

SLR Streets and Alleys

Hyde Park Corner start

Rotten Row

Established by William III at the end of the 17th century. Having moved court to Kensington Palace, William wanted a safer way to travel to St. James's Palace. He created the broad avenue through Hyde Park, lit with 300 oil lamps in 1690– the first artificially lit highway in Britain. The lighting was a precaution against highwaymen, who lurked in Hyde Park at the time. The track was called *Route du Roi*, French for King's Road, which was eventually corrupted into "Rotten Row".

In the 18th century, Rotten Row became a popular meeting place for upper-class Londoners. Particularly on weekend evenings and at midday, people dressed in their finest clothes to ride along the row and be seen.

In 1876, it was reconstructed as a horse-ride, with a brick base covered by sand.

Man in Moon Passage

Nothing extraterrestrial about this one. Almost certainly named after a pub that used to be here.

But one event of note did occur here. In 1791, famed double bass player Frantisek Kotzwara visited a prostitute in Vine Street with an unusual request: castration. She refused, however, the persistent Kotzwara still enjoyed an evening of sexual adventure, culminating in death by auto-erotic asphyxiation, the first on record.

Seven Dials

The original layout of the Seven Dials area was designed by Thomas Neale during the early 1690s. The original plan had six roads converging, although this was later increased to seven. The sundial column was built with only six faces, with the column itself acting as the gnomon. This layout was chosen to produce triangular plots in order to minimise the frontage of houses to be built on the site, as rentals were charged per foot of frontage rather than by the square footage of properties. After the successful development of the Covent Garden Piazza area nearby, Neale hoped that Seven Dials would be popular with wealthy residents.

This was not to be and the area gradually deteriorated.

At one stage, each of the seven apexes facing the column housed a pub.

By the 19th century, Seven Dials was among the most notorious slums in London, part of the rookery of St Giles.

The original sundial column was removed in 1773. It was long believed that it had been pulled down by an angry mob, but recent research suggests it was deliberately removed by the authorities in an attempt to rid the area of

"undesirables". The original was re-erected in Weybridge. The replacement sundial pillar was erected in 1989 to the original design.

The seven streets at Seven Dials originally had quite different names - the names were changed in the 1930s. Today, only two houses remain from the original Thomas Neale development of the 1690s; 61 Monmouth Street and 64 Neal Street. It is now a conservation area, and over 25% of the buildings are listed.

Lincoln's Inn toilets

Hanging sword Alley

The alley was first known as Ouldwood Alley in the 16th century. It formed part of the rookery of Alsatia. It was then named after the sign of a fencing school recorded in 1564, and tuition in this martial art remained in the area until the 17th century.

In the 18th century, it became known as Blood Bowl Alley after a night-cellar which was an infamous drinking den.

Turnagain Lane

Until the Fleet River was covered over this was a little lane that ran from Old Bailey down to the river bank. There was no bridge crossing at this point, it was impossible to proceed any further and the only option was to return to Old Bailey.

In the 13th century, it was known as Wendageyneslane and in the 15th century as Turneagayne Lane.

Bleeding Heart Yard

The courtyard is probably named after a 16th-century inn sign dating back to the Reformation that was displayed on a pub called the Bleeding Heart in nearby Charles Street. The inn sign showed the heart of the Virgin Mary pierced by five swords.

However, urban legend has it that the courtyard's name commemorates the murder of Lady Elizabeth Hatton, the second wife of Sir William Hatton, whose family owned the area around Hatton Garden. Lady Hatton had made a pact with the devil to secure wealth, position, and a mansion in Holborn. During the housewarming of the mansion on 27 January 1646, the devil danced with her, then tore out her heart, which is found, still beating, in the courtyard the next morning. Bleeding Heart Yard also features in the Charles Dickens novel *Little Dorrit* as the home of the Plornish family.

Cock Lane

In the mediaeval period, this street was known as Cokkes Lane and was the site of legal brothels.

25 Cock Lane is the site where the supposed Cock Lane ghost manifested itself in 1762, and is also the place where writer John Bunyan, who wrote England's first best-seller, died from a fever in 1688.

The junction of Giltspur Street and Cock Lane was known as Pye Corner, famous as marking the furthest extent of the Great Fire of London, which is commemorated by the Golden Boy of Pye Corner.

This effigy was originally built into the front of a public house called The Fortune of War which used to occupy the site but was pulled down in 1910. For a while the pub was THE place to go for surgeons to buy corpses.

Giltspur Street

Giltspur Street takes its name from the spurs worn by the knights who would ride through the street to reach jousting tournaments at the nearby Smooth Field. (Now Smithfield).

Spurs were an essential part of the knight's life in medieval times; the expression 'to win one's spurs' comes from the fact that originally it meant to obtain a knighthood. Gilt spurs would have been a real mark of oneupmanship.

Giltspur Street later became far less glamorous: it was the site of the Giltspur Street Compter, a debtors' prison, built at the end of the 18th century.

The street also formed part of the route from Newgate Prison to Tyburn, leading into the steep ascent of Holborn Hill. The expression 'going west', unlike the 'go west' of American pioneering times, referred to that last journey towards Tyburn.

Wardrobe Place

The unusual name does indeed come from an actual wardrobe. Not just any wardrobe though, but the King's wardrobe.

Established under Edward III (1312-1377) it's where the King would keep his best outfits but also important household items, a bit like a hotel room safe. The items were on view, much like the crown jewels today.

The Wardrobe was originally based at the Tower of London and you can still see its ruined tower inside today. The Great Fire of London in 1666 destroyed the King's Wardrobe and in 1782 the institution of the wardrobe was absorbed into the Treasury.

Nos. 3-5 are late 17th or early 18th century. See original footscrapper (an indication of how dirty City streets were) and bell pushes ('office' and 'housekeeper') on number 4. The other buildings are more recent.

After the Great Fire, legislation came into being in 1709 that required window sills to be compulsory. Prior to this windows had either been flush or a small window

sill. The Act required 100mm (4 inches deep or more) window sill and the setting back of the window.

Any old window you see with a window sill of 100mm (4 inches deep or more) is likely to have been built after The Great Fire of London.

Such was the fear of fire that a second London Building Act was added in 1774 which specifically looked at recessing the timber window frame into the brickwork. This affectively means that part of the window frame is hidden.

Knightrider Street

The name is first recorded in 1322. The 16th-century historian John Stow suggested in his 1598 Survey of London that the street was named after "Knights well armed and mounted at the Tower Royal, riding from thence through that street west to Creed Lane, and so out at Ludgate towards Smithfield, where they were there to tourney, joust, or otherwise to show activities before the King and States of the realm."

The street is south of St Pauls Cathedral perhaps to prevent the jangling of armour disturbing services in the church.

Cheapside and surrounding streets

Cheapside is the former site of one of the principal produce markets in London, 'chepe' broadly meaning "market" in Saxon English.

It connected the southern end of the Roman Watling Street with the main City settlement to its east and its alignment was dictated by a convenient bridging point across the river Walbrook.

Market buildings were constructed along the roadside from the late twelfth century, with low roofs that later formed viewing platforms for jousting tournaments.

At that time the layout of Cheapside was more like a marketplace than a street: up to 62 feet wide but with very narrow exits at each end.

Side streets acquired names that indicated their early specialisations: fishmongers traded on Friday Street, while Honey Lane, Milk Street, Bread Street, Poultry and Wood Street are self-explanatory.

Meat was brought in to Cheapside from Smithfield market, just outside Newgate. The top end of the street was known as the Shambles (referring to an open-air slaughterhouse and meat market).

In medieval times, the royal processional route from the Tower of London to the Palace of Westminster would include Cheapside. During the reign of Edward III in the 14th century, tournaments were held in adjacent fields.

Trump Street/Russia Row

Trump Street, originally known as Trumpadere Street, was built after the Great Fire. The street may be named after Trump Alley (long since gone) or because its occupants had the same occupation as those that lived in the alley - trumpet makers.

Their principal customers were the City waits, or watchmen; each of whom was provided with a trumpet, also known as a "wait," for sounding the hours of the watch, and giving the alarm.

Russia Row gets its name from the Muscovy Company (also called the Russia Company) which was an English trading company chartered in 1555. It had a monopoly on trade between England and Muscovy until 1698 and it survived as a trading company until the Russian Revolution of 1917. Since 1917 the company has operated as a charity, now working within Russia.

Sherborne Lane

In the 13th century, the street first went by the name of Shittborwelane, and later Shiteburn Lane. This was because of the overwhelming stench of poo in the area. The disgusting smell can be put down to the nearby public toilets and the entire street became a cesspit of compacted and rotting human, animal and general waste.

Filthy streets were a serious problem in 14th century London. The city's inhabitants (humans and animals) collectively produced 50 tons of excrement every day (2.5m inhabitants) - bearing in mind, there was no sewerage system for another 500 years.

In 1345, a law was passed stating that anyone dumping refuse in the streets would be fined two shillings - a considerable amount of money at the time. It was common at the time for street names to reflect their official function, or - in this case - unofficial function. Some medieval street names have survived, including Addle street - meaning stinking urine, or other liquid filth - and Fetter Lane - once Fewterer, meaning idle and disorderly person.

But many, like Sherborne Lane, have been changed to be more palatable to the public; Pissing Alley was renamed Little Friday Street in the 19th century, before later being absorbed into Cannon Street.

Pudding Lane

Pudding Lane is widely known as the location of Thomas Farriner's bakery, where the Great Fire of London started in 1666. Farriner's bakery stood immediately opposite the Monument, on the eastern side of Pudding Lane. The site was paved over when Monument Street was built in 1886-7, but is marked by a plaque on the wall of nearby Farynors House.

Pudding Lane was given its name by the butchers of Eastcheap Market, who used it to transport "pudding" or offal down to the river to be taken away by waste

barges. There was a wharf at its lower end called Rothersgate (from the "rothers" or cattle that were landed there), and it was also known as Rother Lane.

Pudding Lane was one of the world's first one-way streets. An order restricting cart traffic to one-way travel on Pudding Lane and 16 other lanes around Thames Street was issued in 1617, an idea not copied until Albemarle Street became a one-way street in 1800.

Mincing Lane

In the late 19th century Mincing Lane was the world's leading centre for tea and spice trading - in 1834 it was nicknamed the 'street of tea' - after the British East India Company successfully took over all trading ports from the Dutch East India Company in 1799.

It was the centre of the British opium business (comprising 90% of all transactions), as well as other drugs in the 18th century.

Businesses in the British slave trade were also based in Mincing Lane.

Its name is a corruption of Mynchen Lane, so-called from the tenements held here by the Benedictine 'mynchens' (nuns) of the nearby St Helen's Bishopsgate church (from the Anglo-Saxon Minicen, for a nun). Among the nuns, there were occasional disagreements and transgressions. For example, in 1385, a nun named Joan Heyronne, suffering from gout, convinced the pope to provide her with a yearly ten pound allowance to support her. Her prioress, Constance, responded to the news by locking Joan in her room with minimal food until the dean and chapter of St Paul's intervened. Around 1432, a prioress was also reprimanded for owning too many dogs, while in 1385, nuns were reprimanded for kissing secular persons. Judging from this documentary evidence, the level of devotion among the nuns to their vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience likely waxed and waned.

It was the Round the Horne radio show (1965-68) scriptwriters, who popularised the proper noun word 'Mincing' in the slang sense.

Seething Lane

The street is named after an Old English expression meaning "full of chaff". Pre-thirteenth century, the street was originally a narrow path connected to the nearby corn market in Fenchurch Street and grain was threshed here.

Samuel Pepys lived here in 1660 when he became Clerk of the Acts of the Navy, to be close to the Navy Office building which was built in 1660. He is buried in St Olave's Church at the junction with Hart Street.

French Ordinary Court

A fairly modern name for a route that has existed since at least Tudor times when much of this part of London was still gardens. Opposite the modern entrance to the alley was the main gate entrance to the monastery of the Crutched Friars.

By 1746 this area was fully built up, and the passage had gained its name of French Ordinary Court. The name comes from food, specifically venues where all the meals cost the same price.

'Ordinaries' were fairly common in the City of London during the 17th and 18th centuries. The French bit comes from the arrival of the French Huguenots who opened a number of Ordinaries in this part of London to cater to their fellow immigrants. A French style Ordinary stood on the site of the court.

The court was also somewhat larger than it is today, and open to the skies. Its current subterranean appearance is thanks to the arrival of the railways — and Fenchurch Street station to be specific, for the alley now runs under the station, through some of the arches.

Crutched Friars

The Crutched Friars were a Roman Catholic religious order in England and Ireland first recorded in the 13th century. Their name is derived from the staff they carried with them surmounted by a crucifix. 'Crutched' is a corruption of crucifix, nothing to do with crutches.

There were several orders devoted to the Holy Cross that had some presence in England and there is much confusion to which specific order the friars belonged to. Earlier literature linked most of the Crutched Friars to the Italian Crosiers, but later it was proven that they were a branch of the Belgian Canons Regular of the Order of the Holy Cross. The Crutched Friars were suppressed by Henry VIII during the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1538.

They were never a very large order, and they have been lost to history except for this one area of London named for them and a pub in the area.

Horselydown Lane

In 1597 Bermondsey was described as a country village. At this time the area that is now the Tower Bridge Conservation Area was mainly meadowland called Horselydown, which had been used as pasture for grazing animals during the Middle Ages.

This was also the site of the John Courage Brewery and the dray horses that delivered the beer to London's pubs were kept here. See statue to Jacob further along.

OPTION: Great Maze Pond

The "Maze" Pond, which used to be situated at the southern end of the Guy's site, was fed by a tributary of the River Thames, now known as 'Guy's Creek'. Archaeological excavation of the site has unearthed an early Romano-British boat and Roman timbers edging the creek. In the Middle Ages farmers from Kent and Surrey used to drive their cattle up to London for sale at Smithfield Market. The fields around the Maze Pond were a focal point where the cattle were grazed and watered.

"Mr Guy's Hospital for Incurables" was built on this site in 1725. The 1746 Map of London shows the pond still in existence. 'Maze pond' is probably a corruption of 'May's pond', as in farmer May, nothing to do with a mansion or great country house maze.

Stones End Street

If you have ever driven in France you may have passed through the countryside and therefore driven through quite small towns and even smaller villages. You may have noticed that, as you approach a village or town there is a sign by the side of the road with the name of the location written on it. Places in England have a similar system. However, in France, as you pass the point where the town or village boundary ends, there is another sign with the place name displayed again but this time it is 'crossed out' with a red line through it. That is not something we do in England.

In medieval England, there were no signs but you always knew when you were entering or leaving the parish boundary of a town. Wealthy towns had the roadway paved right up to the boundary. At that point, the roadway usually changed to a dirt track. This did not happen in villages because most of them were not wealthy enough to have stones sets (or cobbles) to provide a durable surface on which carts could travel.

This practice also applied to London. The point where the stone sets on a road ended was usually called 'Stones End'. On the wall beside the pavement, you will see a plaque recording the original site of 'Stones End' and giving a brief explanation. It is the last street in London to bear the name.

Disney Street

'Disney' is in fact an extremely old name of Norman origin, deriving from d'Isigny; a surname historically used by folk from the town of Isigny-sur-Mer in north-western France. The name has been borne by these two Borough streets since at least the 1860s, well before Walt Disney came here. In 1902 a drunken woman was arrested after "ill-treating a baby by swinging it round" along with a verbal threat to "dash the child's brains out by throwing it on the pavement."

Going even further back in time when the area had a more rural vibe, the street was known by completely different names- Bird Cage Alley (which really did refer to local artisans who made pet cages) and Harrow Street; an offshoot of which was 'Harrow Dunghill' which would no doubt have had quite a literal meaning back in the 18th century.

ENDS AT RUSSELL SQUARE