

LONDON'S HIDDEN SECRETS

VOLUME 2

Discover more
of the City's
Amazing Secret
Places

Graeme Chesters & David Hampshire

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Discover More of the City's Amazing Secret Places

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Survival Books • Bath • England

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NOTE

Before visiting anywhere mentioned in this book, it's advisable to check the opening times, which are liable to change without notice.



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Introduction

London has a fascinating and turbulent 2,000-year history, during which it has been burnt down several times, rebuilt, bombed in two world wars and rebuilt again. Despite, the ravages of time and conflicts (and developers!), the city has enough world-famous attractions to keep the average visitor or resident occupied for a month of Sundays. These are more than adequately covered in a wealth of standard guide books; what **London's Hidden Secrets** does is take you off the beaten path – side-stepping the city's tourist-clogged major sights – to seek out its more unusual charms and esoteric, mysterious side.

Like volume one of **London's Hidden Secrets**, researching and writing this second volume has been a pleasure and a labour of love. It contains a wealth of fascinating attractions that we were unable to include in the original book due to lack of space; in fact, the more research we did the more treasures we found, until a second volume was inevitable. We have both lived and worked throughout the city and, like most long-term London residents, we thought we knew it pretty well. However, we were surprised to find just how many little-known delights London has to offer – not only had we previously not visited many of the 'secret' places featured in this book, we hadn't even heard of many of them!

Inside you'll discover a wealth of historic churches and other ancient buildings; secret gardens and long 'lost' cemeteries; fascinating small museums and galleries; atmospheric pubs and stunning hotels; cutting-edge art and design, and much more. A total of 140 destinations in all corners of the city and its environs. Not all are secrets of course, but many are hidden and virtually unknown except to a small group of locals and insiders.

London's Hidden Secrets isn't intended as a walking guide, although many of the places covered are close to one another in central London – notably in the hubs of Westminster and the City – where you can easily stroll between them, while some are out in the suburbs. However, most are close to public transport links and relatively easy to get to. What's more the vast majority are free, so there's no excuse for not getting out there and exploring.

With a copy of **London's Hidden Secrets** to hand to inspire you, you need never be bored of London (or life). We hope you enjoy discovering the city's hidden secrets as much as we did.

Graeme Chesters & David Hampshire

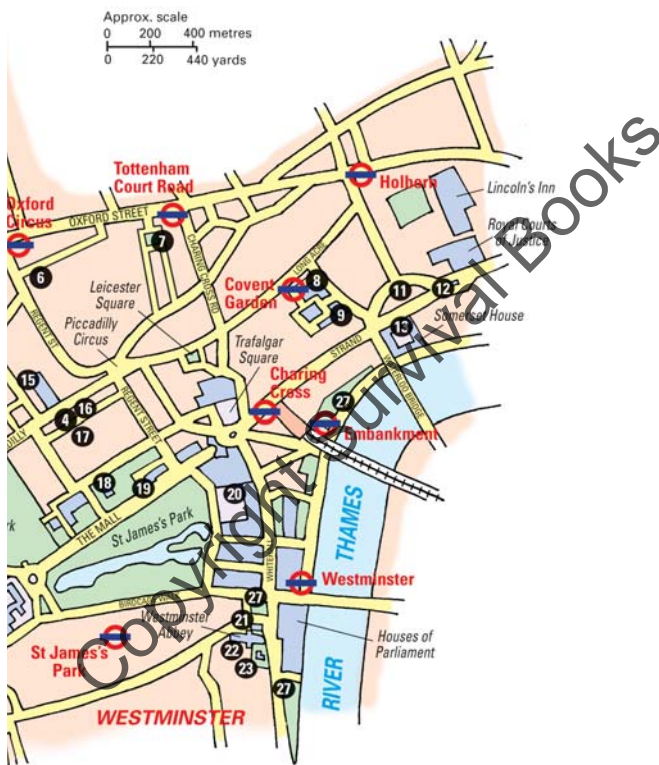
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CHAPTER 1

CITY OF WESTMINSTER



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AT A GLANCE

Address: Inner Circle, Regent's Park, NW1 4NX (📧 www.londongardensonline.org.uk/gardens-online-record.asp?ID=WST108).

Opening hours: Daily, 7am to dusk.

Cost: Free.

Transport: Baker Street or Regent's Park tube station.



GARDEN OF ST JOHN'S LODGE

The garden of St John's Lodge – built in 1817-19 by architect John Raffield for Charles Augustus Tulk, MP – is exquisite; it's the quintessential perfect English garden offering great views of the imposing lodge, which was the first house built on Regent's Park. In 1892, a new garden 'fit for meditation' was designed (for the third Marquess of Bute) with formal areas, a fountain pond, Doric temple, stone portico and partly sunken chapel, which reflected Arts and Crafts ideas and the revival of interest in the classical.

The garden has been open to the public since 1928 and is completely separate from the Lodge and maintained by the Royal Parks. It was renovated and redesigned in 1994 by Landscape Architects Colvin & Moggridge to reflect the original plan and honour the 3rd Marquess of Bute. A new entrance walk was created to the east of the gatehouse and bungalow, with double gates to provide privacy for the house. The east-west scalloped hedge was replanted in yew, but the 1920s flower beds were renewed after public consultation, a variation from the original plan designed by architect, Robert Weir Schultz (1860-1951). New high-backed wooden benches were also commissioned. The new planting established quickly, and today the gardens form a luxuriant oasis in the heart of the city.

The Lodge remained in private hands until 1916 – past owners included Lord Wellesley (1st Duke of Wellington), Sir Isaac Goldsmid and the Marquesses of Bute. Today it's one of only two villas that remain within Regent's Park from John Nash's original conception and is now leased by Prince Jefri Bolkihah of Brunei.

A metal arbour, reflecting the original stone portico, and a wooden covered seat were created, along with the installation of a number of new statues and urns. Among the fine statues are the *Hylas* by Henry Pegram (central in a small round pond), a bronze of a nude man with a sensual mermaid seizing his legs to pull him to his doom, and a bronze by Charles L. Hartwell of a semi-draped shepherdess holding a lamb with the inscription 'To all protectors of the helpless.'

In order to enjoy this haven of calm and beauty, you first have to find it! From the Inner Circle, proceed anti-clockwise past Chester Road on your right, and some 200yds further on you'll find the (hidden) entrance gate to St John's Lodge Gardens – if you pass the Lodge you've gone too far!

“ *A delightful hidden garden* ”

AT A GLANCE

Address: Marylebone Road, NW1 5HT (☎ 020-7873 7373,
📧 www.ram.ac.uk).

Opening hours: Museum: 11.30am to 5.30pm, Mons to Fris, and noon to 4pm on Sats.

Cost: Free.

Transport: Baker Street or Regent's Park tube station.



ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC MUSEUM

This museum will delight anybody with an interest in music. The Royal Academy of Music was founded in 1822 by Lord Burghersh (1784-1859) and was granted its Royal Charter in 1830 by George IV. It moved to its current, custom-built premises in Marylebone Road in 1911. The museum is situated in the York Gate building, linked to the Academy's building via a basement, which was designed in 1822 by John Nash (1752-1835) as part of the main entrance to Regent's Park.

The Academy (as it's usually called) is Britain's oldest degree-granting music school and has been a college of the University of London since 1999. It's the country's leading specialist higher education institution and also number one for music, in addition to being Britain's leading conservatoire. Throughout its almost 200-year history it has trained thousands of accomplished musicians and has a student body of almost 700 (drawn from over 50 countries) in over 20 musical disciplines.

Many famous musicians – singers, players, conductors and composers – have studied at the Academy. Some have returned as teachers to stimulate new generations of musicians, while many have become leaders in their chosen musical fields and professions. Among the Academy's most distinguished living alumni are Sir Elton John, Annie Lennox, Michael Nyman, Sir Simon Rattle and Sir John Tavener, while those from previous generations include Sir John Barbirolli, Sir John Dankworth, Sir Arthur Sullivan and Sir Henry Wood (of Proms fame), to name just a few.

The museum displays material from the Academy's world-renowned collection of instruments, manuscripts, objects and images. An integral part of Academy life, it regularly hosts exhibitions and events, including daily piano demonstrations. Highlights of the collections include Cremonese stringed instruments from 1650 to 1740, a collection of English pianos from 1790 to 1850 from the famous Mobbs Collection, and original manuscripts by Purcell, Mendelssohn, Liszt, Brahms, Sullivan and Vaughan Williams. The galleries are a showcase for the work of performers, composers, instrument makers and scholars.

Since its foundation the Academy has acquired important collections of instruments, manuscripts, paintings, busts, drawings, teaching aids and artefacts, batons, furnishings, memorabilia and other objects, including many collections named after individuals such as composer Sir Arthur Sullivan, conductor Sir Henry Wood and the Foyle (Yehudi) Menuhin Archive. The Academy also has a shop, restaurant and a bar open in the evening for drinks and snacks.

If you want to experience the special atmosphere of the Academy, you can drop in for a concert, master class or any public event, most of which are free.

“Where both pop and classical music flourish”

AT A GLANCE

Address: 17 Marylebone Road, NW1 5LT (☎ 020-7935 7315, 🌐 www.stmarylebone.org).

Opening hours: Mons to Fris, 9am to 5pm, Sats, 9am to 4pm and Suns 8am to 4pm or later. See the website for service times.

Cost: Free (donations are invited).

Transport: Baker Street or Regent's Park tube station.



ST MARYLEBONE

The present Marylebone church (Church of England) is the fourth to serve this parish, designed by Thomas Hardwicke and consecrated in 1817. It was built over a large vaulted crypt, which served as the parish burial ground until 1853, when the entrance was bricked up and its use discontinued (but later re-opened – see below).

In 1885, major alterations were made including the removal of the end wall, the creation of a chancel for a robed choir and a sanctuary within the new apse. The upper galleries on the sides of the church were removed, revealing the full length of the windows and letting in more light. New, beautifully-carved mahogany choir stalls with angel ends were installed, the floor was covered with marble mosaic, a fine marble pulpit and two balustrades were constructed, and a gilded cross set into the ceiling above the site of the original altar. The new decorations were in the neo-classical style, combined with the pre-Raphaelite love of detail. These alterations resulted in the magnificent church much as it is today (although bombing in WWII blew out the windows).

The church (and previous churches on the site) has many historical links, including the baptism of Lord Byron and Nelson's daughter, Horatia; the marriage of Sheridan to Miss Linley; and the graves of Charles and Samuel Wesley. Charles Dickens (1812-1870) and his family lived nearby in Devonshire Terrace and his son was baptised here (many characters in *David Copperfield* were based on people living in Marylebone). The poet Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett were secretly married here in 1846 after exchanging 574 love letters, which is commemorated by the Browning Chapel (1949).

The lovely crystal chandeliers were donated in 1968 by the Marylebone Council Chamber after it merged with the City of Westminster. The organ, by the celebrated Austrian firm of Rieger, is one of the finest in the country and is played regularly by Royal Academy of Music students. St Marylebone has long had a reputation for the excellence of its music; there's a professional choir on Sundays and a wealth of concerts and recitals are held throughout the year.

Today the crypt, which was refurbished and opened in 1987 by HRH The Prince of Wales, is (surprisingly) an NHS Health Centre, and a centre for physical and spiritual healing. It also contains a chapel and a café.

The church's tranquil churchyard is a haven from the bustle of Marylebone Road and stages the delightfully named 'Cabbages and Frocks' market on Saturdays.

“ A beautiful church, both inside and out ”

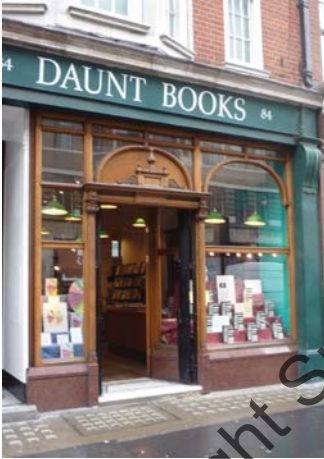
AT A GLANCE

Address: Various – see opposite.

Opening hours: Various (see websites opposite for information).

Cost: Free.

Transport: The nearest tube stations are listed opposite.



15c Book of Hours sold by Maggs Bros.

DISTINGUISHED BOOKSHOPS

Daunt Books (83 Marylebone High Street, W1U 4QW, ☎ 020-7224 2295, 📧 www.dauntbooks.co.uk, Baker Street tube) is a relatively new kid on the block, founded by James Daunt in 1990. The flagship store is housed in a beautiful Edwardian bookshop; the back room is particularly impressive with its original, oak mezzanine gallery, graceful skylights and stained-glass window. Entering Daunt is like stepping back in time to a calmer, more graceful period, when people had time to browse and customer service wasn't just a cliché, with knowledgeable staff and books beautifully and elegantly displayed.

In its relatively short life, Daunt has earned an enviable reputation as one of London's most treasured, independent booksellers – where books are loved and cherished and aren't just something sold alongside baked beans and CDs. A cosy café provides the perfect opportunity to linger and savour your tomes over a warming cup of something.

Hatchards (187 Piccadilly, W1J 9LE, ☎ 020-7439 9921, 📧 www.hatchards.co.uk, Piccadilly Circus tube) is London's oldest bookshop and the second-oldest in the UK (now owned by Waterstones). It was founded by John Hatchard in 1797 on Piccadilly, from where it still trades today (over five floors). Its customers have included most of Britain's greatest political, royal, social and literary figures – from Queen Charlotte (it holds three Royal Warrants), Disraeli and Wellington, to Kipling, Wilde and Lord Byron.

It has a reputation for attracting famous authors for signings/readings, including J.K. Rowling, Alexander McCall-Smith, Peter Ackroyd, Margaret Thatcher, Lauren Bacall, Stephen Fry, Jeremy Paxman, Joanne Harris, David Attenborough, Michael Palin, Hilary Mantel, Sebastian Faulks and Howard Jacobson.

Maggs Bros. (50 Berkeley Square, W1J 5BA, ☎ 020-7493 7160, 📧 www.maggs.com, Green Park tube), established in 1853, is one of the world's largest antiquarian booksellers. It was founded by Uriah Maggs (a Dickensian name, if ever there was one), who at the age of 25 left his home town of Midsomer Norton in Somerset to set up business in London. The shop is housed in an 18th-century townhouse (said to be the most haunted house in London) in the heart of Mayfair, which retains its Adam fireplaces, tile-lined pantries and cast-iron kitchen range.

Maggs handles books and manuscripts of the highest quality, and acts as advisor and bookseller to many of the world's finest collections, both private and institutional, but also stocks books over a wide price range. Its more notable sales have included two Gutenberg Bibles. As you would expect, the staff are widely-travelled experts, and can communicate in many languages.

““ *Where browsing is a pleasure* ””

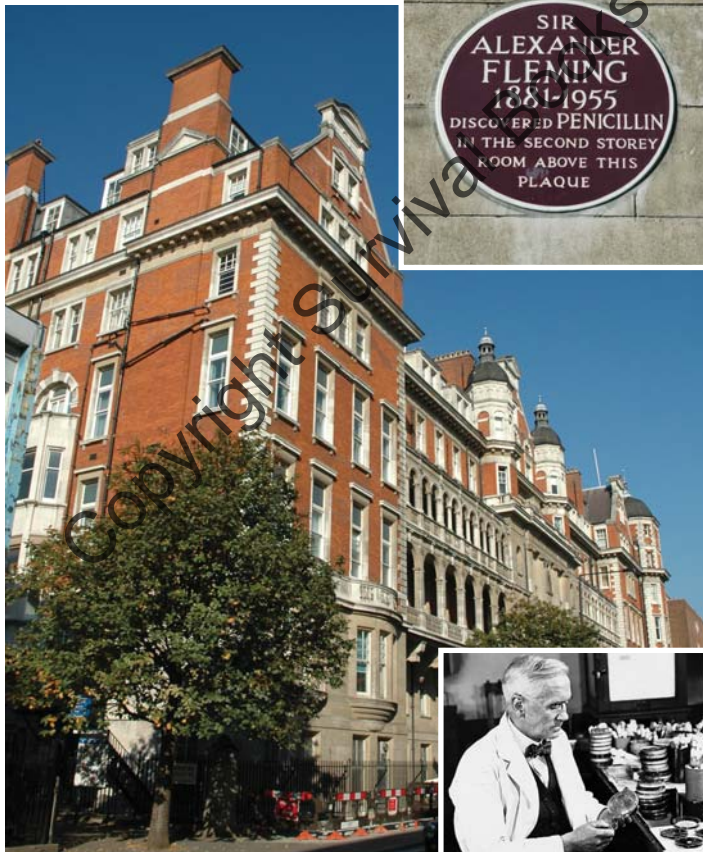
AT A GLANCE

Address: St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street, W2 1NY (☎ 020-3312 6528, 🌐 www.imperial.nhs.uk/aboutus/museumsandarchives).

Opening hours: Mons to Thurs, 10am to 1pm (other times by appointment); closed on Public Holidays and 24th December to 2nd January.

Cost: Adults £4, children, students, senior citizens and the unemployed £2.

Transport: Paddington tube and rail station.



Alexander Fleming

ALEXANDER FLEMING MUSEUM

While a museum dedicated to the founder of penicillin might not immediately set the pulse racing, it's engaging, so please bear with us. Alexander Fleming (1881-1955) discovered the antibiotic in 1928 – a breakthrough that revolutionised medicine and earned him a Nobel Prize – in a basic and under-funded laboratory at St Mary's Hospital (founded in 1845). The breakthrough was actually made as a result of an accident when an experiment was mistakenly contaminated, resulting in the discovery of the antibacterial powers of penicillin. "When I woke up just after dawn on September 28, 1928, I certainly didn't plan to revolutionise medicine by discovering the world's first antibiotic or bacteria killer," Fleming would later say, "But I suppose that was exactly what I did." Today, there are few lives that haven't been touched by this phenomenal discovery, before which there were no antibiotics and the slightest infection could lead to death.

A reconstruction of Fleming's restored laboratory, displays and a video uncover the remarkable story of how a chance discovery became a lifesaving drug destined to revolutionise medicine. There are also exhibits about Fleming himself and his commitment to the further development of his discoveries.

Fleming was born on 6th August 1881 at Lochfield in Ayrshire, Scotland. After attending Kilmarnock Academy he moved to London, where he attended the Regent Street Polytechnic and, after working in a shipping office for four years, was persuaded by his elder brother, Tom (an ophthalmic surgeon), to study medicine. In 1903, he enrolled at St Mary's Hospital Medical School in Paddington and after qualifying he joined the research department, where he became assistant bacteriologist to Sir Almroth Wright (1861-1947), a pioneer in vaccine therapy and immunology.

Fleming served in WWI as a captain in the Royal Army Medical Corps and worked in battlefield hospitals in France, where he discovered that antiseptics were killing more soldiers than infection itself. In 1918 he returned to St Mary's, where he discovered penicillin in 1928. His research was later taken up by Howard Florey and others, enabling the mass-production of penicillin during WWII, since when it has saved millions of lives around the world. Fleming was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1945, along with Howard Florey and Ernst Boris Chain (who did further research and mass-produced penicillin). He died in London in 1955 and was interred in St Paul's Cathedral.

In 1999, the Fleming Museum was declared an International Historic Chemical Landmark by the American Chemical Society and the Royal Society of Chemistry.

“ Splendid tribute to the inventor of penicillin ”

AT A GLANCE

Address: Great Marlborough Street, W1B 5AH (☎ 020-7734 1234, 🌐 www.liberty.co.uk).

Opening hours: Mons to Sats, 10am to 9pm, Suns 12pm to 6pm.

Cost: Free.

Transport: Oxford Circus or Piccadilly Circus tube station.



LIBERTY

Since 1875, Liberty has been synonymous with luxury and outstanding design, and is one of London's more famous retailers. Arthur Liberty's intuitive vision and pioneering spirit led him to travel the world seeking individual pieces to inspire and excite his discerning clientele. Liberty isn't just a name above the door, but Arthur Liberty's legacy, which stands for integrity, value, quality, and above all, beautiful design – not least the building itself.

Arthur Lasenby Liberty (1843-1917) was born in Chesham, Buckinghamshire in 1843 and acquired his love of Oriental design and wares while employed by Farmer and Rogers in their 'Oriental Warehouse', where he soon became the manager. By 1874, Liberty decided to start his own business and leased half a shop at 218a Regent Street selling ornaments, fabric and objets d'art from Japan and the East. Within 18 months he had expanded the business to neighbouring properties and his store became the most fashionable in London. In the 1890s, Liberty built strong relationships with leading English designers, including key figures in the Arts and Crafts and Art Nouveau movements such as William Morris.

The magnificent mock Tudor building that you see today was built in 1924 and was bizarrely constructed almost entirely from the timbers of two old warships: HMS Hindustan and HMS Impregnable. It was designed around an interior courtyard that formed the main focus of the building, and Liberty employed the best craftsmen to install magnificent staircases, carvings and stained glass windows. Sadly, Liberty died in 1917, seven years before the completion of his imposing Tudor building.

Liberty has a long history of artistic and inspiring collaborative projects – from William Morris and Gabriel Dante Rossetti in the 19th century, to Yves Saint Laurent and Dame Vivienne Westwood in the 20th. Recent collaborations include renowned brands such as Nike, Kate Moss for Topshop, Hermes and Manolo Blahnik, to name but a few.

Liberty celebrated its centenary in 1975, which was marked by a major exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Nowadays Liberty sells fashions, cosmetics, accessories, gifts, etc. in addition to its iconic homewares and furniture, and is one of London's most prestigious stores. When you've soaked up the atmosphere, take a break in the excellent café on the second floor.

The Liberty staircases are designed in such an odd way that customers often get lost, which led to the publication (in the '70s) of a free booklet entitled 'How Not To Get Lost in Liberty's'!

“ A mock Tudor masterpiece built from old warships ”