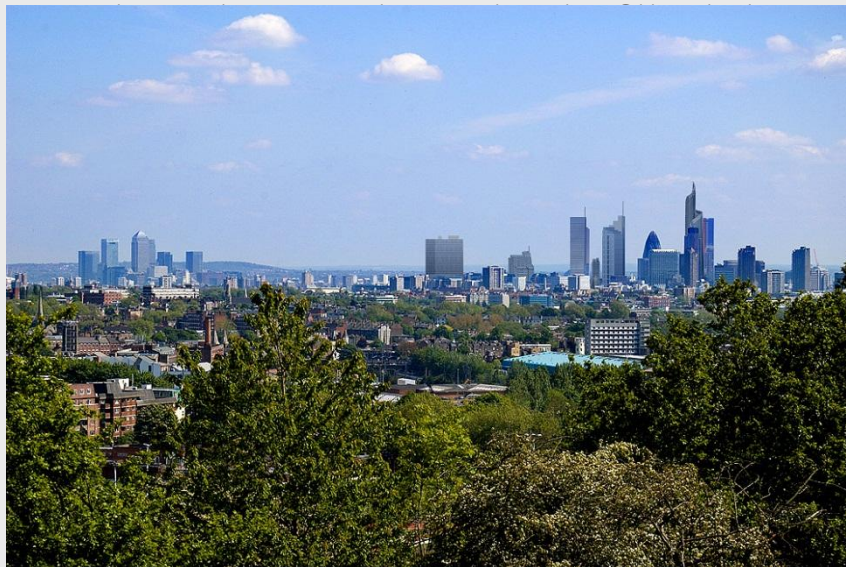
The stone is dated 1680, which is particularly interesting because this is about the time when Bagnigge House was used as a summer retreat by Charles II's mistress, Nell Gwynne. Nell's association with the area is commemorated in Gwynne Place on the opposite side of the road.

The "Pinder a Wakefeilde" mentioned on the plaque refers to a famous old pub called the Pindar of Wakefield on nearby Gray's Inn Road. It



View from Parliament Hill

Parliament Hill is not the highest spot in London, but it is higher than most and it commands extensive views east, south and south-west right across the valley, with the main landmarks to the south picked out on a panorama board. From this vintage point you can



Parliament Hill is an area of open parkland in the south-east corner of Hampstead Heath in north west London.

The hill, which is 98 metres (322 ft) high, is notable for its excellent views of the capital's skyline. Many famous landmarks can be seen from its summit

such as Canary Wharf and St Paul's Cathedral in the City of London.

Despite its name, it is not home to





LOCAL AREA

It is administered by the City of London Corporation together with the rest of Hampstead Heath. The Eastern (Highgate) side, including Parliament Hill Lido, is known as Parliament Hill Fields, and a local girls' school, Parliament Hill School, is named after it.



Dr Johnson's House

Cross New Fetter Lane here and turn right
past the plaque on the left commemorating
the Moravians, a Protestant sect from Germany who sought refuge in England
in the 18th century. (Their original burial ground still exists behind a high wall at World's End in Chelsea.) On the right you pass the eastern boundary of the Bacon estate and the former Public Record Office before turning left into West Harding Street and its continuation (bearing right) Pemberton Row. Follow the signs to Dr Johnson's House in Gough Square. Here The Doctor compiled his great dictionary, published in 1755. The adjoining curator's house is said to be the smallest in the City: one



Answer the questions:

- 1. Are the lights in all the sections of the Piccadilly Circus?
- 2. Is there an arrow in Eros's bow?
- 3. What is the centre of London's cinema land?
- 4. Who is guarding the entrance to Westminster Bridge opposite the Houses of Parliament?
- 5. What do the letters GAC mean?
- 6. Is Parliament Hill the highest spot in London?

