

The Fridays



Purrfect Fridays Lock Down Ride

Start at the cafe in Russell Square – takeaway available, toilets for customers only, if at all.

1. In Euston station

A statue of scientist and navigator Matthew Flinders (1774-1814), credited with popularising the name Australia, and the first person to circumnavigate the 'Great Southern Land' and map South Australia's coastline. The statue, by sculptor Mark Richards, shows Flinders leaning over a chart of Australia, dividers in hand, accompanied by his faithful pet cat Trim.

Trim the cat was born in 1799 on the Southern Indian Ocean and accompanied Flinders around Australia and to Mauritius. He was described as 'the best and most illustrious of his Race, the most affectionate of friends, faithful of servants, and best of creatures'. Trim is a much-loved cat even now, with a dedicated Wikipedia page and his own merchandise at the State Library of New South Wales. Matthew Flinders died in England in 1814 aged 40 and was buried at St James, Hampstead Road, London. The church was demolished in the 1950s and it is rumoured Flinders' remains are buried under one of the platforms. Some sources say platform 4 or 5, whilst others say his grave might lie somewhere under platforms 12-15.



2. Greater London House

As demand for cigarettes increased during the First World War, the Carreras Tobacco Company expanded its business in the 1920s, like many other tobacco companies. Carreras had outgrown its Arcadia cigarette

factory in City Road, London, so it closed the facility and opened a new Arcadia Works in 1928 in Mornington Crescent, Camden.



Statue of Bastet (664–342 BC)



The Craven A black cat brand

Dominating the entrance to the building were two large 8.5-foot (2.6 m)-high bronze statues of cats, stylised versions of the Egyptian god Bastet (or Bubastis, or Bast), which had been cast at the Haskins Foundry in London. The image of a black cat was a branding device which Carreras used on the packets of their [Craven A](#) range of cigarettes. The building had thus been conceived as a "temple" to Bastet, and the architects' original drawings reveal that it was to be named Bast House (the name was dropped due to unfortunate similarities to derogatory words in English).

The cats stood guard over Arcadia Works until 1959 when Carreras merged with Rothmans of Pall Mall and moved to a new factory in Basildon, Essex. The cats were removed from the building and separated; one was transported to Essex to stand at the Basildon works, the other exported to [Jamaica](#) to stand outside the Carreras factory in Spanish Town.

In 1960–62, the Camden Arcadia Works were converted into offices. The building was refurbished and stripped of all its Egyptian decoration, which was now out of fashion, in an attempt to give it a simpler, more Modernist appearance. At this time, it was renamed Greater London House.

3. Anglers Lane, Kentish Town. *Plaque on left by Raglan street to Boris, 1986-1996*



4. Magdala Avenue. *Large sculpture above main entrance to Whittington Hospital*



5. Highgate Hill (Northbound side)

The Whittington Stone is an 1821 monumental stone to which was added in 1964 a statue of a cat. It marks roughly where it is recounted that a forlorn Dick Whittington, returning to his home from the city of London after losing faith as a scullion in a scullery, heard Bow Bells ringing from 4 ½ miles (7.2km) away, prophesying his good fortune leading to the homage "Turn again Whittington, thrice Lord Mayor of London!" This quotation and a short history of the man cover two faces of the stone.



6. Queen Square (South west corner)

Captured preparing to jump off a red brick wall, this small playful statue of a domestic cat named Sam can be found in the south-west corner of Queen Square Gardens in Holborn.

The bronze statue actually commemorates Patricia Penn (1914-1992), a former resident in the square who was a nurse, "champion of local causes" and member of the Queen Square Resident's Association. The statue was donated by the local community in Penn's memory.

As is clear from the monument, Penn was also a cat lover. Sam was, of course, one of her pet cats. Sadly, the original version of Sam – which was installed in 2002 to mark the 10th anniversary of Penn's death, was stolen in 2007. But a replacement was installed in 2009 – this time with steel rods running into the bricks to prevent it being taken again.



7. Savoy Hotel

The topiary cat outside is a version of Kaspar. The Savoy's famous black cat, Kaspar, was carved in 1927 by the designer Basil Ionides, from one single block of plane. His intended function was to act as the fourteenth guest in the private dining rooms when thirteen guests were present, and his creation was directly related to the unfortunate demise of a Savoy client over quarter of a century earlier.

One evening in 1898, a wealthy South African named Woolf Joel hosted a small private dinner at The Savoy. One or two guests had to cancel, with the result that only thirteen people finally gathered for dinner on that

fateful evening. Over the meal there was some discussion about the various superstitions associated with unlucky number thirteen, including the one that the first person to get up from a table of thirteen would also be the first one to die. Joel scoffed at the suggestion, and sportingly offered to allay his guests' fears by leaving the table first. Back home in Johannesburg a few weeks later, Joel was shot dead.

Joel's death made a particular impression on his dinner guests, and by extension the management of The Savoy. Taking no further chances, it was decreed that in future any table of thirteen would be joined by a member of staff as a fourteenth guest, and for the next twenty-five years a waiter would duly be roped in as necessity dictated. This was not the most convenient of solutions however. Firstly the presence of a complete stranger at the table prevented the discussion of confidential matters, and for many clients this was the reason that they had convened in the first place. Secondly, it deprived the hotel of the services of a waiter for the duration of the function, no small matter at busy times of day. Another solution had to be found.

In the 1920s the architect Basil Ionides had been commissioned by the Directors of The Savoy to redecorate the private dining room "Pinafore". However Ionides thought he had the answer to another challenge, too.

Why a black cat is anyone's guess, but Kaspar's sinuous form had adorned tables for thirteen ever since. With a napkin around his neck, he sits silently at his place, and is served with each course in turn along with the rest of the guests. He does not contribute much to the conversation, but can be relied upon for absolute discretion afterwards.



7. Bermondsey Wall East, Cherry Gardens

The multi-part sculpture is called 'Dr Salter's Daydream' and shows the whole Salter family. The scene is poignant in that Joyce died at the age of eight. Sadly the statue of the doctor was stolen in 2011 (presumably to be sold for scrap) and following this, the statues of Joyce and the cat were removed for safekeeping. A campaign was set up after the theft to raise funds for a new statue. At the same time, [Diane Gorvin](#), the sculptor of the original statue, drew up plans for the replacement group, which would also include a statue of Salter's wife [Ada](#). In the group, 'Dr Salter's Daydream' Alfred, in his old age sits imagining Ada, Joyce and her cat as they once were in happier days long gone by.



8. Gough Square

"I NEVER SHALL FORGET THE Indulgence with which he treated Hodge, his cat... I recollect him one day scrambling up Dr. Johnson's breast, apparently with much satisfaction, while my friend smiling and half-whistling, rubbed down his back, and pulled him by the tail; and when I observed he was a fine cat, saying, 'Why yes, Sir, but I have had cats whom I liked better than this;' and then as if perceiving Hodge to be out of countenance, adding, 'but he is a very fine cat, a very fine cat indeed.'" -James Boswell, The Life of Samuel Johnson 1799.

Hodge was a black cat belonging to the English lexicographer Samuel Johnson of whom the writer was particularly fond. He was known to go out of his way to purchase oysters to feed the cat, even to the point of annoying his servants by his pampering of his pets.

After Hodge's death, the poet Percival Stockdale wrote "An Elegy on the Death of Dr Johnson's Favourite Cat": "Who, by his master when caressed / Warmly his gratitude expressed; / And never failed his thanks to purr / Where'er he stroked his sable fur."

The bronze statue to Hodge by sculptor Jon Bickley was installed in 1997 by the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Roger Cook, outside Johnson's house at Number 17 Gough Square where he lived from 1748 to 1759, now a museum dedicated to the writer's life. Hodge is shown sitting on top of Johnson's dictionary and next to some empty oyster shells. The monument is inscribed with the words "a very fine cat indeed."



9. Old Gloucester Street (in playground)

This is Humphrey, who lived at the Mary Ward adult education centre until he died in 1992, and the sculpture is by Marcia Solway, who attended the education centre. This was her only completed work, and after she also died in 1992 (aged 32), the work was donated by her mother, and it was agreed that it would be erected in Queen Square in Bloomsbury, by the education centre. This happened in 1997.

Unfortunately, the Trustees of the square then changed their mind, and forced its removal, and the cat ended up in Alf Barrett playground, and following refurbishment of the park, the cat was revealed once more in 2003.



Return to Russell Square