

City of London walk 2

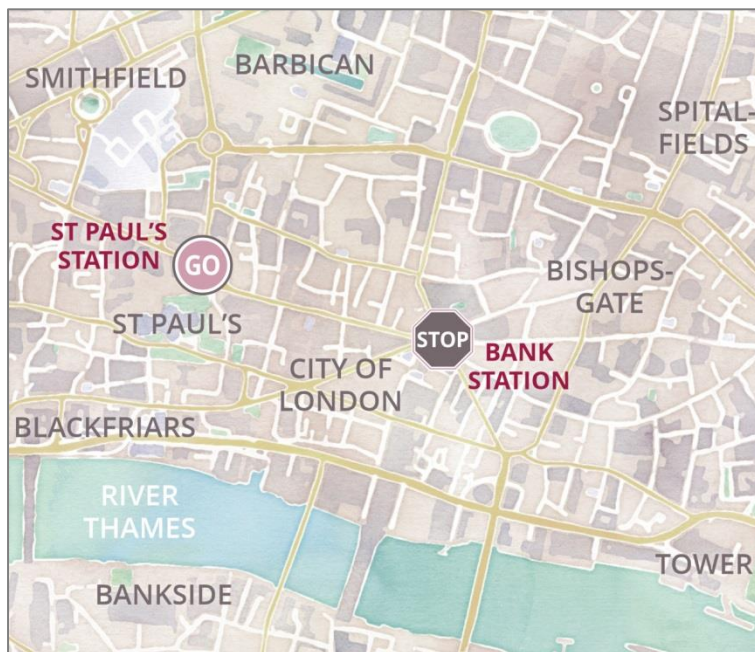
Updated: 17 October 2023

Length: About 3¼ miles

Duration: Around 4 hours

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WALK

Cheapside, St Mary-le-Bow, Bow Lane, Watling Street, St Mary Aldermary, No 1 Poultry, St Stephen's Walbrook, The Mansion House, The Royal Exchange, The Bank of England, Jamaica Wine House, Leadenhall Market, Lloyd's of London, The 'Scalpel', The 'Cheesegrater', St Mary Axe, The 'Gherkin', The Baltic Exchange, Bishopsgate, The Heron Tower, Church of St Ethelburga the Virgin, Gibson Hall, Austin Friars, Dutch Church, Halls of the Worshipful Companies of Leathersellers, Carpenters and Drapers.



GETTING HERE

The walk starts in **Cheapside**, just a few hundred yards east of St Paul's Cathedral.

The nearest tube station is **St Paul's**, which is on the Central line.

There are numerous bus routes that serve the St Paul's and Bank area.

Arriving by tube, leave the station at Exit 1 – it's marked Cheapside – walk straight ahead, then bear slightly to your left. You will then be in Cheapside.

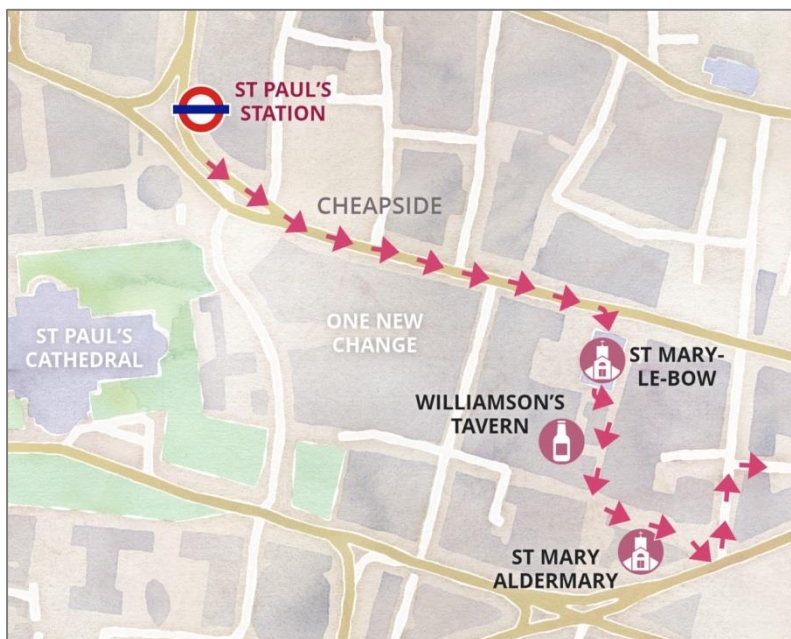
First, some information about Cheapside.

Cheapside had been the City's main shopping street since the 12th century. 'Cheap' comes from the old English word 'chepe', meaning to barter, or a market where goods could be bartered for. Indeed, the names of several of the streets that lead off Cheapside come from the goods that were once sold here – Poultry, Bread Street, Milk Street, Honey Lane, Wood Street, Goldsmith Street, etc.

Following the Great Fire of London in 1666, Cheapside was rebuilt, and the market traders were moved to more permanent premises. Further changes took place after World War II when bombing had destroyed over half of its buildings. Over the past few years, the street has once again become the City of London's main shopping street.

Since medieval times, Cheapside has also been part of the main ceremonial route from the Tower of London to Westminster and it's still used today for events such as Royal coronations, funerals, processions and the Lord Mayor's Show. The latter was something that started in 1215 and still takes place on the second Saturday of November. The Lord Mayor travels with the procession, which terminates just outside the City at the Royal Courts of Justice, where having been blessed at St Paul's Cathedral, he swears an oath of allegiance to the Crown.

Charles Dickens' son wrote about Cheapside in his 1879 Dictionary of London: "Cheapside remains now what it was five centuries ago, the greatest thoroughfare in the City of London. Other localities have had their day, have risen, become fashionable and have sunk into obscurity and neglect, but Cheapside has maintained its place and may boast of being the busiest thoroughfare in the world, with the sole exception perhaps, of London-bridge."



Route map 1

STARTING THE WALK

Walk down Cheapside on the left-hand side; on the right you'll see the huge **One New Change shopping centre** that opened in 2010. It's the largest shopping centre in the City of London and

includes interesting roof terraces which besides having a restaurant and bar, both with outdoor seating, offers public areas with an unusual view of St Paul's Cathedral.

On the left side of the road is **Wood Street**; notice the 'Cards Galore' shop on the corner. It occupies one of the last remaining old buildings in Cheapside and is also a rare example of the two-storey buildings that were given permission to be built following the Great Fire of London in 1666. Just a few yards up Wood Street, virtually next to the shop, you'll see a tiny 'garden' that now occupies what was once the churchyard of 'St Peter Cheap'. The church had been built in 1196 but destroyed in the Great Fire of London and never rebuilt. It was in this churchyard that in 1791, William Wordsworth once stood and listened to a bird singing in the tree (I doubt it's the tree that's still there today!) Here he wrote the poem entitled 'The Reverie of Poor Susan', telling the story of the memories awakened in a country girl in London on hearing a thrush sing in the early morning. The first verse is as follows, but I have put the whole of the poem in the **appendix**.

The Reverie of Poor Susan

At the corner of Wood Street, when daylight appears,
Hangs a Thrush that sings loud, it has sung for three years:
Poor Susan has pass'd by the spot, and has heard
In the silence of morning the song of the bird.

As a point of general interest, I'll also mention here that Wood Street is one of a number of streets in the City where it can sometimes be difficult to find a building with a number on. This is because many numbers were removed at the height of the IRA bombing campaign to make it more difficult for anyone planting a bomb to identify particular targets. In any case, the order of some numbers hasn't always made sense since the Second World War – as a result of the intensive bombing raids on the City, some streets were left with hardly a building still standing. However, when redevelopment began, buildings weren't necessarily erected in any particular order. So, sometimes one would be constructed in the middle of a street, with no other buildings around it, so it might have been numbered '1' – hence in some streets the building numbers can be quite haphazard. As a City of London policeman I had stopped to ask for help in finding an address told me, "It can be a nightmare for us and the other emergency services!"

Continue on down Cheapside – ahead of you on the other side, you've probably already noticed **St Mary-le-Bow Church**. It is Grade I listed and regarded as being one of the more beautiful churches in London. Built above ground level and with a flight of steps leading up to the entrance, as well as having a dramatic spire, it has always been a landmark and must have been an imposing sight in the days before tall buildings were erected.

For many years St Mary-le-Bow was second only in importance to the nearby St Paul's and unique in being part of the Diocese of Canterbury and not London. Although there had previously been a small Saxon church on the site, following William the Conqueror's Norman invasion of England in 1066, he decided to build a new, much larger and very imposing church here, one that would impress (and no doubt subdue) the local population. He had it built in the Norman style, using the distinctive 'white' Caen stone. This was used around the same time to build two other major buildings that he instigated – the White Tower in the Tower of London and St Paul's Cathedral – the original, not the one you see today.

The church is dedicated to Sancta Maria de Arcubus – which means St Mary of the Arches – and those arches can still be seen in the crypt today. Although the church was virtually destroyed in

the Great Fire, the crypt survived. The church was one of the first to be rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren. The crypt also survived when the church was again destroyed, this time in the Second World War Blitz, being rebuilt in the 1950s. One of the highlights of the latest rebuilding is the most unusual and quite magnificent square shaped piece of glass containing a scene from the Crucifixion that hangs from the ceiling.

The church tower contains the Bells of Bow. When it was built in 1088 it was considerably higher than neighbouring buildings and the famous Great Bell of Bow could be heard for many miles around – hence the saying that to be a true cockney you had to be born within the sound of the church's bells.

For almost five hundred years, indeed until the late 19th century, the bells were rung at 9pm each evening to signify the end of the working day for apprentices. (Bearing in mind how early they started, it must have been a welcome sound) It was these same bells that Dick Whittington is said to have heard when he had got as far as Highgate in north London. The sound of them ringing made him turn back to the City, becoming Mayor for the third time. It was said that the bells could be heard as far away as Hackney Marshes in the far east of London. In the days of the curfew, the ringing of these bells was the signal for the bells of other churches across the city to ring theirs.

Of course, for several hundred years children have heard and sung the nursery rhyme – 'Oranges and Lemons' – and here's the relevant verse:

"When will you pay me, say the bells of Old Bailey
When I grow rich, say the bells of Shoreditch,
When will that be, say the bells of Stepney,
I do not know, say the Great Bell of Bow"

And it's worth pointing out that, as with many City churches, it is closed on a Sunday – however there are services every weekday.

Leave the church and walk through the adjacent Bow Churchyard.

The statue in the middle of the churchyard square is of Captain John Smith, who was born in Lancashire in 1580 and later became a member of this church.

Captain John Smith was certainly a very successful man – a soldier, explorer, colonial governor, admiral and author, who played a pivotal role in the exploration and settlement of America. Indeed, it was he who named the region of northeast America 'New England' and it was thanks to him that the early settlers in Virginia even managed to survive. Coming from a farming family, he taught them how to grow their own crops, not only saving their lives but ensuring that Jamestown and the state of Virginia became so successful in later years.

He led several expeditions exploring and mapping the coastline and the Chesapeake Bay. He wrote detailed journals of life in Virginia, of his encounters with the Native Indian population – his life finally being saved by Pocahontas, the daughter of an Indian Chief. Another fascinating story in itself.

Standing on a Portland stone plinth and cast in bronze, the statue is a copy of one that stands in Jamestown in Virginia and was unveiled here by the Queen Mother. There's a small carved relief of the City of London's crest, and the inscription reads "First among the leaders of the settlement at Jamestown, Virginia, which began the overseas exploration of the English-speaking peoples". Captain Smith died in 1631 and is buried in St Sepulchre without Newgate Church in Holborn.

Finally, notice the sign on the wall of the church explaining that it's in the Ward of Cordwainer (few people know what one is, but we pass a sculpture of one shortly and I will explain it then.)

Walk to the back of Bow Churchyard and follow the lane around the rear of the church – (the lane is also called 'Bow Churchyard') and then turn right down **Bow Lane**. This little pedestrianised street is usually packed with office workers at weekday lunch times and in the early evening. Thursdays and Fridays are particularly busy with the traditional City workers enjoying after-work drinks, and the numerous pubs and wine bars are not only full inside, but so is the street outside.

At one time there was an assortment of interesting little shops here, and whilst some have been replaced with fast food outlets, cafes and bars, a surprising number have survived. One of these is Rigby & Peller, the former supplier of the Queen's undergarments. I say former because the shop's founder lost their Royal Warrant because she had allegedly written too much detail in her autobiography about her visits to the Palace to measure Her Majesty for her undergarments. Presumably Her Majesty has gone back to M&S!

As you walk down Bow Lane, look carefully for a small passage on the right called Groveland Court – it's just before Rand and opposite Rigby & Peller and easy to miss but worth walking down to take a look.

At the end of Groveland Court, you'll notice a pub called Williamson's Tavern which claims to be located at the exact centre of the City of London. Originally a private house that was built in 1667, it later became the residence of many of the Lord Mayors of London. King William III and Queen Mary dined here – notice the ornate gates at the end of the passage which were given as a gift to the Lord Mayor to thank him for his hospitality.

After the Mansion House was built and became the Lord Mayors official home, it became a hotel, and remained so until just before the First World War when the last remaining member of the Williamson family died. It was then turned into a tavern and is now one of the William Nicholson's pubs.

William, who was born in 1824, was quite a fascinating character, being a Member of Parliament, distiller, cricket player and benefactor, responsible for financing Lord's Cricket Ground and its famous pavilion. He ran his family's brewing business and 'revitalised a collection of characterful alehouses, each one an architectural delight and with a strong sense of place and individuality.' He died in 1909.

Continue down Bow Lane, **turning left** when you reach the junction with **Watling Street** – (look to the right when you get there as there's a lovely view of St Paul's). On the opposite corner of Watling Street and Bow Lane is a pub called **Ye Olde Watling**. It is said to have been built by Sir Christopher Wren, using planks of brine-pickled timber from dismantled ships, to provide accommodation for the workers rebuilding St Paul's Cathedral following the Great Fire of London.

Watling Street is an ancient route used for several thousand years by travellers going between Canterbury in Kent and St Albans in Hertfordshire. It crossed the River Thames by a ford close to Westminster Abbey. Formerly just a track to the coastal ports of Kent, the Romans both extended and paved it, so making it easier for their armies to move around. They eventually extended it northwards as far as Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland.

Having turned left down Watling Street, you'll see on the right the side entrance to **St Mary Aldermary**. (There is sometimes a sign saying, 'please use other door', but if it is open, use this one to go in.)

I have had to dig quite deeply to try and establish the origin of the church's name, and it seems that 'Aldermary' means the 'elder Mary' and therefore that this is the oldest church in the City dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

St Mary Aldermary was founded around 900 years ago by Benedictine monks from the priory of Christchurch in Canterbury, its first Rector being appointed in 1233. Bearing in mind its age and position, it's hardly surprising that it is steeped in history. For example, one of Geoffrey Chaucer's relatives was a Church Elder and the poet John Milton was married here. It was yet another church that was badly damaged in the Great Fire and rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren. Uniquely though, and unlike all the other churches he designed, it is in a Gothic style. Fortunately, it only suffered minor damage in the Second World War. What is unusual about it today is that it is the official home of the 'Moot Community' – a monastic order within the Church of England for those unable to express their beliefs through the traditional church.

It's open from Monday to Friday and worth looking inside. You'll immediately realise it is like no other church you have probably experienced. It has the bustling Host Café that serves a variety of light lunches and other refreshments. You'll see people sitting at small tables and in the church pews, some eating, some simply working on their lap tops, whilst others enjoying a social gathering. The church describes itself as a "Peaceful, relaxing sanctuary amidst the noisy bustling streets of London... adding "bring your own lunch or enjoy ours; make use of the free Wi-Fi" Definitely not the average church!

And MOOT? It's a 'new monastic community' based in this church that describes itself as a 'contemporary expression of a church that seeks to support people to find, explore and sustain a spiritual path within the Christian contemplative tradition, inspired by the example and life of Jesus Christ.'

Back outside the church you pass a sculpture that was created in honour of the cordwainer. So what is a cordwainer? Well, the word is an anglicisation of the French word 'cordonnier', which means shoemaker. It was introduced to England after the Norman invasion in 1066. However, it didn't apply to an ordinary shoemaker, but only to a highly skilled craftsman who would have used the finest goatskin leather from Cordoba in southern Spain to make the finest shoes. The cordwainers' roots in the City go back to 1272, and then in 1439 they were issued their royal charter, which enabled them to control the entire shoe trade within the City of London.

And the difference between a cordwainer and a cobbler? The latter weren't allowed to make new shoes – just repair them. And the Cordwainers are the only historic trade body to have a ward (a district) of the City of London named after them, which is where you are now.



Route map 2

At the bottom of Watling Street, turn left and then left again up Queen Street – cross over, then **turn right down Pancras Lane**. The little ‘garden’ you pass on the left is the site of **St Pancras Church**, which was destroyed in the Great Fire in 1666. At the bottom of the lane, notice the wall plaque that explains it was the site of the parish church of **St Benet Sherehog**, yet another church destroyed in the Great Fire. The first recorded mention of this church is in the year 1111. And the unusual name ‘Sherehog’? It comes from the fact that in medieval times, this was one of the wool-dealing districts of London. And ‘sherehog’ was the name given to a castrated ram after its first shearing. Bet you didn’t know that – and if it ever comes up in a pub quiz, you could be a winner!

Turn left back along Queen Victoria Street – when you reach Bucklersbury Passage we’re going to cross over, but before we do just take a look into the ‘Passage’ under the enormous building on your left (called **Number One Poultry**).

Notice the two lifts on either side of the entrance into building. These go up to the roof where there’s the lovely **Coq d’Argent** French restaurant, brassiere and cocktail bar. Providing you’re moderately well-dressed then take the lift up to have a look. Besides the posh restaurant, there are terraced gardens with outdoor heaters, so you can enjoy an alfresco drink, lunch or dinner whatever the weather. Sometimes you are met as you step out of the lift – if you are, simply say you’re thinking of coming back for an evening cocktail or dinner and want to take a look first. They will then happily let you look around.

(And, if you did want to spoil yourself, they do an excellent 2-course set menu – with four choices for each course – for under £30 – three courses for £34. Per person of course – and that’s 2019 prices.)

Number One Poultry is regarded by many as being a particularly fine example of ‘post-modern architecture’ – and to me so much better than many of the glass and steel constructions that have sprung up all over London over the past few years.

With its unusual colours – pink and yellow coloured ‘brick’ walls, striped facades and curved forms, some people say it reminds them of a children’s toy, especially with its ‘submarine-like

clock tower'. Being 'wedge shaped', I think it's more like the prow of a huge ship. You get a better view of the building from the other side of Queen Victoria Street – which we cross next. Even better is to see an aerial photograph, as that shows both its triangular shape and the internal huge circular atrium or rotunda.

The building was recently the subject of a major planning/preservation battle involving some of the world's top architects – the building's owners had claimed that it is too 'inefficient a use of space' and wanted to undertake substantial 'modernisation' to both the interior as well as the exterior. (In other words, I guess they thought they could squeeze more money out of it) And this is a building that didn't even open until the mid-1980s. The last I heard was that after a long campaign by architects and preservationists, the building has been granted Grade I listed status – due to it being an 'unsurpassed example of 'commercial post modernisation'. It's said to be the 'youngest' listed building in Britain. So, whilst I'm sure there will be some internal redevelopment, hopefully the building itself has been saved.

Back to the walk. Cross over **Queen Victoria Street** and walk down the pedestrianised **Bucklersbury**, between the enormous **Bloomberg building** on the right and the totally different, tiny by comparison and lovely Victorian **Number 1 Queen Victoria Street**, which is the City of London Magistrates Court.

The **Bloomberg building** opened in 2017 and is the European headquarters of the giant American company of that name. It's quite a staggering building, both in size (over 4,000 employees work here) and in its 'sustainability' – rainwater collected on the roof is used to flush the toilets for example. However, it was criticised for its 'wasteful construction'. Apparently, 600 tons of Japanese bronze and 10,000 tons of Indian granite were used, all of which were obviously imported. And the interesting water feature in front of the building is meant to 'evoke the Walbrook River', which once flowed close by here.

Facing you now is the wonderful **parish church of St Stephen Walbrook**. As the list of rectors inside shows, there has been a church here since 1301. Following its destruction in the Great Fire, it was the first church that Sir Christopher Wren rebuilt after the Great Fire. The splendid dome is modelled on his original design for the dome on St Paul's Cathedral.

The church has an unusual shape being built using the 'Greek cross form' – and being 'in the round' means everyone is within 30 feet of the pulpit, which itself is a huge block of stone, designed by Henry Moore and controversial at the time. It's very simple and very beautiful and it's hardly surprising that it's Grade I listed. Indeed, the renowned architectural author Sir Nicholas Pevsner said of the interior that it was "one of the ten most important buildings in England". It's definitely worth going in to take a look, not least to learn more about the church's connection with the Samaritans, the emotional support helpline.

On 2 November 1953 Chad Varah began the Samaritans help line at St Stephen's. He was its rector for almost fifty years from 1953 to 2002, and when he retired at 92 years of age he was the oldest working clergyman in the Church of England.

In 1953, London still had the three letter and four number telephone numbers, and the church was MANsion House 9000*. The original Bakelite telephone handset that Chad used was found in his study after his death and can be seen in a glass case inside the entrance of the church. The centre of the dial shows the number, as phones did in those days.

(* Letters disappeared after the introduction of subscriber trunk dialling (STD), being replaced with additional numbers.)

Turn right out of the church – and right again into St Stephen’s Row – the large building that backs onto the other side of the lane is the **Mansion House** – we see more of it in just a moment.

Behind the church is its little churchyard, now dwarfed by the huge modern offices of Rothschild’s, the banking conglomerate that was founded in 1761 and said to be one of the world’s wealthiest companies.

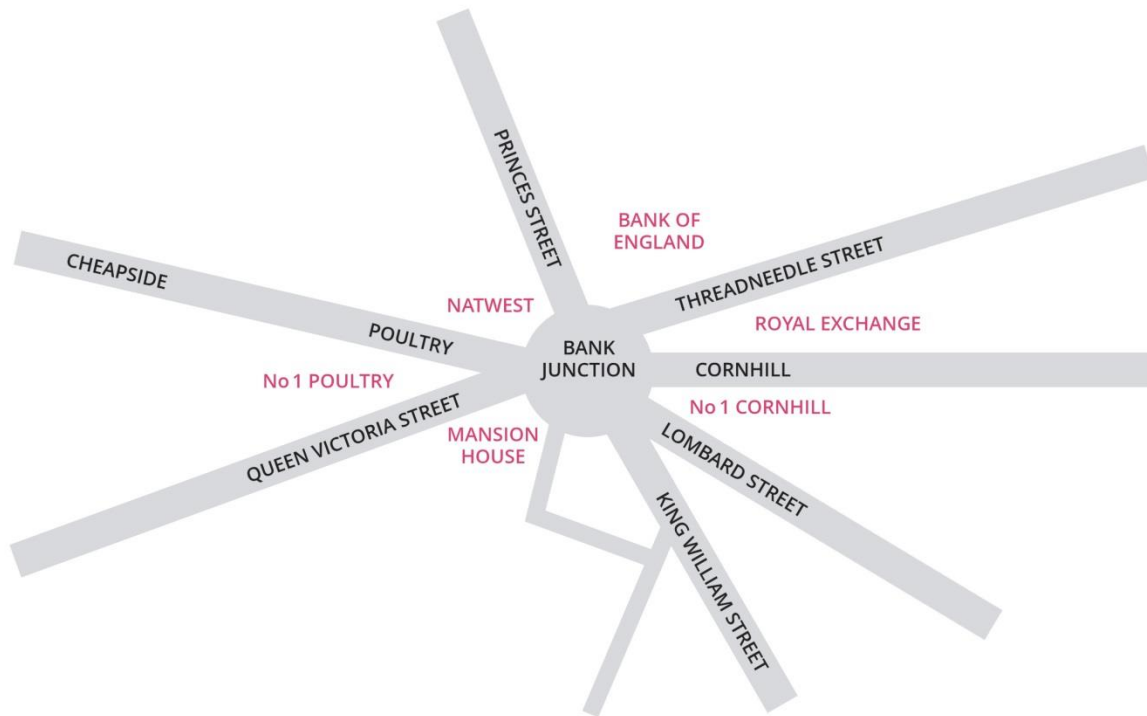
Turn left up **Mansion House Place**, which runs up the side of the Mansion House and at the top is one of the busiest junctions in central London – (or rather would have been until fairly recently when the City Corporation decided to make it ‘bus and cycle’ only and banned private cars and taxis). But first, take a few steps to the left to take a closer look at the Mansion House itself.

At one time the Lord Mayor of London would live and work in the hall of the livery company to which he belonged. However, following the Great Fire in 1666, a ‘mansion’ was built where the Mayor could both live, work and hold official functions. The site was adjacent to the River Walbrook and since 1282 had been a livestock market. It was built in 1752 in the Palladian style that was popular at the time, with steps leading up on either side to a grand portico, fronted by six Corinthian columns. These support a ‘pediment’ with a sculpture of a symbolic ‘figure’ of the City of London trampling on her enemies. Although it’s Grade I listed, I have to say it’s one of my least favourite City buildings.

The Mansion House is still used for important city functions, two of the most well-known being the ‘Easter Banquet’ when the Foreign Secretary makes the principle speech of the evening, whilst in June, the Chancellor of the Exchequer makes his annual speech about the British economy. The building is normally open for public visits once a week, but prior booking is needed.

And if you’ve watched the Netflix series ‘The Crown’, then you’ll like to have seen what it’s like inside, as it’s been used as a stand in for the White House.

I have written a little more about the Mansion House in the **appendix**, particularly about the funding of its construction, as besides being unique it was grossly unfair.



Simplified map of Bank junction

From the top of Mansion House Place, we're going to cross over the Bank junction, where eight streets meet – but before we do, I'll just explain what the buildings are that you can see from here, in case you aren't familiar with the area.

Straight across in front of you is the imposing **Bank of England** on **Threadneedle Street**. To the immediate right of it, between Threadneedle Street and Cornhill, is the unmistakable frontage of the Royal Exchange, which we are going to visit next. Finally, the road branching off on your immediate right is **Lombard Street**. I'll say more about what's on the left side in a moment.

So, cross over Lombard Street and then Cornhill to the little plaza in front of the **Royal Exchange**. The statue in the middle of Cornhill is a memorial to James Henry Greathead, the civil engineer. He took Marc Brunel's invention of the movable tunnelling shield, which he had used to build the first tunnel under the Thames and adapted it to build London's underground network. And the plinth on which the statue stands cleverly disguises a ventilation shaft for the underground line beneath it.

Standing on the little triangular island front of the Royal Exchange, time for another brief orientation. If you look back across the Bank junction, you get a good view of the **Mansion House**. To the right of it is the modern pink and cream distinctively shaped **Number One Poultry** that we saw earlier. To the right of that, on the triangular corner between Poultry and Prince's Street, is **NatWest's** City of London office.

Finally, alongside on your right, is of course the imposing and rather forbidding **Bank of England building**.

The Bank of England was established in 1694 and is the second oldest bank in the world. It's been on this same site since 1734, though much of the original building was demolished during renovation and extensions in the 1920s. Britain's gold reserves – and those of thirty other countries – are stored in vaults deep underneath. There are said to be around 400,000 bars.

You can't visit the Bank itself, but you can visit its small museum which is situated in the adjacent Bartholomew Lane. Admission is free and it's open Monday to Fridays.

I have put more information about the Bank of England in the **appendix**.

But now, back to where we are standing – the most prominent feature is a large statue of the Duke of Wellington mounted on his horse. This commemorates the Duke's assistance to the City of London in ensuring a bill was passed in the House of Commons to allow the rebuilding of London Bridge. Immediately behind it is a commemorative memorial to the City of London Royal Fusiliers. (I find it interesting to read the names of the many City of London's military companies; for example, the 28th Battalion of the Artists Rifles, the 8th Battalion of the Post Office Rifles and the 25th Battalion of Cyclists.)

Provided the Royal Exchange is open then go into the main entrance and take a little look around. In the centre is a Fortnum & Mason bar and restaurant that is surrounded by a number of exclusive shops, whilst the floors above are used as offices.

Having done so, make your way to the rear of the building and leave by that exit.

Note – *If the Exchange isn't open, (i.e. at weekends) then walk around the building to the left and you can pick the walk up as below.*

The history of the Royal Exchange goes back to the 16th century, when Thomas Gresham, a very wealthy merchant, decided London needed a centre of commerce and stock exchange. It was modelled on the Bourses (an early form of stock exchange and a name still used in parts of Europe) on land owned by the City Corporation and the Worshipful Company of Mercers. (Mercers were merchants who dealt in fine fabrics, particularly silks and velvets). And they still own the site – it's hard to imagine what it must be worth today.

The Exchange was a four-storey building surrounded by a piazza with over 100 small shops on its upper floors, and so impressed was Queen Elizabeth I when she visited it in 1570 that she announced it must be called the 'Royal' Exchange. She also granted it a licence to sell alcohol, which it still does, now in the upmarket Fortnum & Mason bar and restaurant in the centre of the building.

The building was badly damaged in the Great Fire of London in 1666 and rebuilt just a couple of years later, which is when it became the centre of a more regulated stock market. The increase in the number of 'unlicensed' brokers, together with the resulting increase in fraudulent trading, resulted in the introduction of more formal rules and regulations, one. The poor behaviour of stock brokers in the 17th century, particularly their 'rude manners', eventually resulted in them being banned from the Royal Exchange and some began to operate from various coffee houses in the area – and even in the adjacent streets – hence why we have both 'Exchange Alley' and 'Change Alley' close by.

Eventually, in 1773, a separate and more formal 'stock exchange' was set up in the nearby Capel Court, which eventually led to the creation of a building called 'The Stock Exchange', which today is situated nearer to St Paul's Cathedral.

Nearly two hundred years later the Exchange was destroyed again, and rebuilt in 1884 the style you see today, with the magnificent Corinthian eight-pillared portico, said to be inspired by the Pantheon in Rome. In place of shops this new building had offices, and the central courtyard was roofed over.

Insurance brokers, many of whom had originally begun their informal trading in the Lloyd's Coffee House, moved to offices in the Royal Exchange in 1774, where they remained until 1908, after which they moved to purpose-built offices in nearby Lime Street. (We see the latest Lloyds building later in the walk). The Royal Exchange finally ceased in its original function in 1939, and the ground floor now houses some very upmarket shops and the restaurant and bar, whilst the upper floors are used as offices.

And a point of interest; the steps outside the front of the Royal Exchange are historically where certain royal proclamations, such as the dissolution of parliament, the death of the monarch and the confirmation of the next monarch's accession to the throne, are announced to the public by a herald.

Leave the Exchange through the exit door at the rear of the building – but just before you walk through the 'vestibule' and into the street, notice the statue of **Abraham Lincoln**. Also, to the left of that there's a door marked 'No 1' which was the office of **Paul Julius Reuter** – this was where he first set up his famous world news organisation. Over a hundred years later Reuters is still providing many of the world's leading newspapers and other media outlets with news stories.

There's a memorial to him in the street outside the exit doors, explaining that he was born in Germany in 1816 and died in Nice, on the French Riviera, in 1899. On the rear of the memorial are details of the Reuter organisation, explaining how it revolutionised news gathering across the world. It's unusual in that it is in a 'raised printer's typeface'. I've put more about it the **appendix**.

We're going to turn to the right along the pedestrianised Royal Exchange – but before we do, look to the left-hand end of the Avenue and you'll see the memorial statue to **George Peabody**.

Peabody was an American multi-millionaire who founded what became the JP Morgan Bank, the largest financial organisation in the USA. He donated around half his wealth to charitable causes and is said to be the 'father of modern philanthropy'. Whilst many of his philanthropic projects were in America, he also became a generous benefactor in London, setting up the Peabody Trust that financed many projects to help the poor of London. The trust built a number of social housing estates that offered 'decent accommodation to artisans and the labouring poor of London'. Most of these are still lived in today, though now renovated and modernised. He was also very keen on education and built a number of libraries and schools. In today's money it is estimated that he gave away almost £150 million.

(And a reminder ... if the Exchange building is closed on the day you visit, then walk around it to the left (with the Bank of England on the other side of the road) – you will see the statue of George Peabody at the start of Royal Exchange – turn right and pick up here.)

At the top of Royal Exchange is a drinking fountain that was originally erected by the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association.

The Metropolitan Free Drinking Fountain Association was inaugurated in 1859, following the example set in Liverpool by the philanthropist and temperance enthusiast Charles Melly, who began to install drinking fountains at his own expense from 1854. Their popularity was such that the London association turned to other sympathetic organisations to help with funding, and some of the most supportive were various evangelical Christian churches, as well as the temperance movement. This resulted in many of the fountains being placed close to public

licensed premises. The success of the fountains was phenomenal – each serving hundreds of homes within the area.

At the same time there was a huge need for water for the thousands of horses that worked the streets of London. In the 19th century, cattle were still driven through the streets of the city *en route* to Smithfield Market and water was also needed for them, as well as the thousands of horses that were essential to moving around the city. The association changed its name to include cattle troughs in 1867.

Although the association stopped providing public drinking fountains in 1936, the charity is still in existence today – as the Drinking Fountain Association – supplying drinking fountains to schools and working on water projects in Third World countries. Their wonderful work was recognised in 2000 when they received a National Lottery grant.

At the end of the road, turn to the right down Cornhill – and still on the water theme, notice the old pump with a sign on it dated 1755. On the other side there is more information explaining that a well was first dug here in 1282.

Turn to the right, then cross over Cornhill and walk down for **just a few yards** before **turning left up Change Alley** (it's just to the right-hand side of the Pitcher and Piano pub, which was once the offices of the Scottish Widows Life Assurance).

This was once a very important part of the City, although it was badly damaged by bombs in the Second World War and so a lot of odd rebuilding has taken place since.

After just twenty yards along Change Alley we turn right at the little 'cross lanes' and follow the passage around to where it emerges into **Lombard Street**.

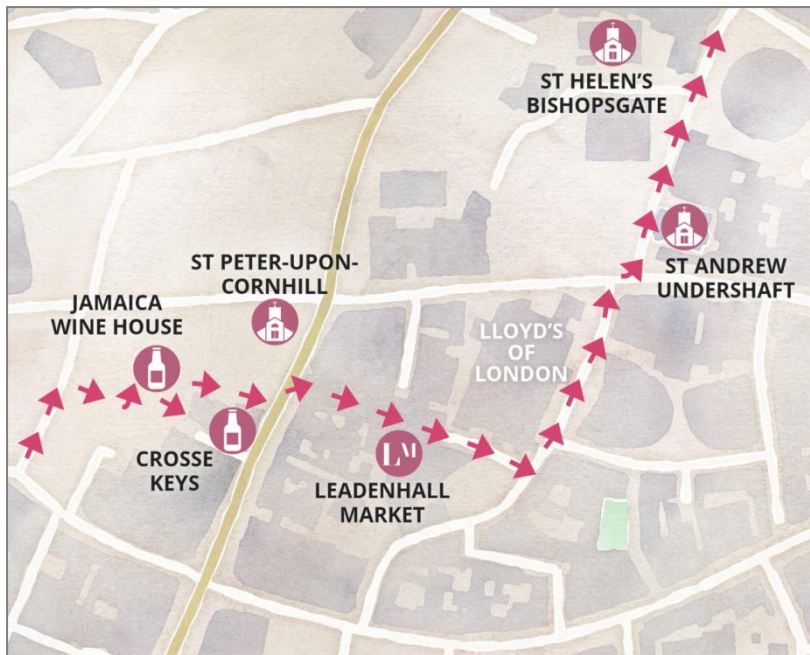
At the 'cross lanes' notice on your right a plaque explaining that this was the site of the Kings Arms Inn, where in 1756 the first meeting of the Marine Society took place.

Opposite you, on the other side of Lombard Street, you'll see a Sainsbury's Local and a plaque on its wall explains that from 1691 until 1785 this was the site of **Lloyd's Coffee House**.

Lloyd's Coffee House was the forerunner of the world-famous Lloyd's of London, an extremely important meeting place for merchants, ship owners as well as sailors. News and information about shipping would be exchanged here and deals struck. Edward Lloyd had a pulpit installed from which maritime auction prices would be announced, and he also began publishing a newspaper containing shipping news and information about shipping insurance. In 1774, merchants who had begun to specialise in insurance, moved to the Royal Exchange that we visited just now.

Turn left up Lombard Street and just a few yards along notice the iron sign hanging above you. In case you aren't sure, it's a grasshopper and was the emblem of Thomas Gresham, one of the City of London's most illustrious citizens, a trusted confidant of Elizabeth I, several times Lord Mayor, successful businessman and generous benefactor. This was both his home and in 1563, became the site of his newly formed **Martin's Bank**. It only closed when the bank was sold to Barclays in the 1960s.

Continue on for seventy-five yards or so then **turn left into Birchin Lane**.



Route map 3

Halfway along, where the sandwich shop protrudes into the lane, **turn right** into the very narrow **Bengal Court** (though before you do notice the sign on the wall that commemorates a Royal Naval officer who was killed here in 1944 whilst trying to prevent a robbery on a jewellery shop.)

When you reach the little modern square, turn immediately to the left, passing the George & Vulture Pub and then after a few yards you reach the 'cross lanes'. (The famous **Simpson's Tavern** is a few yards down the lane on your left.)

In front of you is the Grade II listed **Jamaica Wine House**, which opened in 1652. Although it's been refurbished and – despite its name – it is now more of a pub than a wine bar. The interior has been well-preserved, with several small rooms and plenty of dark wood panelling. Worth a quick look inside if you have time.

The Jamaica Wine House was the first of the famous London coffee houses. The wall plaque says it was 'at the sign of the Pasqual Rosée's Head'. It was known locally as the Turk's Head, probably because Pasqual Rosée, who had set it up, was helped in doing so by a gentleman who traded in Turkish goods and imported their coffee. In the 17th and 18th century, coffee houses were public social places where men would meet for conversation, learn the news of the day and carry out commercial dealings. The diarist Samuel Pepys was one of its early regular customers.

At the little 'junction of the lanes' turn right, passing along the front of the Jamaica Wine Bar and the St Michael's churchyard next to it. Directly ahead are a pair of double wooden doors with a sign to their right that says, '**No. 7 St Michael's Alley**'. If the doors are open, then walk inside – it's the rear entrance to a remarkable Wetherspoon's pub called **The Crosse Keys**.

The original Crosse Keys pub opened in the 1550s and was a very busy coaching inn with around forty coaches arriving or departing each day! Its courtyard was also used by Shakespeare's actors to perform his plays. The pub was destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666. In 1913, the site became the banking hall of the headquarters of the Hong Kong & Shanghai Banking Corporation (now of course, HSBC). More recently it was bought by Wetherspoons who, as usual, have done

an amazing job with the restoration – I love the glass domed roof, the gallery as well as the original signs for the toilets that direct you downstairs to the ‘Ladies & Gentlemen’s Washrooms’.

Leave the pub through the same rear door through which you entered and turn to the right, (the churchyard railings will be on your left) – the short fifteen yards passage will lead you around to the right into **Corbett Court**. Go down the steps then **turn left up another small lane**, alongside the **Bengal Court Restaurant**.

After about ten yards you will see the entrance to another well-known pub – **The Counting House**, now a Fullers ‘Ale and Pie House’. Once again, it’s worth taking a little look in to see how successfully this former banking hall has been preserved and turned into an enormous pub. With its high ceilings, enormous glass domed roof, ornate dark wood, and marble and brass fittings, it really is quite special.

The Counting House was originally a private bank that was founded in 1759 and, whilst I won’t list it all here, (though it may seem as though I have) had what must be one of the longest names of any bank. It started as ‘Dimsdale, Fowler, Barnard & Dimsdales, before merging with a bank from Bath called ‘Prescott, Brymer, Clutterbuck & Co’, and then acquiring ‘Drewett, Fowler and Fowler’. Oh, and in 1850, they entered into a partnership with Amyand, Staples and Mercer. And then somewhere along the way, they also merged with Dimsdale, Cave & Tugwell & Co. However, after all that it eventually ended up as a part of the Royal Bank of Scotland!

Part of the building is on the site of the northern wall of a 2,000-year-old Roman Basilica, part of which was later incorporated into the walls of the bank’s basement strong room. Now a Grade II listed building, it was restored in 1998 by the Fullers Brewery and turned into the Counting House. They won a well-deserved City Heritage Award for their ‘sensitive refurbishment’ of the building. (And if the name ‘Counting House’ seem familiar, then it’s probably because you remember the old nursery rhyme – “The king was in his counting house, counting out his money”)

Leave the pub by the way you went in and walk straight ahead of you.

Note though ... If you didn’t go inside the pub, then simply **turn to the right out of Corbett Court**, and walk down **St Peter’s Alley** – but make sure you now have St Peter’s churchyard on your left.

Notice the raised graves in the churchyard; this was once the burial ground for the parishioners of St Peter’s Church and Charles Dickens refers to it in ‘Our Mutual Friend’, saying how the graves were “conveniently and healthily elevated above the living”. The church was said to have been founded by King Lucius in AD 179, destroyed in the Great Fire and then like so many others in the City, rebuilt by Wren. It’s now used as a study centre to train men and women for the ministry

And when you reach the bottom of St Peter’s Alley, notice on your left the shop called **Ede & Ravenscroft**, ‘robemakers and tailors’, who have been in business here since 1689.

You are now in **Gracechurch Street** – and directly opposite is the entrance into the delightful **Leadenhall Market**, where we head next. The market has been wonderfully preserved with the beautifully restored shop fronts and glass roofed rotunda and I find it fascinating. Whilst I have put some information here, I have written a little more for the **appendix**.

It’s bustling during weekday lunchtimes and in the early evenings when hundreds of office workers flock here for a bite to eat or an after-work drink. Particularly popular is the cheese shop

and bar, whilst next door to it is **Viandas** – one of my personal favourites. They sell excellent Spanish hams and wines. Until recently a couple of doors down, was a pen shop, with fountain pens costing hundreds or even thousands of pounds, but sadly, and I suppose not surprisingly, it has recently closed. Opposite, there's a shop selling fine wines, whilst on the corner is aerr, a Pizza Express! But at least its shop front is in keeping with its historic surroundings.

When you reach the central rotunda, continue walking ahead, passing the **Lamb Tavern** (which was founded in 1780) on the left and on your right the **Reiss** fashion shop.

This takes you into **Leadenhall Place**.

In the film 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone', Harry enters Diagon Alley via the wizarding inn called the Leaky Cauldron. Location shooting was done in Bull's Head Passage, which is just around the corner from Leadenhall Market, opposite the Loch Fyne restaurant. And I have to say, it's definitely not worth looking for – the Leaky Cauldron is now just a modern looking opticians' shop that isn't even in keeping with the rest of the market shops.

Leadenhall Market is at the centre of Roman London and some of it was built over the site of a Roman forum (a meeting and market place), which was part of a huge Roman Basilica and, said to have been the biggest this side of the Alps.

It means there has been a market of sorts here for nearly 2,000 years. In the 14th century it sold poultry, cloth, wool and leather, later also becoming a centre for the sale of meat. Later it also had a monopoly in the City of London for selling leather and cutlery. After the wooden buildings were destroyed in the Great Fire in 1666, it was rebuilt in stone.

A major rebuilding scheme was undertaken in 1881 by Sir Horace Jones, the City of London Surveyor. He took down the old stone buildings and replaced them with the iron and steel construction that you see today. He had also been responsible for designing the Smithfield and the Old Billingsgate Fish Markets.

I've put more information on Leadenhall Market in the **appendix**.

Immediately you've walked past the Lamb Tavern and Reiss, you can't miss on your left the huge and still somewhat 'futuristic' building (although it's been here now for nearly forty years) of **Lloyd's of London**.

We've already seen the site of the coffee house where Lloyd's of London began, as well as the Royal Exchange where the business was based for nearly 150 years. Lloyd's moved to a new building in Leadenhall Street in 1928, and then to a second building in Lime Street in 1958. Although much of that building was demolished, you can still see some of its original façade around the corner in Leadenhall Street.

This new steel-clad building was designed by Lord Rogers and opened by the Queen in 1986. It has similarities with the (then) equally futuristic Pompidou Centre in Paris that Rogers also designed.

It is comprised of three towers, each with their own 'service tower', built around a central atrium. The 'mechanical and circulatory' systems – lifts, pipework etc. – are on the outside. Being 'wrapped' in stainless steel gives it a high-tech, almost post-modern, aesthetic look. The escalators are a stylish part of the interior and cross the divide of the large open atrium, although this is something that is now a feature of a number of buildings.

However, whilst it has been given Grade I architectural status – the highest possible – I have read that Lloyd's have had discussions to exercise a break clause in their lease and move to a new building. One report said that Lloyd's has 'made no secret of its frustrations with its headquarters'there is a fundamental problem with the building, as everything is exposed to the elements which makes it costly to maintain. What is more, as a result of improved technology, Lloyd's apparently now only uses three-quarters of the building, the rest being sublet.

I've put a little more information about the history of Lloyd's in the **appendix**.

Continue past the Lloyd's Building and at the bottom, **turn left into Lime Street**. But as you do, look to the right and in the background, you can see the enormous 39-floor 600 feet high skyscraper that's been nicknamed the '**Walkie Talkie**'. Looking at its shape, you can see why it got that name, though its official (and boring name) is **20 Leadenhall Street**. And I'll just mention here that on its roof is the **Sky Garden** – definitely worth a visit sometime – [check their website](#) for details of how and when you can visit.

Further down Lime Street, you can't miss the new 28-storey office block **Willis Building** (named after its major tenant), which was designed by Sir Norman Foster. To the left is the front aspect of Lloyd's – if you look down to the lower level, you'll see the Lloyd's gift shop – some nice items for sale but generally rather expensive.

The very new building on the right at the bottom of Lime Street is known as '**The Scalpel**', though its official (and once again boring) name is **52 Lime Street**. The reason for its unusual design was simply that the planners wanted to reduce its impact on the view of St Paul's Cathedral from Fleet Street.

Leadenhall Street runs from left to right and just pause for a minute or two here to take it all in – so much development has happened over the past couple of years – and is still happening. It's quite a breath-taking scene, to me more reminiscent of Manhattan than London.

If you look to the left, on the other side of Leadenhall Street, you can't miss the dramatic looking skyscraper 'on legs' with an open plaza in front. Again, nobody seems to bother with its official name of the '**Leadenhall Building**' or '**122 Leadenhall Street**', as because of its shape it has been nicknamed '**The Cheesegrater**'. As with the Scalpel, the design of the building has been dictated by the need to preserve views of St Paul's Cathedral.

Architecturally, I think it is quite interesting, with external escalators leading up to the reception level on the raised ground floor. In that respect it has some similarities with the Lloyd's building opposite – i.e. 'exposed' service facilities and lifts. And talking of lifts, The Leadenhall Building is said to have the fastest lifts in Europe.

Directly in front of you is the large plaza of the older 23-storey and 380 feet high **Commercial Union building** (now called Aviva). It was built in 1969 and is about to be demolished to make way for the new 56-storey **Number 1 Undercroft**. The new building has already been given two nicknames; one being the Diamond and the other The Trellis (both on account of its unusual structural design).

Slightly to the right of it you can't miss the unmistakable shape of the '**Gherkin**', now one of the City's most iconic buildings.

There's a real contrast on the other side of the road as just to the right is the very much smaller and older – and now looking rather incongruous – **Lloyds Bank**. I wonder how much longer it will be before it is demolished and yet another skyscraper erected on the site.

With so many new skyscrapers being built in the City, I have written a few words about the changing skyline of the City of London in the **appendix**.

Cross over Leadenhall Street and walk down **St Mary Axe** to the right of the Commercial Union building. A few yards down on the right is the old church of **St Andrew Undershaft**. Built in the 12th century, it's one of the few churches in the City of London to have survived both the Great Fire and the Blitz. Sadly though, after all that, its beautiful 17th century stained glass windows were destroyed by IRA's bombs in the 1990s – more of which later.

Next to it is **Fitzwilliam House**, which is built on the site of another church – the ancient **Church of St Mary Axe**, which gave its name to both the street and one of the City of London's earliest medieval parishes. It was built around 1230 and demolished in 1561, after which the parish united with St Andrew Undershaft. (And Fitzwilliam? He was one of the City's early mayors.)

And why the unusual names for both churches?

Firstly, St Mary Axe Church (its full name was the Church of 'St Mary Axe, St Ursula and her 11,000 Virgins). According to the historian John Stow in his 1603 'Survey of London', an axe was once hung over the east end of the church. A document dating back to the time of Henry VIII says it was a holy relic, more specifically, "An axe, one of the two that the eleven thousand Virgins were beheaded with". This is a reference to the legend that Saint Ursula, returning to Britain from a pilgrimage to Rome, and accompanied by eleven thousand handmaidens, refused to marry the chief of a Hunnish nomadic tribe they met on the journey and was executed, along with all of her handmaidens.

And 'St Andrew Undershaft'? A huge maypole used to be erected alongside the church each year and was said to have been taller than the church's tower. Maypoles used to be called 'shafts', so the church was built 'under the shaft'. However, in 1547, the maypole was so badly damaged by rioters who felt it was 'pagan and heathen' that it was subsequently broken up.

As you pass **Fitzwilliam House**, look to the left across to the other side of the road and the old stone building you can see behind the Commercial Union Building is **St Helen's Church**, which I mention shortly.

Next on the right is the easily recognisable **Gherkin** building, which opened in 2003. It was nicknamed the Gherkin because of its shape, though I'm not sure it resembles any gherkin I have ever seen. It's been compared to everything from an aircraft engine to a torpedo – but the name Gherkin has stuck. However, its correct but mundane name is '**30 St Mary Axe**'.

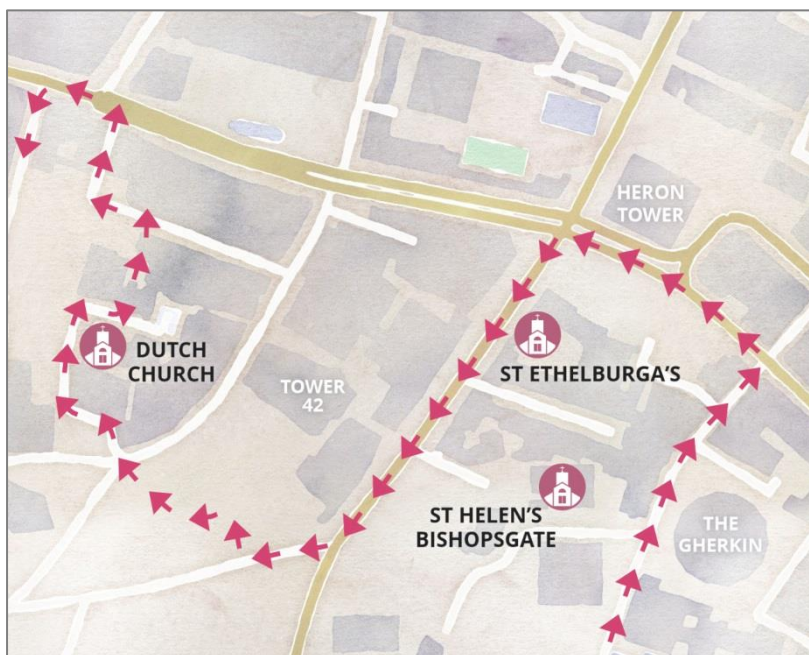
The Gherkin was designed by Norman Foster and said to be an example of what is called 'Neo-futuristic' architecture – it certainly is a different and striking office building. It has a restaurant on the top floor but it's generally only used for pre-booked functions and not normally open to the public.

It was built on the site of the Baltic Exchange and the offices of the Chamber of Shipping, whose buildings were virtually destroyed by an IRA bomb on 10 April 1992. There was pressure to rebuild the Exchange on the same site, particularly as it was the last of the historic 'trading floors' in the City of London, but it was deemed too badly damaged to be repaired and was demolished. Both organisations moved into a new site that we see just a few yards further on.

The swirling pattern on the outside of the building is actually part of the Gherkin's energy-conscious designs and carries pockets of air through shafts that produce a double-glazing effect, drawing warm air out of the building during summer and keeping it in during the winter.

One of the best parts of the building is the panoramic Iris bar and Helios restaurant. The Helix is on the 39th floor and serves modern British food, whilst on the floor above is the Iris (so named because if you were to look down on it then you'd see the top of the Gherkin as a giant eye, with the bar being its iris). Enclosed by glass dome it offers a 360-degree view of the city. For many years it was private, with access only for tenants and their invited guests, but it is now open to the public, though definitely not the place for a cheap drink!

You need to book to get in, which you can do up to five weeks beforehand, and at the time you need to give full details of the name and addresses of the guests, all of whom will need to produce ID when they arrive. Details are available at: <https://searcysatthegherkin.co.uk>.



Route map 4

If you want to visit **St Helen's Church**, then cross over and walk down the road opposite the Gherkin – it's on the right of the ramp to the underground carpark. Its interior is different from that of most churches and worth looking in if you have time (and if it's open – it often isn't).

St Helen's was originally a 12th century Benedictine priory. It was unusual in having two parallel naves – one where the nuns would worship and the other for the local parishioners. In the 1590s this was William Shakespeare's parish church – he lived nearby.

St Helen's was another church that survived both the Great Fire and Blitz, but was badly damaged by both the IRA bomb of 1992 and even more so by the IRA's Bishopsgate bomb the following year. Being Grade I listed, the church was rebuilt to its exact previous specifications and despite the subsequent loss of many of its precious monuments in the attack, it is said to still have more than any other church in London, with the exception of Westminster Abbey – hence its reputation as being the 'Westminster Abbey of the City'. It is the largest surviving parish church within the City of London and renowned for its evangelical services.

Continue on along St Mary Axe, and next to the Balls Brothers wine bar, at No. 38, are the offices of the Baltic Exchange who moved here after their building was demolished by the IRA bombing, when the Gherkin was built on the site it previously occupied.

The **Baltic Exchange** was established in 1774 by members of the maritime industry to provide market information and is today “the world’s only source of maritime market information for the trading and settlement of physical and derivative shipping’. It has six hundred members across the globe who encompass the majority of the world’s shipping. Members are also responsible for a large proportion of all ‘dry cargo and tanker fixtures’, as well as the sale and purchase of merchant vessels.

At the next junction, turn left into **Camomile Street**. From here to the corner of Bishopsgate is currently (2019) a massive construction site. Given the inspiring name of ... hmmm ... **100 Bishopsgate**, it will consist of two buildings, one of which will be almost 600 feet high and have 40 storeys. The second, much smaller building, is being cleverly linked to **15 St Helen’s Place** (in the road behind it), which we see shortly.

You are now at the junction with Bishopsgate, the start of the A10, one of the principal roads leading out from London through Essex to Cambridge before ending in Kings Lynn in Norfolk. (And although not really relevant, I find the background to how the English road numbering system was devised, based on the four major roads that spread out from London, quite interesting and in case anybody else is interested, I have included it in the **appendix**).

Before we turn left down Bishopsgate, I’ll mention the skyscraper office building on the opposite corner. Until recently it was known as the ‘**Heron Tower**’ (though when it opened, the City of London Corporation didn’t like that name and insisted it was changed to the unimaginative ‘**110 Bishopsgate**’. However, everyone continued to call it the Heron, and despite it recently being renamed ‘Salesforce Tower’ – after a huge American technology company that is now one of the major tenants – it is still widely known as the Heron. When it opened in 2011, it was the third tallest building in London, though it’s certainly not now.

The Heron Tower was built by Gerald Ronson, head of his family’s multi-million property group that in the 1980s was the second largest private company in Britain. Unfortunately, things went badly for him – he was arrested in the ‘Guinness Four’ share trading scandal and served a short prison sentence.

For most people the biggest attractions of the building are its two roof top restaurants. The **Sushi Samba** is on the 38th floor with views across the city and is open 24 hours a day. Bearing in mind its location, meals are quite reasonably priced. It is also a bar (though alcoholic drinks aren’t served in the early hours of the morning – in fact not until 9am) The other restaurant is the **Duck and Waffle** that’s situated on the 40th floor and this is more exclusive (and much more expensive, and thanks to its floor to ceiling glass windows has even better views). Excepting weekends, you can often gain admittance to the Sushi Samba without a reservation, certainly to the bar if not for a meal. It has a small outdoor terrace that is pleasant, particularly on a warm evening. The separate express lift to both the bar and restaurants is next to the main entrance, just a few yards up Bishopsgate from where you are standing.

And if you’d like some trivial information, then the building’s lobby contains the largest privately-owned aquarium in Britain. Its ‘triple height’ tank contains over a thousand fish with sixty-five different species. The aquarium has two fulltime ‘fish attendants’, who feed the fish their own, naturally sourced diet.

Turn to the left down Bishopsgate and immediately after the new 100 Bishopsgate building on the corner you'll see a small gate on your left that leads to the rear garden of St Ethelburga's Church – if it's open, perhaps take a look inside. It's another church that has a much longer name – officially it's the Church of St Ethelburga-the-Virgin within Bishopsgate – (St Ethelburga was a 7th century abbess from Barking in Essex).

The earliest records of St Ethelburga's go back to 1250; it was rebuilt around 1411 and although it escaped any serious damage in both the Great Fire of London and the Second World War, it was virtually destroyed in April 1993 by the IRA Bishopsgate bomb which I mentioned just now destroyed the Baltic Exchange and much else.

Although it was one of the biggest bombs the IRA ever used in London, it fortunately happened on a Saturday morning, so although over forty people were injured, only one died. However, £350 million of damage were caused to buildings over quite a wide area. It's easy to forget some of the horrendous IRA terrorist atrocities that took place in London around that time, but fortunately, this was the last of the IRA's major attacks in England.

Following the bombing, the church was rebuilt as closely as possible to its original design and has now become a Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, a multi-faith non-profit charity. Entrance into the church is through the narrow gate that leads into a small courtyard garden. There you'll see a small glass lobby and if you follow the passage to the right, it will take you into the nave of the church. It's certainly not how most people would imagine a church – just bare stone walls, no seats and instead of an altar, there's just a simple table. But it's what's on the table that is so poignant, for it is a book with a page dedicated to the life story of every person who died in the various IRA bombings in London and a different page is turned to each day. As I say, very poignant indeed.

Finally, I will just mention that it was one of the church's rectors, John Rodwell (1843–1900), who was the first person to translate the Koran into English. And I like the quotation from the Koran that's displayed here – “Our God and Your God Are One”. (*Koran 29–46.*)

Continue on down Bishopsgate for just a hundred yards or so until you come to a pair of splendid gates with columns either side. This leads into **St Helen's Place** and although the sign says it's a private road – hence the gates – it is open to the public. The road and the buildings on either side are owned by the **Guild of Leathersellers**, one of the city's ancient Livery Companies which received its royal charter in 1444. The site covers some six acres of what must be some of the most valuable land in Britain. The considerable rental income goes towards the charitable work that the Guild still does to this day.

Towards the rear and on the left of St Helen's Place is the entrance to the restaurants in the seven-storey extension of 110 Bishopsgate, which I mentioned previously.

Cross over at the pedestrian lights and continue walking on down Bishopsgate – you can't fail to notice another huge new skyscraper a couple of hundred yards further down on the left.

Now simply called '**22 Bishopsgate**', it was to have been called the 'Pinnacle' and would have been the second tallest building in both Britain and Europe (after the Shard), but construction halted in 2006 after only seven floors had been built. The site then lay idle for so long that it became nicknamed 'The Stump'. However, after a ten-year gap, the building work recommenced in 2016 with new owners and a revised design. This was a building that was lower and a little 'slimmer', partly to reduce its visual impact, but also because of fears that the height of the cranes needed to construct it would be a danger to aircraft heading for the London City Airport.

It will now be just under 600-feet high and have 37 storeys. Completion is planned for 2020, so probably by the time you are doing this walk it will no longer be an ugly and messy building site.

As you approach the junction where **Threadneedle Street forks to the right**, notice on your right the magnificent **Gibson Hall**.

Back in 1862, the directors of the National Provincial Bank decided to rebuild their head office here in Bishopsgate. The bank had been formed following the merger of three banks – the National, Westminster and Provincial. They asked architect John Gibson to design it; he had previously been the assistant to architect Sir Charles Barry during his rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament.

When it opened in 1865, it was the largest banking hall in London and its intricate detail and design resulted in it being accepted as being the best example of Gibson's work – so much so that it was later renamed Gibson Hall after him. If you look up, you can see the elaborate carved panels set between the columns and the statues on the top. These symbolise the industries and crafts for which the bank and its branches supplied finance; agriculture, commerce, manufacturing, navigation, mining, shipbuilding, science and the arts.

After the National Provincial Bank merged with the Westminster Bank, they relocated much of their head office activities into the iconic Nat West Tower, just a few hundred yards away. Whilst not open to the public, Gibson Hall is now available for hire for weddings, conferences and other events.

We turn to the right up Threadneedle Street and after 50 yards or so turn right through a pair of iron gates into Adam's Court.

The passage takes you past a small 'courtyard garden' – take a look inside as from here you get an excellent view of the 600-foot high **Tower 42**, previously known as the NatWest Tower, where part of the NatWest bank relocated after leaving Gibson Hall.

The NatWest Tower was built in Old Broad Street in 1980 for the bank, though it's now home to a number of other companies and its name has changed accordingly. When it was first proposed as far back as 1964, its design was certainly controversial, being the first such 'skyscraper' in the city. It was badly damaged in the 1993 Bishopsgate IRA bombing, and the renovations and repairs cost over £75 million. There were plans to demolish it and rebuild from scratch, but due to the confined space this would have been both difficult and expensive, so it was decided to renovate it instead. After this had been done, NatWest decided not to re-occupy it and it was sold and subsequently let to other companies.

On the top (42nd floor) there is a wonderful champagne and cocktail bar called Vertigo 42. With an almost 360° view over London, it's one of my favourite places to take visitors to London and really is worth a visit, but you often need to make a reservation. Check their website at <http://www.vertigo42.co.uk/>.

From the garden, **turn to the left down the steps**, pass through the next gate and continue past the Ball's Brothers wine bar – this brings you out into **Old Broad Street**, where there's an old police box on the right.

Almost directly opposite on the other side of the road you will see an archway with the words '**Austin Friars**' carved above it, where we walk next. Go through the arch, follow the lane around and, as the lane bends to the right, notice under the sign 'No.4 Austin Friars', a statue of a

bearded monk holding a book that's set into the wall. Opposite is the 'tradesman's entrance' to the Drapers' Hall, the front of which we see later in the walk.

Austin Friars takes its name from the Augustinian priory that once stood nearby. It was built in 1253 but attacked in the Peasants Revolt in 1381. I like the story that the so called 'Prince of the Humanists' Erasmus of Rotterdam, a Dutch priest, philosopher and theologian stayed in the priory in 1513, but refused to pay his bill, complaining about the quality of the wine he was offered!

At the end of Austin Friars is a **Dutch Church** that was built in 1550, completely destroyed by bombs in the Second World War and subsequently rebuilt. The main entrance is around to the right.

The Dutch Church was the first non-conformist church in England and it has been here since 1550. It's the oldest Dutch-language Protestant church in the world and known in the Netherlands as the "mother church of all the Dutch reformed churches". It offered services to Protestant refugees from the Low Countries (Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg) as well as to others coming from northern Europe. The original building was destroyed by bombs in the Second World War and the church you see today opened in 1954. Inside, you can't fail to notice its simplicity – very different from a traditional Church of England or Catholic place of worship – though there is a splendid stained-glass window.

Opposite the front of the church at No.12, the red-brick building is the **Furniture Makers' Hall**, one of the more recent guilds. Unlike many which go back to medieval times, this wasn't established until 1952 and only received its royal charter in 2013.

The Furniture Makers' Company was set up by the furnishing trade and aims to promote the industry, encouraging young people within it to undertake additional training and study for relevant qualifications. They also give 'marks of distinction' for the best in design and manufacturing each year, as well as providing financial and other assistance to people working within the furniture industry who fall on difficult times. It's supported by all sections of the furniture industry – the major manufacturers, retailers, designers, craftsmen and students. I was surprised to discover it's even actively supported by companies such as IKEA, John Lewis and Marks & Spencer.

Next to the Furniture Makers' Hall (to the right of it) **turn left into Austin Friars Passage** – this takes you into **Great Winchester Street** – and at the top, turn again into the busy street known as **London Wall**.

At the end of the road pass through the large gates (reminding us again the road is privately-owned) and **turn right into Throgmorton Street**. But as you do, look along to your left and notice some of the older and interesting houses on the left-hand side that amazingly survived the bombing raids of the Second World War – something that few buildings in the area did. It's the upper floors and roof gables that I find particularly interesting.

Notice also the faded and worn sign over the door of the first building that says it was once a Lyons Restaurant.

J. Lyons Restaurants were a chain of hugely popular eating places in London for many years and this was their 'flagship'. It opened in 1900 and was the 'celebrated eating place' for the many of the stockbrokers, bankers and insurance brokers who worked in the City of London.

The main dining rooms (there were several) were below ground level and were reached by a marble staircase that was lined with gold mosaic. There was then the wood-panelled 'Oak Room' Restaurant; the 'Long Room' that was the biggest room of all and lined with marble walls and mirrors to give it an even greater feeling of space; a Grill Room and finally the Millionaires Room, where the silk-hatted brokers came for 'long lunches of oysters and champagne' What I found fascinating was that a long pole with a large iron loop at one end was used in this room to lift the top hats of the customers to the highest pegs of the great hat rack!

The restaurant finally closed in 2013 and has been empty ever since, but the last time I walked past (early 2019) there were signs that something may be happening to it.

Continue walking (to the right) along **Throgmorton Street** and ahead of you is the rear of the Bank of England.

This can easily be the end of the walk – in which case simply turn left when you reach **Bartholomew Lane**, which takes you past the Bank of England's museum. At the top turn right and you are back to the **Bank junction**, where you can catch a bus or the tube.

However, if you feel up to just a five- or so-minute extension to explore a couple more lanes, then **turn right** up the side of the Coya Peruvian restaurant **into Angel Court**.

At the top of **Angel Court turn left into Copthall Avenue** and follow it around for about 100 yards, (you'll see a telephone box on your right) and **turn left into Copthall Buildings**.

Continue for just a few yards to where the road bends slightly to the left and where **Telegraph Street** begins **turn sharp left down an unnamed passage**. (If you have got as far as the Telegraph pub then you've gone too far!)

The passage will lead you into **Tokenhouse Yard** – it was built in the reign of Charles I and initially the London home of the Earl of Arundel. As you enter the yard, take a look at No. 12 to the right. Called **Token House**, it was built in 1871 and was originally the head office of merchant bankers, later becoming the offices of Cazenove. They were (and still are) 'upmarket' investment bankers who at the time, were known for their liveried footmen who would meet and greet customers who visited the bank. Notice the lion's heads on either side of the entrance door. The house, whilst no longer their offices, is now Grade II listed.

And the name 'Tokenhouse Yard'? It's because in the 17th century tokens were issued here – they were small coins that were given by traders to customers prior to low denomination copper coins, such as farthings, being available.

At the bottom of Tokenhouse Yard turn right back into **Lothbury**, then passing the rear of the Bank of England on your left. On your right is the Parish Church of St Margaret Lothbury. A board just inside explains that the first rector was 'Reginald the Priest' – in 1181.

Notice **41 & 42 Lothbury**, also on the right – this impressive building was once the headquarters of the Westminster Bank. It's now offices and if you're here on a weekday, it's worth popping in to take a look at what was the magnificent banking hall on the ground floor that has been wonderfully restored. You can't go in very far, but you can certainly see what was the banking hall.

Continue almost to the end of Lothbury – notice the statue of Sir John Soane, the architect of the original Bank of England building – and turn left into **Princes Street**. If you continue to the bottom you reach the Bank junction where there are plenty of buses and tube lines.

APPENDIX TO THE CITY WALK 2

MORE ABOUT THE CITY OF LONDON

As this walk takes place in the City of London, I have begun this appendix with some background and history on the City. I have then written more specific background to some of the City's unique institutions – for example the livery companies and the wards and watch system.

Following this, I continue with my standard format, giving further details about various specific places, events or people that we encounter during the walk for those who'd like more information.

Firstly, a brief overview

The City of London is sometimes said to be unique. It's a city within a city, and a county as well (though not a country as the Vatican is). Indeed, I have actually heard the City of London being referred to as the 'Vatican of the Commercial World'.

Rather uniquely, it is technically not subject to the Crown – nor to Parliament, where it even has its own special 'representative' called the Remembrancer. He or she sits close to the Speaker of the House – and has a similar seat in the House of Lords. They are the only non-MP or civil servant with a seat in Parliament and their job is to ensure that the City's unique rights are maintained, a role that dates back to the time of Henry VIII when the City of London felt he was interfering with their affairs. In practice they do more than that, acting as a channel of communication between the City, Parliament and the Crown.

As a result of not being technically subject to the Crown, the City is the only part of the United Kingdom where the Queen has to ask for permission to enter. When she visits, she's met by the Lord Mayor at Temple Bar, (where the Strand becomes Fleet Street), makes a little bow and asks for permission to enter. The Mayor then in turn hands her the City's Sword of State, which signifies an invitation to enter.

The City is small, measuring just under 1 ¼ acres, yet its influence has for centuries extended across the world – and in financial matters still does. Indeed, until the start of the 20th century it was regarded as being the world's centre of finance, insurance and trade. It is also the country's centre for the legal profession. Much of the wealth of Britain is created and generated through and by the businesses based in the City of London, which has always been known as Britain's principle financial and business centre. And despite the growth of financial industries in places like New York and Hong Kong, it is still one of the world's leading centres. Although over the past twenty years some of the City's financial service industry has moved a couple of miles east to Canary Wharf, the City itself still dominates.

The 'Square Mile'

The map here shows what a compact area it is. And as a matter of interest I'll mention here that the entrance to the City is marked at the boundary on most roads leading into it by a cast iron 'dragon' mounted on a stone or metal plinth. Most are painted silver, with their wings and tongues in red. Examples can be seen at Victoria Embankment, Temple Bar, Holborn, Farringdon, Aldersgate, Moorgate, Bishopsgate, Aldgate, London Bridge and Blackfriars Bridge.

A very brief history of the City of London

I emphasise that this is just my personal interpretation of a very complex story

It's really a 'Tale of Two Cities' and I'll begin by mentioning that whilst most cities have a cathedral – London is made up of two cities and therefore has two cathedrals. The City of London has St Paul's Cathedral, whilst the other is the City of Westminster, which has as its cathedral Westminster Abbey. That's the first of many 'oddities' about London.

Visitors to London – particularly those from overseas – often get confused with the concept of the 'two Londons'. There's the London of Buckingham Palace, the Royal Parks, Oxford Street shops, the West End's theatres, Covent Garden's bars and restaurants, Westminster Cathedral and the Houses of Parliament – and then when they look at a map, they can see a small one-mile square area called the 'City of London', a 'city within a city' that's famous for being a centre of international finance and banking, a place of ancient customs, towering skyscrapers and historic buildings. Then they discover it has its own police force, a mayor who is a 'Lord Mayor' and appointed not in any real democratic way, but by a small number of influential and successful businessmen within the City, completely unlike Sadiq Kahn or Boris Johnson, who are elected by the population at large. And even more strangely, whereas the 'metropolis' of London has a population of over eight million, the City of London's is just a tiny resident population of just seven thousand (in the last census of 2011 – current estimates are that it is now nearer to eleven thousand).

And of course besides all of that, it's a place where even the King or Queen must stop at its boundary to ask permission from the Lord Mayor to enter ...

No wonder visitors can get confused!

And all of this is precisely the reason why I love the City and find walking around it so fascinating.

The City was extensively bombed during the Second World War, which caused widespread damage to many of its historic buildings, (and of course we mustn't forget that much of it had previously been destroyed four hundred years earlier in the Great Fire of 1666) it is still a place of fascinating customs; historic quirky buildings, little ancient alleyways and squares, beautiful churches ... and between my two walks – City Walk One and City Walk Two, we see many of these places.

The City of London is one of Britain's most historic areas. For the past 2,000 years it has been the centre of commerce and trade in Britain – and in the 19th and 20th centuries, much of the world.

The City of London is often referred to as the 'Square Mile', which indeed it almost is; despite its fame and achievements it is just a very small area. It's the oldest part of London and dates back to Roman times. There were probably settlements going back even earlier, but it was the Romans who first built a 'city' here.

Indeed, its size hasn't really changed much since those Roman times. They settled here in AD50, some seven years after they had invaded Britain, creating a city known then as Londinium. They had chosen this particular site to build their settlement as at this point the River Thames narrowed sufficiently to enable them to build a bridge, allowing a connection to be made with their crossing points between Kent and the continent.

The city grew until some ten or so years later (around AD60) it was attacked by Boadicea, the Queen of the Iceni tribes who lived in an area of what today probably includes much of Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Norfolk. She attacked and burnt down Colchester, which was then the Roman capital of Britain, before heading south to destroy Londinium, indiscriminately killing most of the population – locals and Romans alike.

However, displaying the efficiency for which they had become famous, within ten years the Romans had rebuilt the city, larger and more prestigious than it had been before, and made it their capital. In order to protect it, both from British and foreign invaders, they established the boundaries of the city and began building an enormous stone wall around them.

The wall was a mighty undertaking. London is built on clay, not rock, so the stone for its construction had to come from elsewhere, and they chose a 'ragstone' from Maidstone in Kent. Once quarried, this had to be brought by barge around the coast of Kent and up the Thames, in itself a monumental feat, as it is estimated that well over a thousand barge loads would have been needed, as the wall was around 15 – 20 feet high and around 7 or 8 feet thick.

This great defensive wall, much of which wasn't built to its eventual height and width until almost AD180-190, has played an enormous role in both the success and preservation of the uniqueness of London, making it such a fascinating place to explore.

The Roman wall had generally followed the line of existing defences, and incorporated the same gated entrances to the City, with more being added over time. Until at least the 15th century these gates were guarded at all times and locked at night. (The position of some of those gates are recognised today by street names or districts – Newgate, Aldgate, Bishopsgate, Ludgate for example).

Much of the wall has been demolished over time and the stone used in houses and other buildings, but parts of it can still be seen today – for example in the underpass between Tower Hill Tube Station and the Tower of London, or in nearby Coopers Row, at the rear of the 'driveway' entrance adjacent to the Grange City Hotel. The street called 'London Wall' follows the route of the wall westerly for just over ¼ of a mile, though you see little evidence of it. However, there is a particularly good example of it in Noble Street, that's close to the Museum of London and which we walk along in the City of London walk 1.

Defensive walls were also built along the riverside, and again gates were built into it to provide access to the Thames.

Although London had become such an extremely prosperous and prestigious Roman city, with grand public buildings, an enormous amphitheatre and the largest basilica this side of the Alps, all 'good' things come to an end, and by the beginning of the 5th century the Roman Empire was in rapid decline. Rome itself was becoming under threat from invaders from the east of its empire, and with London being its most northerly outpost, its soldiers were withdrawn to help to protect it.

As a result, within less than a hundred years, what had seemingly become a quite magnificent city became virtually abandoned – something I find hard to understand and imagine.

Saxon times

The next 600 years or so, sometimes referred to as the 'Dark Ages', saw the Saxon invaders moving into southern England. By the 5th and early 6th century the Anglo Saxons had begun settling just outside the old Roman city (why they didn't just move into the city the Romans had

built and left, I've never understood). They are believed to have made a base somewhere just slightly north of today's Strand/Fleet Street, which they called Lundenwic. (The Anglo-Saxon word 'wic' meant 'trading town', so it was 'London trading town'.) They based themselves here and built a small harbour as it was adjacent to where the River Fleet entered the Thames.

By the 9th century, the Vikings from Denmark had begun raiding England, particularly on the eastern side of the country, though eventually being defeated by the Saxon King Alfred the Great, who then set about strengthening and in places rebuilding the old Roman fortifications to be strengthened and in places rebuilt.

The Danes (rather than the Vikings) began attacking in the 10th and early 11th century and eventually, in 1016, Prince Cnut the Great (later known as Canute), the son of the Danish King, successfully invaded and became King of England.

By 1100 the population of London was said to be around 15,000 and within two hundred years it had increased to 80,000.

William the Conqueror and the Norman invasion

The Norman invasion in the 1060s saw William the Conqueror's quickly realising the importance of London and he began to redevelop the City, reinforcing the defensive walls that the Romans had built a thousand years before. To make the City of London even more secure, he set about building the Tower of London; its massive size was designed to as much to intimidate and subdue the local population and so prevent any uprising as it was to deter any possible foreign invaders.

In addition, William quickly realised that granting rights and privileges to the City of London, in return for them acknowledging him as King (and paying taxes), made a lot of sense. As subsequent royals have also realised. It is said that since then there's been a thousand-year history of monarchs allowing the City of London to carry on doing what it does best, which is to make money and pay taxes, whilst at the same time distrusting it.

By the beginning of the 12th century, the City of London was granted an important new charter, another step towards its 'self-government'. This included the ability of the City to appoint their own Sheriffs, allow citizens to be tried in their own courts, reduce the taxes the citizens had to pay to the Crown and much more.

The population of London continued to grow, though the 'Black Death' plague in the mid-14th century saw the City lose around half of its population. but as a result of the City of London's political and economic importance – and despite further epidemics – the population continued to rise quite rapidly.

Another major upheaval that had considerable effect on London took place in the middle of the 16th century, when King Henry VIII broke away from the Vatican controlled Roman Catholic Church, founding the Church of England in its place. He brought about the Dissolution and one of its major impacts was that the Catholic church's vast landholdings, monasteries and other religious buildings were commandeered by Henry and his cronies.

Throughout the 15th and 16th centuries the City of London continued to become more successful, with its companies and the Livery Companies (Guilds, which I explain elsewhere) growing in wealth, power and prestige. This commercial success continued throughout the next two or three centuries. Trade with Europe and gradually the rest of the world, continued to grow. The formation of institutions by Royal Charter such as the Muscovy Company and the British

East India Company which eventually ended up controlling most of India, meant that the City of London's fortunes continued to soar.

In December 1664 another disaster hit London when the first fatality of the 'Great Plague' was recorded, and eventually one third of its population died from it. Recent excavations for Crossrail (the Elizabeth Line) construction project have uncovered several of the 'plague pits' where the bodies of victims, dying too quickly for proper burials to be arranged, were thrown.

However, hot on the heels (in more ways than one!) came the Great Fire of London in 1666.

The City's old narrow medieval streets, with houses packed so closely together, meant that the fire was able to spread so quickly and wreak devastation on the City. However rebuilding started almost immediately, but now with far more building restrictions, such as houses spaced further apart and not constructed solely of wood, to try and avoid it happening again.

However, it was thanks to the vision, drive and enthusiasm of people like Christopher Wren that London literally arose out of the ashes. His contribution to the rebuilding of the City was inestimable and he was responsible for the rebuilding of St Paul's Cathedral, and over fifty other churches, preserving at least some of the City's original character. Indeed, just thirty years after the Great Fire it was being said that the 'streets of London were paved with gold'.

By now, the City's success and its subsequent rising population had seen it spreading far beyond its previous boundaries. This growth was partly due to a rapid rise in immigration. Religious intolerance and persecution in Europe saw an influx of Huguenots from France and the Low Countries, many of whom settled in London and brought with them their specialist skills, such as weaving, clock, watch and jewellery making, further contributing to London's financial success and wealth.

By the end of the 19th century London's population was five times larger than it was at the beginning of the century. It had become the most prosperous, populated and influential city in the world. Its companies were trading with countries across the world and it was said that one fifth of the planet was ruled from London. Indeed the East India Company was at the time the biggest trading company in the world and ended up ruling over much of India for many years. Improved mechanisation saw factory output beginning to soar. At the same time transport links were rapidly being developed across the country. The Regent's Canal had opened, enabling factory goods to be brought by barge from the industrial Midlands to London and the docks on the River Thames. Railways were spreading out from London to all parts of the country, again providing more markets for manufactured goods as well as bringing cheaper coal for the newly opened power stations in London, fresher food for City dwellers and much more.

The River Thames and the City's growth

And here I must make a quick mention of the River Thames. Besides acting as the City's southern boundary, there is no doubt that one of the main reasons for the City's success has been the Thames. The Romans had realised the importance of the river and constructed the first quaysides. From the 10th century onwards the loading and unloading of cargoes, and all that goes with it, became the responsibility of companies based within the City, and very profitable it was for many hundreds of years.

Collecting taxes on imported goods – particularly high value cargoes such as spices, tea and coffee – were vital to Britain's official 'coffers' and, by the 16th century, half of England's customs revenue was being collected from cargos being unloaded in London. To ensure none were missed, the government decreed that only 'Legal Quays', where there was a Customs presence,

could be used for this purpose and in 1558 twenty of these quays were licensed between the Tower of London and London Bridge.

However, as the shipping trade continued to rapidly grow, so did the queues of ships waiting to unload. Indeed, the situation became so bad that at times it was said to have been possible to have walked from the north bank of the Thames to the south bank by simply stepping on the decks of the moored ships, all waiting their turn to be unloaded. As this could take days or even several weeks to be done – and some cargoes were of perishable goods such as food – it was becoming a serious problem. In addition, there was the problem of ship owners having their expensive craft sat for long periods not earning any money. All of this resulted in the first of the London Docks being built – but even that wasn't until 1799 (I cover more about this in more detail in the Tower Bridge to Canary Wharf Thames Walk).

But returning to the brief history of the City of London – it would be impossible to cover here the phenomenal growth and success of the City over the next two centuries. On my 'Walk Two of the City of London' we visit a number of significant buildings that were erected in the 17th and 18th centuries – for example the Royal Exchange in 1571; Edward Lloyd's first coffee houses in 1652 (the forerunner of Lloyd's Insurance Company, which was founded 120 years later in 1773); the Bank of England in 1691; the Stock Exchange in 1801 ...

The success of London as a whole, of which the City of London was a significant 'driving' force, can be seen by the amazing growth in population; in 1851 London as a whole had just over 2½ million residents; fifty years later, at the end of Queen Victoria's reign in 1901, it was more than 6½ million.

The 20th century

Jumping forward now to the 20th century – whilst the population of London as a whole continued to rise, the residential population of the City had actually been falling during the latter part of the 19th century. This had been encouraged by the better transport links provided by the early underground train networks, as people began to move further out into the new and expanding suburbs. However, as a result of the continual expansion of the City's commercial and financial businesses, the actual numbers travelling in to work in the City was increasing.

The Second World War

Needless to say things changed rapidly following the outbreak of the Second World War. Destroying London was key to the German's plan to demoralise the people and then invade England. Both the City and the neighbouring docklands and its associated factories were major targets for German bombing raids. Large swathes of the City and the docks and huge areas of the East End were reduced to rubble, reducing the population still further.

In total over 18,000 bombs were dropped on London. From September 1940 to May 1941 bombing raids were almost a daily or nightly occurrence – indeed, with the exception of just one day, there was a period of almost three months when bombs fell on London every night or day. Statistics vary, but it is said that over 30,000 Londoners were killed in the war, with over 80,000 seriously injured and a million houses damaged or destroyed.

By the end of the war the City of London was one of the worst damaged areas of the country. Many residential buildings had been so badly damaged they were demolished, and replaced by new office buildings, thus further speeding up the population decline.

The City of London in the 21st century

The City has always been somewhere that was frantically busy during the working week, with thousands of office workers flooding in every weekday. (Today there are said to be around 400,000 people working here, many in the financial services and insurance industries).

However, few people actually lived in the City so it was a different story in the evenings and at weekends when it would often be virtually 'deserted' and the restaurants, bars and shops closed, so even tourists didn't bother to visit.

I understand that in the last census there were only about 9,000 people registered as living in the City, however, in recent years that is changing, and the population is said to be increasing. 'Mixed use' skyscraper developments, that offer both office space and residential apartments, are being built and perhaps to avoid long commutes, people are moving back in. Whilst some shops and bars still remain closed in the evenings and at weekends, many now stay open, particularly on Saturdays. Fortunately, there are still plenty of streets you can walk around and see little sign of life on a Sunday morning. Perfect for sightseeing, enjoying the atmosphere and taking photographs.

In addition to that, the City is also becoming more popular with tourists as a place to stay as well as visit, and over forty new hotels, offering well in excess of five thousand bedrooms, have either opened recently or will be opening over the next year or so. Whilst room rates are still generally expensive during the business week, they can be surprisingly attractive at weekends and in holiday periods.

How the City of London was, and in many cases still is, run

The Corporation of the City of London

Its official name is the 'Mayor and commonality and Citizens of the City of London' and it's the "oldest continuous municipal democracy in the world". Or to put it another way; "The world's longest established local government authority".

After William the Conqueror had invaded England in the Norman Conquest of 1066, he may have defeated the army, but he wasn't prepared to do battle with the wealthy and prestigious City of London! So, in a Charter the following year, he granted various rights and privileges to the City, its merchants and citizens; many of those still hold good today. Further rights were granted to the City in the Magna Carta in 1215. The City also gained more independence in many areas from the Crown – too much money was being created by the City for them to dare to interfere.

There had been a form of organised 'government' in the City as far back as Saxon times, but this gradually became more formalised and by 1265 the Aldermen began to consult with a group of forty 'wise and discreet' citizens on various matters. The City had already been divided into wards and between one and four from men from each was selected. From 1376, this group had become more formalised and became known as the 'Common Council', which is still the vital part of the City's government. (I mention the Wards again shortly).

The structure of the Corporation of London is still the same as it has been for many hundreds of years. At the top is the Lord Mayor, followed by the Court of Aldermen, The Court of Common Council and the Freemen and Livery of the City.

The Lord Mayor, who serves a one-year term of office, is chosen by fellow members of the Court of Aldermen. Whilst the role is largely ceremonial these days, it is still prestigious, though

the Lord Mayor is expected to work extremely hard, which I explain more about next). And of course, it is important not to confuse the Lord Mayor of the City with the Mayor of London, a political post, who is elected by residents of the whole of London. There have now been nearly seven hundred Lord Mayors of the City since the role was established in 1687.

Alderman and Councilmen stand for election in each of the twenty-five wards, (more on those later), each ward being an electoral division. Residents and businesses based in the City are entitled to vote.

The Court of the Aldermen is chaired by the Lord Mayor and meets eight times a year.

The Court of Common Council is the primary decision-making body, and usually meets every month. As with any local authority it primarily works through committees but is unique in that it is non-party political.

The Role of the Lord Mayor of London

Whilst the Lord Mayor's primary responsibility is to represent the City of London, it would be fairer to say that it actually means representing the City's financial services sector – the banks, insurance companies, stock brokers ... all of which are both the power house of the City as well as that of the country.

During their year in office the Mayor would often be attending between five and eight functions a day; they would make around eight hundred speeches in a year. The Mayor is also expected to travel extensively during their year of office. They would usually be abroad on official business for around a hundred days of the year.

The Mansion House

This is the official home of the Lord Mayor for the year they are in office. It was built in 1752 by the architect George Dance the Elder and the Palladium-style building is now Grade I listed. Outside, its six Corinthian columns support a pediment that has as its centre piece a 'symbolic figure of the City of London trampling on her enemies'.

The most famous room, used for lavish receptions, is known as the 'Egyptian Room', on account of its marble columns

Besides the rooms used for hosting official functions, the Lord Mayor has his or her private apartments, and there are a further twenty bedrooms for staff and guests.

Some of the official functions are quite magnificent and politically very important. The 'Easter Banquet' has as its main speaker the current British Foreign Secretary, whilst the white tie dinner has as its principle guest and main speaker the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who uses the opportunity to talk about the British economy.

Interestingly, as the Lord Mayor was at one time also the City Magistrate, the Mansion House also had the courthouse within the building and there were twelve cells, eleven for male prisoners and one for women, in the basement. One of the more famous prisoners was Sylvia Pankhurst, who was held here on charges of sedition in 1930. The Magistrates Court is now in an adjacent building.

... and how the building of the Mansion House was funded ...

I must just make mention here about the way in which the building of the Mansion House was funded. It was truly as unique as it was grossly unfair and actually rather wicked.

At the time there were a number of 'dissenters' living in London. These were people who opposed state interference in religion and turned their backs on the Church of England and Catholic Church. Many refused to take the Sacrament, a fundamental part of both church's worship.

So, in order to raise the money for the building, the City authorities decided to only select 'dissenters' to stand for election as a Sheriff of the City of London. They did this because they knew the rules said that to be a Sheriff you had to have taken, and continue to take, the Church of England's Sacrament – something they knew they wouldn't be able to do.

At the same time, they brought in a new 'law' that said anybody who refused to stand for election to Sheriff would be subject to a huge fine, in today's money equal to many thousands of pounds. And in so doing they systematically ruined a lot of people and raised enough money to build the Mansion House.

Guilds and Livery Companies

The majority of the City of London's Livery Companies evolved from the medieval guilds that were to be found in many of the leading cities of Europe. Guilds are said to go back as far as Saxon times – groups of men from the same trade, would 'adopt' a local church, taking that church's Saint as their patron. They gradually changed from being mainly religious fraternities into organisations that would regulate the trade or craft that the 'members' were involved with. Some people have referred to them as a medieval version of today's employer's associations and trading standards officers!

Realising that having some sort of official 'recognition' by the Crown would give them more authority, they began to apply for 'Royal authorisation' and by 1180 some were even being fined by Henry I for not having sought it. The Crown had quickly realised the benefits of working with these guilds. After all, they were generally made up of clever, skilled and hardworking men, many of whom were amassing considerable amounts of money – which of course Kings (and Queens) always needed more. So in return for paying taxes and making loans to the Crown, the Guilds, as they were by then officially known, demanded to be given various powers, usually connected to having the ability to restrict and supervise their particular trade or profession. This enabled them to do such things as limit the numbers able to trade or practice, prevent cheaper or inferior goods being imported from elsewhere in the country as well as from abroad, set prices, wages and ensure quality by setting up training schemes and apprenticeships. They also had to subscribe to a code of conduct. For example, any merchandise they sold had to be of a certain quality – butchers couldn't sell rancid meat nor could bakers sell mouldy bread.

During the 14th century, members of different Guilds began to wear their own distinctive 'livery', or costumes, thus distinguishing themselves from other guilds. That was quite simply how the name 'Livery' companies came about and these uniforms or costumes evolved into a form of ceremonial dress, unique to each guild, that are still worn today at official events.

Throughout the 15th and 16th centuries the City of London thrived, as did the Livery Companies who were playing a vital role in its success and with the wealth they were creating they began to build elaborate headquarters, known as 'Halls', as they are still known today. These were often quite magnificent and elaborate buildings but sadly, many were destroyed as a result of

bombing raids during the Second World War. However, nearly forty are still in existence and are often quite magnificent buildings that are elaborately furnished. We see a number of them in the City of London Walk 1, and some do occasionally open their doors to allow the public to have a look around – many do this on the annual London ‘Open Door’s weekend each September.

By the 16th century, control of the Guilds, or Livery Companies, as they had then become known, passed from the Crown to the Lord Mayor of London and his Aldermen.

As the Livery Companies increased in prosperity, they became increasingly protective of their own status (or perceived status) within the City. Huge rivalry began to develop between them as to which was the most important and a particular aspect of this was the ‘order of precedence’. Quite simply, this was the order in which each Livery Company would take part in ceremonial events like the Lord Mayor’s or royal processions through the City. Things got so bad that at times it could even result in violence. However, it was the Lord Mayor and Court of the Aldermen that again ruled on this, basing their decision on the size, strength and importance of each Company at that time – and although it was as far back as the early 16th Century, the rules they set for ‘precedence’ still hold to this day.

And in case you might be interested, the Order of Precedence is –

1. Worshipful Company of Mercers (general merchants)
2. Worshipful Company of Grocers (spice merchants)
3. Worshipful Company of Drapers (wool and cloth merchants)
4. Worshipful Company of Fishmongers
5. Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths
6. Worshipful Company of Skinners (fur traders) *
7. Worshipful Company of Merchant Taylors (tailors) *
8. Worshipful Company of Haberdashers (clothiers in sewn and fine materials – e.g. silk)
9. Worshipful Company of Salters (traders in salt and chemicals)
10. Worshipful Company of Ironmongers
11. Worshipful Company of Vintners (wine merchants)
12. Worshipful Company of Clothworkers

*** There was even a ‘battle’ between the Skinners and the Merchant Taylors for the sixth place, eventually resolved by allowing one to be in sixth position one year and the other the seventh, which would be reversed the following year ... hence (it is often said) the expression we still use today: ‘being at sixes and sevens’.*

The whole list of the present 110 Livery Company’s in London is actually quite fascinating, but too long to list here.

And in case you are wondering about the ‘Worshipful Company of ...’ – this is how they are formally referred to. As far as I can make out nobody seems to know where the ‘worshipful’ came from – it was probably just because they thought that by putting ‘worshipful’ in front of Company it made themselves sound more important.

The social and economic conditions that gave birth to the old guilds have long since gone and their role now is often ceremonial, having little or no control over the trades they once represented. However, some still have regulatory or statutory functions: for example, the Goldsmiths and Fishmongers. Most now concentrate on their charitable work (over £50 million a year is given by these companies to charity), whilst some still support the modern equivalent of their past trades. For example, the ‘Horners’, a livery company that goes back as far as 1284 and

who carved and fashioned horns for used for a variety of purposes, from carrying liquids through to musical instruments, now support the modern plastics industry by encouraging educational and training schemes.

More modern Companies cover trades and professions that didn't exist in earlier times, such as the Air Pilots and Navigators and the Information Technologists.

Livery companies often became exceedingly wealthy bodies – so much so that they were able to take care of their members in ill-health and old age. Some set up their own schools and a few of these are still in existence today – e.g. The Stationers Crown Woods Academy and the prestigious Haberdashers School.

These days much of the great wealth they accumulated has gone, (though some have significant property holdings, especially in London) but as a result of their longstanding investments they are still able to do much charitable work.

In the past, 'Liverymen' would have started as apprentices in their respective trade or profession and upon finishing their apprenticeship they became 'Freemen of the City of London' – free from being an apprentice and with many privileges, which I explain more about next. (However, the sons of wealthy people would sometimes buy their way into a Livery Company, and in some cases, it was an honour bestowed on them at birth.)

Freeman of the City

In the 13th century a Freeman was exactly what the name implies – 'free' and not the property of a feudal lord. You could own land and make money as you wished. To carry on a trade within the City of London you would have had to have been a Freeman. Indeed, this was the case right up until Victorian times.

Being a Freeman had many privileges – and I must mention one that still holds good today. A Freeman could 'drive sheep and cattle' over London Bridge without paying a toll, therefore making a higher profit at market. Each year there is a ceremony when Freemen are invited to do just that! Normally held at the end of September, hundreds turn out to see the Freemen 'driving their sheep' across the bridge – in 2018 the procession was led by TV presenter Alan Titchmarsh. And the event also raises significant money for charity.

Some other privileges seem rather dubious. For example, Freemen arrested for capital offences such as treason or murder could request to be hung using a silk rope rather than a rough hessian rope that was used for the lower classes.

Another privilege was that they could carry their swords drawn, to protect themselves against thieves, something they are unlikely to do today. They were also exempt from the press gangs that would roam the city, particularly near the docks, looking for 'volunteers' to be 'pressganged' into naval service. And one privilege that could still be useful today is the right to be drunk and disorderly and be afforded a safe passage home!

These days, anybody who has been on the electoral list for the City of London may apply to become a 'Freeman of the City', though you must be nominated by two 'Councilmen, Aldermen or Liverymen'. However, people who have made a significant contribution to public life can be granted an 'Honorary Freedom', the highest honour the City can bestow. Some famous Honorary Freemen include Benjamin Disraeli, Winston Churchill, Margaret Thatcher, Nelson Mandela, Florence Nightingale, Presidents Eisenhower and Roosevelt, Princess Diana – and more recently JK Rowling, Mary Berry and Dame Judy Dench.

Wards and watchmen of the City of London

Firstly the 'wards' – By 1550, the City of London was divided into twenty-five Wards and men from each would have to take it in turns to act as 'Watchmen' for a year, in addition to their normal work. These wards are still in existence throughout the City of London today, and as you walk around you will see signs on the walls of churches and other public buildings telling you which Ward you are in.

Each Ward, which were also known as Aldermanries, still returns up to two aldermen (depending on its size) to the Court of Alderman and each year one of these is elected as the Lord Mayor of the City of London. Wards also have 'Beadles', an ancient ceremonial office who accompany the Alderman on the various ceremonial occasions in the City.

The Wards are still used by the police for day to day policing, with each one having a constable assigned to it.

And watchmen ... The term 'watchman', who were the forerunners of today's police and fire service, goes back to biblical and then Roman times. They were men who would keep watch for untoward behaviour or events – whether invaders, criminals or a fire breaking out – and who would then either deal with the problem themselves or summon help from others. In England a statute in 1285 by King Edward reads ...

"... and the King commands that from henceforth all Watches be made as it hath been used in past times that was from the day of Ascension unto the day of St. Michael every city by six men at every gate, in every borough by twelve men in every town, by six or four according to the number of inhabitants of the town. They shall keep the Watch all night from sun setting unto sun rising. And if any stranger does pass them by them he shall be arrested until morning and if no suspicion be found he shall go quit."

STANDARD APPENDIX

'A REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN'

I mention in the walk that in Wood Street, just off Cheapside, there's a tiny 'garden' that occupies what was once the churchyard of 'St Peter Cheap'. The church had been built in 1196 but was destroyed in the Great Fire of London and never rebuilt. It was in this churchyard that in 1791 William Wordsworth once stood and listened to a bird singing in the tree (I doubt it's the tree that's still there today!) and wrote the poem entitled 'A Reverie of Poor Susan', that recalls the memories awakened in a country girl in London on hearing a thrush sing in the early morning.

At the corner of Wood Street, when daylight appears,
There's a Thrush that sings loud, it has sung for three years:
Poor Susan has pass'd by the spot and has heard
In the silence of morning the song of the bird.

'Tis a note of enchantment; what ails her? She sees

A mountain ascending, a vision of trees;
Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.

Green pastures she views in the midst of the dale,
Down which she so often has tripp'd with her pail,
And a single small cottage, a nest like a dove's,
The only one dwelling on earth that she loves.

She looks, and her heart is in Heaven, but they fade,
The mist and the river, the hill and the shade;
The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
And the colours have all pass'd away from her eyes.

Poor Outcast! Return — to receive thee once more
The house of thy Father will open its door,
And thou once again, in thy plain russet gown,
Mayst hear the thrush sing from a tree of its own.

The last stanza was omitted from all but Poor Susan's earliest appearances, for reasons discussed in [the poem's Wikipedia article](#).

THE BANK OF ENGLAND

Established in 1694, it is the second oldest bank in the world (a Swedish bank is the oldest). Until it was nationalised at the end of the Second World War it was still a private bank with shareholders.

It's been on this same site since 1734; the building you see today having been designed in stages by several architects, most notably Sir John Soane – a fascinating character who was a great collector of eclectic 'objects. His house in Lincoln's Inn Fields has been turned into an eccentric museum (See my Holborn walk for more details).

The Bank of England was regarded as being an architectural gem and 'revered worldwide for its spectacular use of natural light and mesmerising effects of scale'. Sadly, in the 1920s, much of that building was demolished whilst renovations and extensions were taking place, an act that the architectural historian and writer Nikolaus Pevsner says "was one of architecture's greatest losses" – a view shared by many. (And a point of interest for Bristolians – the design of the Commercial Rooms in Corn Street, built originally as a gentleman's club and meeting place for businessmen and now a Wetherspoons pub – was greatly influenced by the design of the Bank of England – its architect was a pupil of Soane's.)

Underneath the bank are the massive vaults that contain Britain's gold reserves (or what remains of them since Gordon Brown flogged them off) as well as those of thirty other countries. There are said to be over five thousand tons of gold – around 400,000 bars. The keys to open the vaults are three-feet-long – so you'd need rather large trouser pockets to carry them around. And a little-known fact: the largest bank notes that are kept in the bank are called Titans – A4 sized and each worth £100 million.

You can't visit the Bank itself, but you can visit its small museum that's situated in Bartholomew Lane, down the right-hand side. Admission is free and it's open Monday to Fridays.

MONUMENT TO PAUL REUTER

On the rear of the memorial to Reuter, it explains:

The supply of information to the world's traders in securities, commodities and currencies was then and is now the mainspring of Reuters activities & the guarantee of the founder's aims of accuracy, rapidity and reliability. News services based on those principles now go to newspapers, radio & television networks & governments throughout the world. Reuters has faithfully continued the work begun here. To attest this & to honour Paul Julius Reuter this memorial was set here by Reuters to mark the 125th anniversary of Reuters foundation & inaugurated by Edmund L de Rothschild^{TD}. 18.10.76

LEADENHALL MARKET

There is said to have been a market of sorts here since Roman times and evidence of it was discovered in the 1880s when, during rebuilding, workers discovered one of the supports of stone arches, and subsequent excavation revealed that this was part of the biggest basilica in northern Europe; the arches being supports for the arcades. These remains are housed in the basement of a barber's shop at the corner of Gracechurch Street and Leadenhall Market. (More recent development work at 21 Lime Street has uncovered further Roman remains.)

However, the first real records show that by 1321 it was an established meeting place of the Poulterers (merchants selling poultry and game) whilst the Cheesemongers began bringing their produce to the market from 1397. It was then based in a series of courts behind the grand mansion of Neville House on Leadenhall Street.

In 1408 the former Lord Mayor Richard 'Dick' Whittington acquired the lease of the building, and shortly afterwards bought the land as well. It soon became one of the most popular places in London to buy fish, meat, poultry and game. The site grew in importance and a granary and even a chapel were built to cater for those visiting the market.

A few years later it was decided that the market was to be the only place in London where leather could be sold. Two hundred years later, in the 17th century, it was decided that Leadenhall Market was the only place in the City where cutlery could be sold.

In 1666 parts of the market were damaged in the Great Fire of London and it was subsequently rebuilt, this time with a covered roof and divided into three sections – a Beef Market, the Green Market and the Herb Market.

The market underwent a major transformation in 1881 when the Corporation of London authorised Horace Jones, who had already rebuilt Smithfield and the Old Billingsgate Fish Market, to do the same with Leadenhall. The earlier stone structure was replaced with the wrought iron and glass roof buildings that we see today, and which now have a Grade II listing.

A further restoration took place in 1991 and since then it has become a popular area for a selection of unusual shops and attractive places to eat.

Bearing in mind how picturesque the market is, it's hardly surprisingly it is popular as a film location, including scenes in several Harry Potter films, Lara Croft: Tomb Raider and Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy.

And I'll add here a little about 'Old Tom'. During the early 19th century he became the most celebrated character in the market. He was a gander (a male goose) who had come from Ostend to England as a result of his fascination with one of the lady members of his flock who was being shipped from Belgium to London for slaughter in the market. It is recorded that over two consecutive days, 34,000 geese were slaughtered in the market, but Old Tom managed to escape execution. As a result, he quickly became a local 'hero', a great favourite of the workers in the market and even a regular customer in the local inns, where he was fed titbits. He died in 1835 at the formidable age of 38 and, after lying in state in the market grounds, he was buried there.

Old Tom's fame was such that his obituary even made it into *The Times* newspaper. It was published on 16 April 1835 and read –

In memory of Old Tom the Gander

Died 19th March, 1835, aged 37 years, 9 months, and 6 days.

This famous gander, while in stubble,
Fed freely, without care or trouble:
Grew fat with corn and sitting still,
And scarce could cross the barn-door sill:
And seldom waddled forth to cool
His belly in the neighbouring pool.
Transplanted to another scene,
He stalk'd in state o'er Calais-green,
With full five hundred geese behind,
To his superior care consign'd,
Whom readily he would engage
To lead in march ten miles a-stage.
Thus a decoy he lived and died,
The chief of geese, the poulterer's pride.'

THE ROMAN BASILICA

I have mentioned the Roman Basilica* that part of Leadenhall Market was built upon, so I thought a few words of explanation might be helpful.

Little was known about it until the construction of the present Leadenhall Market in the 1880s, when they discovered one of the supports of the many arches it had ... in the basilica's arcades. These remains are housed in the basement of a barber's shop at the corner of Gracechurch Street and Leadenhall Market. More recent development work at 21 Lime Street has uncovered considerably more.

The basilica was originally built in AD70 and enlarged between AD90 and AD 120. It was certainly big – said to be the biggest ever built in Britain – and though not so high (around three storeys) its site was bigger than the present St Paul's Cathedral, covering nearly two hectares. It was said to have been the biggest Roman basilica in Northern Europe.

It was eventually destroyed some two hundred years later by the Romans themselves as a punishment for the City supporting the 'rogue' Emperor Carausius.

* A basilica was a civic centre, with the offices of all the City's officials and included an assembly hall, law courts, the treasury etc.

LLOYD'S OF LONDON

Lloyd's is the largest insurance broker in the world and has been in existence for nearly 320 years. Multiple financial backers, known as 'Names', or corporations, join together here to pool and spread insurance risks. It is reckoned by many to be the 'safest place in the world' to trade in what can be the enormous insurance premiums of paid by international businesses and organisations.

As I've written elsewhere, it started in 1688 in Edward Lloyd's coffee house in the City, a popular place for sailors, merchants and ship owners. Edward would pass on to them reliable shipping news gleaned from his customers and a variety of other sources. As a result, ship owners, merchants, ship's captains etc. would meet here and amongst things they would discuss was insurance.

This continued after Edward died in 1713, but then in 1774, members of the informal insurance 'arrangement' that had been formed moved to the Royal Exchange.

Unfortunately, many of the valuable and now historic early records of Lloyd's were destroyed in the Royal Exchange fire in 1838.

An Act of Parliament in 1871 gave Lloyd's a more formalised legal structure as did a further act in 1911.

THE BALTIC EXCHANGE

The beginnings of the Baltic Exchange go back to 1744. Coffee houses had become important places for merchants and ship's captains to meet to exchange news, and eventually do business and the original exchange set up in the 'Virginia and Baltick* Coffee House' in Threadneedle Street. It led to the formation of an actual 'exchange'.

** This was the correct spelling at the time*

There used to be a trading floor, similar to the Stock Exchange's, but now most of the trading is done by telephone.

The exchange provides daily market prices and maritime shipping costs that are used by freight traders across the world and up to seven 'Indexes' are published.

ST ETHELBURGA THE VIRGIN CHURCH – and the IRA bombing of Bishopsgate

At 10.27 on the 24th April 1993 one of the biggest IRA bombs ever to be detonated in Britain exploded in Bishopsgate.

It had been placed inside a stolen tipper truck that was parked outside the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank at 99 Bishopsgate. Most buildings within a 500-yard radius were extensively damaged, including the NatWest Tower (now Tower 42) and even Liverpool Street station.

Fortunately, it was a Saturday and only one person was killed, though forty-four were injured, and £350 millions of damage was caused.

A year before the IRA had planted a bomb just a few hundred yards away outside the Baltic Exchange in St Mary Axe that killed three and injured 91. Following that attack the police introduced what was called a 'Ring of Steel' that surrounded the City of London. Manned barriers were erected at all the roads entering the area and police were routinely armed.

The Bishopsgate bomb was the last major attack on British soil by the IRA.

Unfortunately, one of many major victims of the blast was St Ethelburga's, a Grade I listed medieval church that had survived both the Great Fire and the Blitz. Sadly, the blast from the bomb virtually destroyed the church. It has been rebuilt and is now a Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, a multi-faith non-profit charity that runs conferences and training courses to bring together people from different parts of the world and different religions to encourage both understanding and forgiveness.

LONDON SKYSCRAPERS

I have mentioned new skyscrapers in several places during the walk, as they seem to be popping up all over the place. As of 2018 there were 510 tower blocks over 20-storeys high planned for Greater London, of which construction had already started on 115.

One of these is going to be 'One Leadenhall Street', a 36-storey, 600 feet high office block that is planned to be finished in 2021. It's attracted considerable criticism from conservation, environmental and historical charities and organisations for its size and design, particularly as it will overlook the roof of the adjacent Grade II listed Victorian Leadenhall Market. It is replacing a 1970s seven-storey office block.

However, it will be dwarfed by Number 1 Undershaft, a 73-storey skyscraper nicknamed The Trellis - which will be the second tallest building in Europe after the Shard.

At 22 Bishopsgate they are building the 'Pinnacle', which when it's completed will be the tallest in the City of London at 59-storeys - 278 metres (over 900 feet high). It was originally going to be 62-storeys, but there were concerns that the height of the cranes needed to build it would cause problems for aircraft heading for the London City Airport.

A list of the City of London's tallest buildings (as at end 2018 - and I have included the Shard and One Canada Square, which are outside of the City) looks like this -

1,016 ft (310m) **The Shard** - built - 95 floors
951 ft (290m) **1 Undershaft** (known informally as 'The Trellis'), due to its external cross bracing - building about to start - 73 floors - replaces the Aviva Tower, that was built in 1969
912 ft (278m) **22 Bishopsgate** - under construction 62-floors
826 ft (263m) **The Diamond** - (100 Leadenhall Street) - construction about to begin - 56 floors
770 ft (235m) **One Canada Square** - 50 floors, built in 1998 in Canary Wharf
770 ft (235m) **Spire London** - under construction
764 ft (233m) **Landmark Pinnacle** - under construction
757 ft (231m) **Heron Tower** (110 Bishopsgate) - 46 floors - built
738 ft (225m) **The Cheesegrater** (The Leadenhall Building) - built
623 ft (190m) **The Scalpel** (52 Lime Street) - 39-floors - built
597 ft (183m) **1 Leadenhall Street** - 38 floors - under construction
593 ft (181m) **100 Bishopsgate** - 40 floors - under construction
590 ft (180m) **The Gherkin** - (St Mary Axe)- built - 40 floors

However, the City's latest skyscraper could be a giant tulip. Foster + Partners, the architects behind the Gherkin, have submitted plans to build the tallest structure in the City of London, and just a fraction shorter than the Shard, currently Britain's tallest building.

Apparently, this would be more of a 'novelty' skyscraper, possibly better described as an 'observation tower' whose design has been said to resemble a 'fungal growth, like a fruiting body laden with spores'. In other words, perched on the top of the narrow tube-like tower is what could be considered a miniature Gherkin – though it's being called a 'tulip' instead.

The planning application includes a public roof terrace, restaurant, bar and viewing gallery.

And where would it be built? Actually, next to the Gherkin itself!

Finally, a spot of trivia

THE ROADS LEADING OUT FROM LONDON

I mention in the walk how many A-roads spread out from London. To add to that, I'll mention something that not many people are aware of, yet it can be quite useful.

All 'A roads' that are numbered from 1–11 start in London but are in 'quarters' – so using a clock face as an example, between 12.00 and 3.00 (in other words from points north to east), all 'A' roads leading out from London begin with the number '1'.

Those leaving London from '3.00 to 6.00' (from points east to south) begin with a '2'.

From 6.00 to 9.00 (points south to west) they begin with a 3.

And ... yes, you've got it ... from 9.00 to 12.00 with a '4'.

Hence the four principle four roads out of London are the A1 to the north, the A2 that leads to Dover in Kent, the A3 to Portsmouth and the A4 to Bristol.

And within these 'quarters', the 'lesser' A roads will also start with the relevant number ... so between the A1 and the A2 you have the A12, A13 etc.

And most other roads within each of those 'quarters' will also begin with the same number – i.e. most A roads in the southeast of England have a '3' as their prefix whilst those in the west with a '4'. So, in the West of England most 'A' roads begin with a '4' – i.e. A46, A412, A420 etc.