

LONDON FOOTSTEPS

David Williams: City of London, guide and lecturer

Tel: 01702 710232 Mob: 07831 857382

E: davidwilliams@dwmedia.co.uk also david171238@gmail.com

www.londonfootsteps.co.uk

NEWSLETTER: SUMMER 2021

BACK IN BUSINESS

When the LONDON FOOTSTEPS programme was re-launched in mid-May, many of us wondered if it was likely to be a 'false dawn'. Some people were understandably nervous, especially when travelling on public transport, but there was general acceptance for going ahead and I am very pleased with the enthusiasm and support most of you have given me.

Listening to the politicians and scientific advisors giving their views on the easing of restrictions shows that caution is still necessary and I have been trying to devise walks which avoid areas that often attract a lot of people. Limiting numbers to around 20 people per walk is my aim although up to 30 is permitted.

The GUNNERS PARK (Thames Estuary) walk was a great success. So many wanted to sign up that it went ahead on two separate occasions to cope with the numbers. The other walks, BRIDGE TO BRIDGE and CITY SURPRISES were equally popular so again these had to be repeated.

Unfortunately, CITY SURPRISES, was abandoned before it started. A serious incident on the railway line near Benfleet caused a three-hour delay and total disruption of the service into Fenchurch Street leaving me with no alternative but to cancel the walk. I appreciate the patience and understanding of those who went to Tower Hill only to get a message that it wasn't happening.

However, on a brighter note, I am re-scheduling CITY SURPRISES and hope that those who were disappointed last time can come along on the new date. Have a look in your diaries and if you can join me then please book a place via email or by telephone as early as possible. Also get in touch if you have any questions. Please note the fee is £8 pp for each walk.

MEETING PLACES

So far we have been starting at TOWER HILL STATION but I want to extend the variety of walks and therefore include some other meeting places. These will be LONDON BRIDGE STATION, the BANK STATION (steps of the Royal Exchange), BLACKFRIARS STATION and LIVERPOOL STREET STATION.

I hope that these stations are convenient for most people. I am also looking at the possibility of starting the walks around 11.00 am which will allow more of you to buy cheaper tickets by travelling after the morning peak.

EASING OF RESTRICTIONS

The main issues for tour guides like myself have been social distancing, the wearing of face masks and going into restaurants and cafes. These have been reviewed and the changes being suggested will, if approved by Parliament, come into force on 19th July.

Meanwhile I have been working on a new programme of walks which cover the period from late July until early September. Here they are.

PROGRAMME OF WALKS

THE CITY LIVERY COMPANIES

There are 110 Livery Companies in the City and they are firmly embedded in the history, business and administration of the City of London. The walk will start at the Royal Exchange and pass at least 17 of the Livery Company halls and several Blue Plaques which recall traditions and ceremonials going back over 1000 years.

CITY SURPRISES

This walk was abandoned in June (see earlier) but deserves a place in this schedule to give regular walkers – and any newcomers – a greater insight into the way London is expanding post-Brexit and why the change in planning laws has seen a remarkable growth in new high-rise building. But history still survives in the shadows of these towering concrete, steel and glass structures.

THREE GATES (Aldgate, Bishopsgate, Moorgate)

A walk that starts at Tower Hill will feature a once-grim part of London where monasteries flourished and were then destroyed, where derelict churchyards were restored, where a 1980s development is being pulled down, where the unconsecrated ground at Bunhill Fields is the resting place for radical thinkers and authors and where the Grub Street hacks penned stories and poems yet barely made a living.

ONE BRIDGE TO ANOTHER (Blackfriars & Waterloo)

Following the success of the previous Bridge to Bridge walk (Tower to London Bridge), this theme continues by starting at Blackfriars Station, crossing the bridge, exploring the South Bank before returning via Waterloo Bridge and the Thames Embankment.

THE GREENING OF LONDON

Tackling pollution, carbon emissions and global warming is not a 21st century problem. London has a long history of giving nature and wildlife a chance to survive in such a hostile environment. The success of the City's bio-diversity policy can be seen in the green spaces, pocket parks, window boxes, rooftop gardens and neat churchyards we are to visit.

SHAKESPEARE IN SHOREDITCH

Britain's greatest playwright attracts millions to the Globe Playhouse on the South Bank but far fewer choose to explore Shoreditch and its rich theatrical history. Yet after the remains of an Elizabethan theatre were discovered in Curtain Road less than 20 years ago there has been renewed interest in an area that saw some of the worst slums in Victorian London. The walk will start at Liverpool Street station.

PROPOSED DATES

Tuesday, 20th July: THE CITY LIVERY COMPANIES.

11.00 am. Meet on the steps of the Royal Exchange (Bank Station)

Wednesday, 28th July: CITY SURPRISES

11.00 am. Meet at Tower Hill Station, outside Citizen M Hotel

Monday, August 9th: THREE GATES (Aldgate, Bishopsgate, Moorgate)

11 am. Meet at Tower Hill Station, outside Citizen M hotel

Thursday, 26th August: ONE BRIDGE TO ANOTHER (Blackfriars & Waterloo)

Meet at Blackfriars Station. Time to be confirmed

Wednesday 1st September: THE GREENING OF LONDON

Meet at Liverpool Street station barrier platform 11. Time to be confirmed.

Tuesday, 7th September: SHAKESPEARE IN SHOREDITCH

Meet at Liverpool Street Station. Time to be confirmed.