

LONDON FOOTSTEPS

Walking tours in and around the City of London

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PROGRAMME OF WALKS OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2009

The days are shorter and there's a nip in the air but a walk through some of the historical areas of London will warm the cockles of your heart! This group of walks take us to places just beyond the City of London and into areas that not have obvious tourist appeal but are fascinating for anyone who wants to know more about the capital's history.

If you are interested in coming along then please let me know beforehand. You can get an off-peak rail ticket and the £5 cost of the walk is payable on the day. If you have a Senior Railcard or a Bus Pass then bring that along as well.

Saturday, 24th October, 2009: SOLICITING IN HOLBORN

Some strange and inspiring stories are revealed in an area squeezed between the City and the West End. It is hard to imagine that Holborn was once an over-crowded, squalid area with a reputation for hard-drinking, prostitution and crime. Charles Dickens lived here for a time and was shocked by what he saw happening on his doorstep. Today, the area is closely associated with publishing and the legal profession but behind the modern office blocks are some intriguing stories.

Meet at Leigh-on-Sea Station at 9.15 am or near the ticket barrier of Holborn Underground Station (Central Line) at 11.00 am

Wednesday, 28th October, 2009: MURDER, MEAT AND MEDICINE

The walk starts near Smithfield meat market so it may be appropriate that this was also a place of hangings, riots and bawdy entertainment. The surgeons and doctors at nearby St Bart's Hospital, founded in the 12th century, were always busy but their skill has saved many lives over the past 900 years. There's also a chance to visit the Hospital museum with its famous Hogarth wall murals.

Meet at Leigh-on-Sea Station at 9.15 a.m. or outside the Barbican Station (Circle and Metropolitan Line) at 11 a.m.

Saturday, 7th November 2009: COVENT GARDEN

Covent Garden is a busy and fascinating place with a variety of shops, restaurants as well as displays from street performers and musicians. But that's not all. It's also about crime, violence and poverty and the theatre. Starting at Temple Station, this walk includes a visit to Somerset House, passes the home of the BBC World Service and establishes links with the Mercers Livery Company, the Bow Street Runners and many great British actors who are remembered in St. Paul's Church, Covent Garden. The walk finishes in Covent Garden, once a great flower and vegetable market, where you are free to enjoy the atmosphere.

Meet at Leigh-on-Sea Station at 9.15 am or at Temple Station (Circle and District Line) at 11.00 am

Friday, 13th November 2009 KING'S CROSS: RAILWAYS AND REGENERATION

One of Europe's biggest re-development programmes is now taking shape around what was once an area better known for prostitutes and cheap hotels. Shops, apartments, a University and concert hall are the modern face of King's Cross – but who can recall the misery of Agar Town, the slums and rookeries and the commercial importance of the Regent Canal which left a deep impression on the young novelist Thomas Hardy; all this nearly 200 years before Eurostar arrived at nearby St. Pancras Station.

Meet at Leigh-on-Sea Station at 9.15 am or at the ticket barrier of Platform 11 Liverpool Street Station at 10.45 am

Friday 27th November, 2009: STRIPPING SOHO BARE!

A wicked and sinful part of London? Not really. This walk takes us a mile or two away from the busy financial heart of London to an area that has always had a 'lively' and sometimes dangerous reputation. This is where the stars of theatre-land often rubbed shoulders with pop stars and the more dubious characters of London's underworld. Yet in the narrow streets and squares are the reminders that Soho's history is so much more than night clubs, the film industry and smart restaurants.

Meet at Leigh-on-Sea Station at 9.15 a.m. You can also join at Tottenham Court Road station and should meet in the booking hall of the Central Line station at 11 a.m.

Tuesday, 15th December: BLOOMSBURY SQUARES

This area on the fringe of the City attracted the rich and famous from the 17th century onwards. Fine squares and grand homes were created; actors, painters, writers, politicians and the aristocracy settled in Bloomsbury. You have the chance to walk through these spacious squares and along streets of elegant houses, starting at Holborn and finishing at Russell Square.

Meet at Leigh-on-Sea Station at 9.15 am or at the ticket barriers just inside Holborn Underground Station at 11 am.