

London Historic Trail¹

Before I begin, let me come clean. A lot of the historical information in this hike was gleaned from taking guided walks of London. I owe a heavy debt to “London Walks,” London’s premiere walking tour company. If you’re interested in an in-depth view of London, check out <http://www.walks.com> for information about their great tours of the city.

You should also note that some of the sights on this trail are historic London Pubs. Please recall that there is no alcohol allowed in BSA Scouting. While you’re on the hike, enjoy the history of these pubs from the outside. If you find yourself wanting to stop in for a bit of something to eat or drink at one of the pubs, you should limit your refreshments to the non-alcoholic variety!

Waterloo Rail Station

Start at London Waterloo rail station. Waterloo has been one of London’s main line rail stations since 1848. One of its most notable features is the Victory Arch, built of Portland Stone. This commemorates the London and South Western and the Southern Railway men who gave their lives in the First and Second World Wars. Interesting piece of trivia... during the First World War, soldiers who were on their way to the coast were given free meals by the “Waterloo Free Buffet”. A memorial plaque is located in the subway beneath the mail like platforms.

From the concourse, head out through the Victory Arch and turn left. Make your way to York Road and turn left again. You should be heading southwest toward the London Eye.

The London Eye

To describe the London Eye as a huge Ferris wheel would be insulting to the Eye. However, according to Wikipedia it is “the biggest Ferris wheel in Europe.”² It was built to celebrate the Millennium, and has become one of London’s most recognizable attractions. Probably the coolest thing about the Eye is that it is only supported on one side. On a clear day you can see up to 25 miles... it’s said that if you know where to look you can even see Windsor Castle!³ A “flight” on the wheel (one revolution) takes about 30 minutes.

Each capsule holds 32 passengers, so you can easily fit a scout group. Unfortunately, the Eye is one of the most expensive tourist attractions in London. Still, it’s worth a splurge if you’re looking for something really unique. Check out the website for ticket prices and group rates. Pre-booking is absolutely essential.



Pass the London Eye heading southwest along the river and you’ll get to Westminster Bridge. Along your way you will also pass the London Aquarium. There are mixed reviews about the Aquarium, so visit at your own risk! Cross the bridge and you’ll be at Big Ben and the Houses

of Parliament. But before you cross over to the seat of government, stop to take a look at the Statue of Boudica at the corner of the bridge.

Statue of Boudica



Boudica, the “Warrior Queen,” was a queen of the Iceni tribe of what is now known as East Anglia in England, who led an uprising of the tribes against the occupying forces of the Roman Empire.⁴ Her uprising destroyed London in about AD 60, in an attempt to kick the Romans out of Britain. It is said that between 70,000 and 80,000 Romans were killed in the destruction of Londinium, Verulamium (now St. Albans) and Camulodunum (now Colchester). Her army was defeated, and she was killed, in the Battle of Watling Street.

Boudica was forgotten through the middle ages, but during the Renaissance she came back to light.

According to Wikipedia:⁵

It was in the Victorian era that Boudica's fame took on legendary proportions as Queen Victoria was seen to be Boudica's "namesake" (Boudica means “victorious” in Celtic). Victoria's Poet Laureate, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, wrote a poem, Boadicea, and several ships were named after her. A great bronze statue of Boudica with her daughters in her war chariot (furnished with scythes after the Persian fashion) was commissioned by Prince Albert and executed by Thomas Thornycroft. It was completed in 1905 and stands next to Westminster Bridge and the Houses of Parliament.

Ironically, the great anti-imperialist rebel was now identified with the head of the British Empire, and her statue stood guard over the city she razed to the ground.

This statue represents the beginning of our trek north and east through Westminster, into the City of London, and over to Shakespeare's stomping grounds. The great warrior Queen is the oldest bit of London history on this walk.

Across the street you'll find Big Ben, the Houses of Parliament, and Westminster Abbey.

Big Ben and Houses of Parliament

When people see Big Ben, they think of old England... a land of Lords and Ladies, Kings and Queens. The clock tower at Parliament is to the UK what the Capitol Dome is to the US – a symbol of the Government. A visit to London is hardly complete without at least taking the obligatory picture with Big Ben in the background. So, here's where you get the best picture (IMHO)...

Head away from the river with Parliament on your left. Pass Westminster Station on your right and cross the street. Ahead of you you'll see a few of the iconic red phone booths. If you stand next to the phone booth (or in front, or even in it) a photographer can get a picture with you, the phone booth and Big Ben all at once. What could be better?

Interestingly, Big Ben is actually the nickname of the bell that hangs in the clock tower rather than the clock itself.

The Parliament building is officially a royal palace, the Palace of Westminster, and was a royal residence for Henry VIII among others. The royal family lived on this site from the 11th century right up until 1512.⁶ The Houses of Parliament, as we know them today, were rebuilt after a fire in 1812. The core of the Palace, and the oldest part of Parliament, is the medieval Westminster Hall, where important state functions take place.

An interesting bit of history involving Parliament is the famous "Gunpowder Plot"⁷. On 5 November 1605, Guy Fawkes tried to blow up Parliament, the King, and all the Lords and MPs. The plot failed, and Britons across the land celebrate the anniversary by burning effigies of Guy Fawkes, having bonfires, and shooting fireworks. According to Parliament's website:

The tradition dates all the way back to November 5th 1605 when Londoners lit bonfires in the streets to give thanks that their King was safe. The bonfire parties quickly became a tradition, which spread across the country and has survived 400 years.⁸

The good news is that if you're interested in seeing Government in Action, you can see debates in progress when the Houses are in session. The Commons and Lords are sitting from about October to July. There are different opening times, recess times, etc. For more information see Parliament's website at <http://www.parliament.uk>.

Now for the bad news... while you can see debates in progress whenever they're happening, an overseas visitor can only take a tour of Parliament in the summer, and can't climb the clock tower at all. The tour takes about 75 minutes. Summer Opening tickets will be available on the day from the Ticket Office located next to the Jewel Tower (opposite the Houses of Parliament). The good news is that you can book your tour in advance... and I'd strongly recommend doing that if you have a group of scouts. In fact, all visitors are advised to pre-book tours in advance by calling +44 (0) 870 906 3773. At the time of writing this document, (not during the summer vacation) admission prices weren't available.

Just outside Parliament, across St. Margaret's Street, you'll find Westminster Abbey

Westminster Abbey

Every English monarch for the last 1000 years has been crowned at Westminster Abbey. The Abbey is truly "a must-see living pageant of British history."⁹ Every year the Abbey and Cathedral welcomes over one million visitors who want to explore this wonderful 700-year-old building.

Scouts and leaders alike will be amazed by all of the monuments and memorials in the Cathedral. Some of the more famous people memorialized include Charles Darwin, Sir Isaac Newton and William Shakespeare. Of special importance to the Scouting movement is the memorial of Lord and Lady Baden-Powell. You'll find their memorial in the nave by the Great West Door – just look for the purple and blue flags of the world associations of Scouting and Guiding. It is very close to the tomb of the unknown warrior – another site that all scouts should see. The Congressional Medal of Honor was presented by General Pershing to the British Unknown Warrior on 17 October 1921. The medal hangs on a pillar near the grave.

If you have time to tour the abbey, be sure to move beyond the interior of the Cathedral. Scouts can get a great insight into the way of life for the monks that lived, worked and worshipped here from the ninth through the 16th centuries. Cub groups will be interested in the children's trail, a free guide that takes the kids through the Cathedral and Abbey, shows them some of the more important memorials and teaches them something about Abbey life.

The bad news is that admission to the Abbey is pricey. Contact the abbey at +44 207 654 4871 to make your booking, and make sure you let them know you're a scout group. The abbey is open for tours every day except Sunday from 9:30 AM. At the time of writing this document, last admission times varied from 1:30 on Saturday to 6:00 on Wednesday, so check the website before you go: <http://www.westminster-abbey.org/visit-us>.

Big Ben to Embankment Rail Station

Make your way back to the river and head north/northeast along the river, walking along the Victoria Embankment. There are a couple of military memorials along the right hand side of the road (closest to the Thames). One of the more interesting is the Battle of Britain memorial.

The Battle of Britain is one of the most important battles of World War II, yet it's relatively unknown to Americans. In June, 1940, the Third Reich had taken France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark and Luxembourg. Britain was the last piece of Western Europe still in Allied hands. Hitler's plan to take Britain hinged on controlling the skies above the English Channel and southeastern England. During July and October of 1940, the out-numbered and under-experienced RAF Fighter Command held off the Luftwaffe, causing them to postpone and eventually cancel their conquest of Britain. During the four months from July 10th to October 31st, 2,936 British, European and Commonwealth airmen were involved in the defence of the British Isles. 544 lost their lives during the battle and a further 795 did not live to see the final victory in 1945.¹⁰

This monument was built in 2005 and unveiled on September 18, 2005. For more information, head over to <http://www.bbm.org.uk>. As Winston Churchill said, "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

When you get to the Waterloo Rail Bridge, go under the bridge and you'll have Embankment Tube Station across the street on your left.

Cleopatra's Needle

At this point you can take a quick detour. If you continue along the Victoria Embankment for about 200 meters, you will come upon an Egyptian obelisk known as Cleopatra's Needle. This actually has nothing to do with Cleopatra herself. It was made in Egypt for the Pharaoh Thotmes III in 1460 BC, making it almost 3,500 years old. It is known as Cleopatra's Needle as it was brought to London from Alexandria, the royal city of Cleopatra. This was all accomplished in 1878 to commemorate the victory over Napoleon at the 1815 Battle of Waterloo.¹¹ Once you've pondered the insanity of transporting a 15-ton, 3,500 year-old artifact from Egypt, head back to Embankment station and continue the trip.

Now go across the street and cut through Embankment Tube Station. Head uphill along Villiers St. toward Charing Cross Tube Station. This is a good spot to get snacks, as there are two Starbucks, several sandwich shops, etc.

Charing Cross



Charing Cross gets its name from a large stone cross that was built here in the 13th century. When King Edward I's wife, Eleanor of Castille, died in East Anglia (about 100 miles northeast of London), he brought her body back to Westminster to be buried. At each stop along the 12 day journey, the King ordered a cross built to commemorate her life. The cross is long gone, having been destroyed in the 17th century.

But a replica stands in front of Charing Cross Rail Station, the terminus of one of the busy rail lines in and out of London. If you want to skip "the City" (or if Westminster Abbey took too long) you can pop over to London Bridge for the "Bankside" portion of the tour. You can also catch a train here for Greenwich.

Turn left along The Strand, passing Charing Cross on your left, and you'll soon get to Trafalgar Square.

Trafalgar Square

Famous for its Lions, Trafalgar Square is the site of Nelson's Column. Probably the greatest naval hero of England, Admiral Lord Nelson led the British fleet to victory against the combined fleets of the French and Spanish navies at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. The Franco-Spanish fleet lost 22 ships in the battle, without a single British ship being destroyed.¹² Unfortunately, the Admiral was killed in battle and returned home to full State honors aboard his flagship, the HMS Victory. It's said that his body was preserved in a cask of brandy for the journey home! If you have time, you could take a day trip to Portsmouth to see the HMS Victory. It's about a 90 minute ride from Waterloo, and you'll need about 4 hours to really see the ship and the historic naval dockyard there.

The original Charing Cross stood at Trafalgar Square, but was destroyed in 1647 and replaced by an equestrian statue of Charles I in 1675. This point in Trafalgar Square is regarded as the official centre of London in legislation and when measuring distances from London.¹³

At this point you could take a side trip to Benjamin Franklin's house on Craven Street, off The Strand half way between Charing Cross and Trafalgar Square. (See appendix)

From Trafalgar Square, head back down The Strand toward Charing Cross. The first street you encounter on your left will be Duncannon Street, across from Charing Cross station. This street heads back to Trafalgar Square. Perpendicular to Duncannon Street, heading away from Charing Cross, is a wide pedestrian path which runs into Chandos Place. Follow Chandos Place to Bedford Street and turn left. Off Bedford Street take your first right onto Henrietta Street. Follow Henrietta Street to Covent Garden market.

Covent Garden

One of the "must-see" areas of London, Covent Garden has been a market place for over 1,000 years. The monks of Westminster Abbey maintained a large kitchen garden throughout the Middle Ages to provide its daily food. From the 12th to the 15th centuries, the monks' old "convent garden" became a major source of fruit and vegetables in London and was managed by a succession of leaseholders by grant from the Abbot of Westminster. The modern Covent Garden was redeveloped in the 17th century with the arcaded piazza and several shops and market stalls. The great fire in 1666 destroyed many of the rival markets in London, ensuring Covent Garden market as the most important in the country.

Covent Garden is also one of the best places in London to see a traditional busker in action. Today Covent Garden is the only part of London licensed for street entertainment with performers having to undertake auditions for the Market's management and representatives of the performers' union and signing up to timetabled slots.¹⁴ These street performers run the range from jugglers, magicians, unicycle stuntmen, you name it. The buskers usually perform on the large open space on the east side of the market shops. If you do stop for a show, keep in mind that some of the jokes can be a bit... un-scoutlike. It's all in fun, and mostly the cubs won't notice (and the older scouts will think they're hilarious). Just "be prepared" for anything, and make sure you drop a few pounds in the collection hat at the end of the show!

On a quirky note, the gas street lamps you'll see in Covent Garden are among only about 1,600 remaining in the City, and have been here for about 200 years!¹⁵

At the east corner of the marketplace is the London Transport Museum. This great museum shows the history of public transportation in London, from the days of horse-drawn buses, to construction of the first tube lines, to Routemaster buses. The museum will take you a good 60-90 minutes to go through the exhibits.

From Covent Garden, make your way back to The Strand, turn left, and head northeast. At 216 The Strand you'll find Twinings Tea Shop.

Twinings Tea Shop

This small shop has been selling tea on the Strand since 1706. It may not be the first tea shop in London, but it's certainly the longest-standing shop. Twinings has been an international tea merchant since the late 1700s, and was one of the more popular tea merchants in Colonial America. In fact, it's said that Twinings tea was not thrown overboard at the Boston Tea Party... that "honor" was reserved for lesser brands.¹⁶ If you love tea, this shop is the place for you. However, be warned that the shop is very small! Twinings holds a Royal Warrant of Appointment to Her Majesty the Queen. (Basically, this means the Queen loves Twinings Tea.)

At the back of the shop is a small exhibit on the history of tea and of Twinings.

Royal Courts of Justice

Across from Twinings are the Royal Courts of Justice. Akin to our Supreme Court, the RCJ is the home of the highest courts in the UK. Scout groups can visit, but only Venture-aged scouts will be allowed to enter the court rooms. For more information on touring the RCJ, see the appendix.

St. George's Dragon

Continuing along The Strand, just after the Royal Courts of Justice you'll see a statue of a dragon with a shield. This dragon, the fabled dragon of St. George, marks the border of the City of London. At this spot used to be the Temple Bar, one of the gates through the London City Wall. Imagine a gateway stretching across this road, controlling foot traffic and horse-drawn carriages moving in and out of London. You'll see the actual Temple Bar later on the hike. Also at this spot, The Strand becomes Fleet Street.

St. Dunstan's in the West¹⁷

Just past the Dragon, at 186a Fleet Street, you'll see St. Dunstan's in the West. This Anglican church has been here since at least 1070, and it survived the great fire in 1066, though it was rebuilt in 1831. The fabulous clock outside the church was built in 1671, and was the first public clock in London to have a minute hand. The figures of the two giants strike the hours and quarters, and turn their heads. It's also the location where the story of Sweeney Todd originated.

Sweeney Todd, the "Demon Barber of Fleet Street," is a London legend. According to some sources, Todd, a barber, tooth-puller and surgeon, actually existed. Apparently, in 1785 he set up shop at 186 Fleet Street. It is claimed that he murdered over 100 of his clients, before selling their flesh on to Margery Lovett, who owned a pie shop in nearby Bell Yard!¹⁸

Continue along Fleet Street to Johnson's Court. Turn left into Johnson's Court, and you'll come to Dr Johnson's House.

Dr. Samuel Johnson's House

This is one of the few residential houses of its age still surviving in the City of London. Built in 1700, it was a home and workplace for Samuel Johnson from 1748-1759, and it was here that he compiled the first comprehensive English Dictionary. You can visit the house... See the appendix for more details.

Across the courtyard from Dr. Johnson's house is a statue of Hodge the Cat, probably the most famous cat in history. Cub Scouts seem to love getting their picture taken by Hodge, who was noted by Johnson to be a "very fine cat, indeed."



Continue past Hodge, bear right through Gough Square, and make your way back to Fleet Street via Wine Office Court and Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese.



Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese

"The Cheese" has been on this spot since about 1538. The current incarnation comes from 1667, when it was re-built after the great fire. Arthur Conan Doyle, Mark Twain, Alfred Lord Tennyson and Charles Dickens are said to have been regulars here. In fact, Dickens refers to the Cheshire Cheese in his "A Tale of Two Cities."¹⁹ There is a bronze plaque inside noting Dickens' favorite spot to sit.²⁰

Now head up Fleet Street again. Just a hundred yards or so along Fleet Street you'll come to a bus stop. Just past the bus stop, across the road, you'll look down an alley way to see the steeple of St. Bride's Church.

St. Bride's Church

This church steeple is literally the inspiration for the modern tiered wedding cake. Apparently, a Fleet Street confectioner named Thomas Rich was commissioned to prepare a cake for the wedding of a fashionable noblewoman. He decided to copy Christopher Wren's design for St. Bride's and the design became synonymous with weddings.

As a tourist site, St. Bride's is probably better without a bunch of scouts. But it has an interesting history, some links to America's Founding Fathers, and is worth a visit another time.

After you've taken a picture of the Wedding Cake Church, head on up Fleet Street to St. Paul's Cathedral.

St. Paul's Cathedral

This is a tourist site par excellence, and well worth the visit. In front of the Cathedral you'll see an interesting statue of Queen Anne. Surrounding the Queen are four figures representing the extent of the British Empire at the time – the native American represents the Americas. See if you can guess which ones represent Ireland, Britain and Oceania.

Around the left (north) side of the Cathedral is the Temple Bar. Imagine this gate blocking the road you've been walking up! It was removed from its spot near the Royal Courts of Justice and re-built in a field in Hertfordshire. In 2003 it was returned to the City and reconstructed here at Paternoster Square.²¹

If you have an hour or so, you must head into the church. Scout groups in uniform usually get free admission to the Cathedral, with a £2 per person charge to visit the galleries. You must pre-book this scout visit by emailing visits@stpaulscathedral.org.uk Normal group admission rates are £10 for adults and £3 for kids aged 7-16, so wear your uniforms and book ahead! Last admission is at 16:00, and no photography is allowed inside the Cathedral. One of the best views in London is from the top of the dome. On a clear day you can see for miles across London. As you climb up to the top of the dome, you'll reach the whispering gallery, which is on the inside of the cathedral about half way up. Apparently you can whisper on one side and be heard on the other. Unfortunately, with all the tourists it will probably be way too loud to actually hear each other across the dome! But give it a try...

Another site inside the Cathedral is the American Chapel. The American Memorial Chapel stands behind the High Altar in an area that was bomb-damaged during the Second World War – a gesture of gratitude to the American dead of the Second World War from the people of Britain.

If you're in London at Thanksgiving (the fourth Thursday in November) you can attend St. Paul's for the Thanksgiving Service at 11:00 AM. The US Ambassador usually speaks, and the service is led by the American churches serving the London expatriate community. Entry to the Cathedral is free for this service.

During the Blitz, St. Paul's was hit by bombs several times, but the fire brigade managed to keep the church from being destroyed. When you're done at St. Paul's, head to the south side and toward the Millennium Bridge. Just across the street from the Cathedral you'll see the United Kingdom Firefighters National Memorial. This memorial commemorates the bravery of firefighters serving the nation during the Blitz.

After seeing the memorial, cross the Millennium Bridge to the South Bank of the Thames. You'll find yourself at the Tate Modern Museum.

Tate Modern Museum

If you fancy a look at some unusual art, this is the place for you. This museum, like most in the UK, is free. (Some special exhibits will have a fee.) Depending on your scouts, and the day you visit, you could spend quite a while at the Tate Modern. See the appendix for more info.

If it's the weekend or a school holiday, Cub Scouts will love the Family Zone section on the third floor of the museum. There are loads of games and exploration packs that help the cubs get involved with the art, but only at the weekends or school holidays. If you want to do one or two of the activities, you should plan on spending at least an hour in the Family Zone. Even without the Family Zone, the museum is quirky enough to keep the interest of most scouts.

Upon leaving the Tate, make your way to the Thames Path National Trail. This National Trail runs for 180 miles along the length of the river Thames. Starting at the Thames Flood Barrier at Woolwich in South East London it runs along the banks of the Thames to Kemble in Gloucestershire.²² The area here in the London area is all "City" but as you get farther west it passes through some really nice country side. From this point, its about 5.5 miles along the path to Greenwich.

Put the river on your left and start walking. You'll soon come to Shakespeare's Globe Theatre.

The Globe Theatre

The Globe Theatre was Shakespeare's stomping ground. Some of the world's best plays were premiered in London at the original Globe which stood not far from this site. American businessman Sam Wannamaker had a dream, and in the 1970s was instrumental in building this replica of the Globe Theatre. The current Globe stands on the site of the 17th century Rose Theatre, and there is a great museum about the theatre, Shakespeare, and the history of the area.

Scouts may enjoy touring and/or seeing a show at the Globe. In the 17th century only wealthy merchants and nobles could afford to have seats. Most of the audience stood on the ground at the foot of the stage. So-called "groundlings" were common folk, and are the reason that most Shakespearean plays have a narrator – after all, someone needed to explain the plot to the uneducated commoners! If you go to a show at the Globe, make sure you contact them well in advance of your trip and pick a show that the scouts will like. Also, reading the play before your visit as a patrol or den would be a great idea to get the scouts accustomed to the lyrical and dated language used by Shakespeare.

Leaving the Globe, continue down the Thames Path. You'll soon get to a great spot for dinner, with Nando's, Wagamama, and The Anchor.

The Anchor

The Anchor has been here since at least 1676. However, it is well established that Samuel Pepys took watched London burn down during the Great Fire of 1666. He writes that he sought refuge in "a little alehouse on bankside ... and there watched the fire grow". Dr. Johnson was a regular, and a copy of his dictionary is on display.²³

By this point on the trail, you'll probably be ready for some food. The Anchor has great Fish and Chips from their 2nd floor chip shop. On a nice day you can eat them on the nice riverside deck. This is a great option for getting a good meal for about £8.

Nando's and Wagamama are other good food options here in Bankside. Nando's does one thing and does it well. Their piri-piri chicken is great, and you can get a good meal for about £10. Wagamama is a pan-Asian noodle bar that serves good, fresh food. They're definitely more vegetarian-friendly. You'll get a good meal for about £12.

If it's not Thursday, Friday or Saturday, this area is about your only option for good food. Otherwise, if it's before 4:00 you'll probably want to wait about 15 minutes until you get to Borough Market. See below...

When you're ready, head left between Wagamama and Vinopolis onto Clink Street. You'll soon come to The Clink, and the Borough of Southwark (pronounced "Suthurk").

The Clink

The Clink was a debtor's prison owned by the Bishop of Winchester. In the 16th or 17th century, most prisons were privately-run affairs. If you were sentenced to prison, you needed to pay for your upkeep! The Clink was reputed to be one of the worst of these prisons, and debtors who couldn't pay (or who couldn't get someone else to pay) were sentenced to hang in the gibbet as a warning to all who would try to live beyond their means. There is one of the original gibbets hanging outside the Clink, complete with the remains of a poor soul who couldn't pay his bills! This is a fun museum to tour, but it's a bit grisly for cub scouts.

From the Clink, continue east along the Thames Path. When you get to the next corner (Stoney St.) you should see the ruins of Winchester Palace in front of you.

Winchester Palace

The Bishops of Winchester were huge landowners in Southwark, and this rose window is all that remains of the palace which was built around 1136. The rose window here is supposed to have been built about 200 years later. The palace was arranged around 2 courtyards, and included a prison (the Clink), brewhouse and butchery as well as a tennis court, bowling alley and pleasure gardens for the Bishop. The window was re-discovered after a fire in the 19th century.²⁴

If it's Thursday, Friday or Saturday, head back to Stoney Street. Following Stoney Street you will come upon Borough Market.

Any other day, continue following signs for the Thames Path. Skip the Borough Market and you'll get to the Golden Hinde in a few minutes.

Borough Market

Borough Market is open Thursday 11:00 – 5:00, Friday 12:00 – 6:00 and Saturday 9:00 – 4:00. If you happen to be on the trail at these times, you should definitely take a trip over to the Market.

There has been a market at this site for almost 2000 years. It was a market in Roman times, sitting at the junction of the Watling Road and the Great London Road. The market was a final rest for visitors coming to London in the 17th century, and sits at the historic end of London Bridge. Over the years, the Borough has been encroached upon by the expansion of London Bridge Rail Station and by the rebuilding (and relocation) of London Bridge. But this market is still one of the most vibrant of all the London markets. This is still where Londoners come on a Saturday to get their produce and meat for their Sunday Roast.

You can get some great food at good prices at Borough Market. But it will be “market eating,” with no (or relatively little) seating available. If you don’t mind that, set a meeting place, let your scouts have £10 and an hour, and turn them loose. They’ll find some grub and meet you, and you’ll get a chance to explore the wonderful world of cheeses, meats, veg, ice cream, etc... You may want to find the guys selling the grilled cheese sandwiches. If you like grilled cheese, these will take you to heaven. Note, the burger stalls, etc, are very busy during lunch hour (between 1:00 and 2:00). There are a few places to get “sit down” food around the perimeter of the Market. If you like sushi, Feng Sushi is pretty good. But when looking for food in Borough Market you should definitely avoid the pubs. Not only are they slow in their service, but the food isn’t all that good.

To get your bearings after the scouts have eaten, find the pub called “The Market Porter” on Stoney St. Put the pub at your back and head into and through the market. When you get to a major crossroads, with the Green Market ahead of you, you’ll be at Cathedral Street. Turn left on Cathedral Street and head over to Southwark Cathedral. When you get to the Cathedral the road will kind of fork. Take the left fork around to the Golden Hinde.

Golden Hinde

Sir Francis Drake is known to the English as one of the greatest patriots and sea captains of the 16th century. The Spanish called him a pirate and a scoundrel. By rights, he was a pirate. He sailed his ship all over the English Channel and the Spanish coast, raiding merchantmen in the name of Queen Elizabeth.

This life-sized replica of Sir Francis Drake’s ship is seaworthy, and has sailed all around the world. Imagine a ship this size terrorizing the Spanish merchant fleet! You can visit the ship, but scouts will probably enjoy the HMS Belfast more, which you can see from the railing at the edge of the Thames looking toward the Tower Bridge (see below). So after you’ve taken your pictures, go ahead and move on.

From the Golden Hinde, continue about a hundred meters along the Thames Path to get to Southwark Cathedral and the original site of London Bridge. On the North side of the Cathedral, closest to the Thames, you’ll find a couple of granite blocks with an interpretive sign. These are pieces of the original foundations of the 18th century London Bridge.

London Bridge

Most visitors to London mistakenly believe that “Tower Bridge” is “London Bridge”. In fact, London Bridge is the big, ugly, utilitarian bridge you see closest to you, just to your east from this location. London Bridge has come across the Thames close to this location since Roman times. Cub Scouts may enjoy the Magic Tree House book about 16th and 17th century London when the Bridge was a bustling town in its own right.

From Southwark Cathedral and the original spot of London Bridge, head along the Thames Path. Go underneath the current London Bridge and keep following “Thames Path” signs to get back to the river. Follow the river past Hay’s Galleria (remember this location later) to the HMS Belfast.

HMS Belfast

From the HMS Belfast you can see the Tower of London across the river. The fancy bridge you see heading across the river is Tower Bridge. Here (or on the deck of the Belfast) is probably one of the best places along the river to get a group picture with the Tower Bridge behind you.

Tower Bridge

The last stop on the London Historic Trail is Tower Bridge. Tower Bridge was built in the 1800s and gets its name from the Tower of London which lies across the river. This is a drawbridge, which is raised and lowered periodically when large ships move into the City proper. It can be exciting to see the bridge raised and a cruise ship coming through – it helps you realize how large those ships are!

If your scouts are interested in the engineering of running a drawbridge, they may enjoy the tour of the bridge and its control and engine rooms. If, like most scouts, they just like climbing to high places, the tour gets them up to the top of the bridge for great views of London.

Finally, head back to Hay’s Galleria and go through the Galleria to Tooley Street. You will be looking at London Bridge Station. The Northern and Jubilee lines of the Underground go through London Bridge Tube Station. Southeastern Trains, Southern Railway, and First Capital Connect head through the overground rail station.

From London Bridge Station, you can get the Jubilee Line to Waterloo, and end the tour where you began.

Greenwich Add-on

Getting to Greenwich

The point of adding Greenwich is to see the National Maritime Museum and the Royal Observatory. There are several ways to get there from London Bridge Station.

- 1- Take an overland Southeastern Train to Maze Hill. Follow signs from the station or ask directions from station staff.
- 2- Take the Jubilee line to Canary Wharf, and change to the DLR. Take the DLR to “Cutty Sark for Maritime Greenwich”. Follow signs from the station or ask directions from station staff.

However you get to Greenwich, make your way to the National Maritime Museum and the Royal Observatory.

National Maritime Museum

Britain has a long and proud maritime history. A great portion of it can be enjoyed at the National Maritime Museum.

Allow at least an hour at the Museum. There are some great exhibits showing how the maritime tradition has impacted Britain and the world. There are exhibits on ship-building, navigation, commerce, you name it. As with other museums, this one is free except for some special exhibits.

The Museum is open daily from 10:00 – 5:00. If you’re bringing a large group, the Museum asks that you let them know in advance. The Bookings Unit is open from 9:00 – 5:00 Monday to Friday. They can be reached at +44 208 312 6608 or bookings@nmm.ac.uk. The same ticket and booking office covers the Royal Observatory.

Up the hill about a 15-20 minute hard hike leads to the Royal Observatory and the home of the Prime Meridian.

Royal Observatory and the Prime Meridian

Scouts will look forward to seeing Longitude 0°00.00” The Greenwich Meridian was developed at the Royal Observatory, and runs right through the middle of the courtyard. Scout groups can put one foot in the East and one foot in the West, and see just how accurate their GPS receivers are. At 1 o’clock each day the bright red time-ball signals Greenwich time. The museum has a great exhibit on the development of the meridians, and why they even exist.

Another exhibit at the Royal Observatory traces the invention of a timepiece that could read accurate time while travelling on the ocean. This exhibit shows science and technology at work over 200 years ago – pretty cool.

The Planetarium is a great option at the Royal Observatory. There is a fee for this one, but the scouts will love it. It costs about £5 per person, and you can discuss (and pre-book) when you contact the Bookings Unit to arrange the group visit (see above). Just make sure you remember that the Planetarium is at the Royal Observatory, NOT at the Maritime Museum, and give yourself time to get up the hill if you see the Museum first.

Allow about an hour at the Royal Observatory, plus Planetarium time.

After you're done at the observatory, head back down the hill to Romney Road. Turn left and go to the end of the street. Turn right on Greenwich Church Street. At the end of the street is the Cutty Sark.

Cutty Sark

The Cutty Sark is one of the most famous Tea Clippers ever sailed in the British fleet. It sailed in the 18th century, bringing tea from the orient around the Cape of Good Hope and up the coasts of Africa and Europe to England. Its permanent home is here in Greenwich drydock.

In early 2007 a large fire gutted the ship. Fortunately, many of the historical artifacts had been removed mere months earlier in order to start a renovation program on the ship. The fire destroyed a large part of the ship's original woodwork, but did not completely destroy the ship. At the time of this publication, the Cutty Sark is undergoing major restoration work and is not open to the public. Once it's re-opened, this section will be updated.

Next to the Cutty Sark, and right up against the Thames, you'll find a round red brick building. This is the entrance to the Greenwich Foot Tunnel.

Greenwich Foot Tunnel

The Greenwich Foot Tunnel linking the Isle of Dogs to Greenwich was opened on 4 August, 1902. According to Wikipedia, "the tunnel replaced an expensive and sometimes unreliable ferry service, and was intended to allow workers living on the south side of the Thames to reach their workplaces in the London docks and shipyards then situated on the Isle of Dogs."²⁵ This is one of a handful of tunnels that were built under the Thames in the late 19th / early 20th centuries. The only reason to go through the tunnel at this point in the Historical Trail is to be able to say you've done it. You can just as easily get across the river on the DLR. However, from the other side of the Thames you will see some good views of Greenwich.



Anyway, if you're going through the tunnel, come out the other side, and make your way north to the Island Gardens DLR stop, then take the DLR to Canary Wharf.

If you don't go through the tunnel, and you want to go to Canary Wharf, go back up Greenwich Church Street to the Cutty Sark DLR stop. Board the DLR and head to Canary Wharf. (You could also follow signs back to Maze Hill rail station...)

From Canary Wharf, transfer to the Jubilee line and you can get to London Bridge or Waterloo. If you're staying at the Lord Amory, the ship owned by the Dockland Scout Project, its an easy walk from Canary Wharf.

Lord Amory

The Lord Amory is the water-based headquarters of the Dockland Scout Project. The DSP is a Scout District within the Greater London Scout Council. They offer water activities, open days and courses to scout groups. They also offer accommodation to visitors of London on a B&B style basis at very competitive rates (but usually fully booked a year in advance). The Lord Amory is a pilot cutter, and claims to be the UK's "only permanently moored campsite."²⁶



For more information about the Lord Amory, check out <http://www.lordamory.org/>. For information about B&B accommodation, you can call them at +44 207 987 3657.

A scout is Trustworthy, so here are my sources:

¹ Place-holder for formatting purposes

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Eye

³ See <http://www.londoneye.com/ExploreTheLondonEye/InterestingFacts/Default.aspx>

⁴ For more information and some links to pre-Roman history of London, check out

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boudica>

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ The Parilament website, <http://www.parliament.uk> is a really good site for information about the building, the government, etc.

⁷ Good website about Guy Fawkes: <http://www.parliament.uk/gunpowderplot/>. The Cub-friendly one is at

http://www.parliament.uk/gunpowderplot/children_index.htm

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ <http://www.westminster-abbey.org/visit-us>

¹⁰ <http://www.bbm.org.uk/history.htm>

¹¹ A really cool website about the history of the obelisk is here: <http://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/England-History/CleopatrasNeedle.htm>

¹² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Trafalgar

¹³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charing_Cross

¹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Covent_Garden

¹⁵ Interesting article from the Westminster City Council about the 200th anniversary of London's gas lamps in June, 2007. <http://www.westminster.gov.uk/councilgovernmentanddemocracy/councils/pressoffice/news/pr-3801.cfm>

¹⁶ <http://www.twinningsusa.com/Twinnings/HistoryOfTwinnings.php>

¹⁷ St Dunstan's information comes from their website, <http://www.stdunstaninthewest.org/homepage.htm>

¹⁸ Sweeny Todd information from London Walks and from the St. Dunstan's website.

¹⁹ General information about the pub from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ye_Olde_Cheshire_Cheese

²⁰ A picture of the brass plaque can be seen here:

http://scienceblogs.com/grrlscientist/2008/10/london_je_olde_cheshire_cheese.php

²¹ All of the information mentioned here about the Temple Bar can be seen from the informational plaque at the site.

For more detailed information, go to: <http://www.thetemplebar.info/>

²² <http://www.thames-path.org.uk/>

²³ http://www.pubs.com/pub_details.cfm?ID=144

²⁴ Heavily paraphrased (some text downright copied) from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winchester_Palace

²⁵ From: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greenwich_foot_tunnel

²⁶ From their website, <http://www.lordamory.org/>

Appendix (in progress)

Royal Courts of Justice <http://www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk/infoabout/rcj/history.htm>

Benjamin Franklin House

Doctor Johnson's House <http://www.drjohnsonshouse.org/>

Tate Modern <http://www.tate.org.uk/>

Appendix-
Hodge the Cat

An Elegy on the Death of Dr Johnson's Favourite Cat

Written by English poet Percival Stockdale

Published in a small volume of "miscellanies" in 1778 and again in a collection of his works in 1810

Let not the honest muse disdain
For Hodge to wake the plaintive strain.
Shall poets prostitute their lays
In offering venal Statesmen praise;
By them shall flowers Parnassian bloom
Around the tyrant's gaudy tomb;
And shall not Hodge's memory claim
Of innocence the candid fame;
Shall not his worth a poem fill,
Who never thought, nor uttered ill;
Who by his manner when caressed
Warmly his gratitude expressed;
And never failed his thanks to purr
Whene'er he stroaked his fable furr?

The general conduct if we trace
Of our articulating race,
Hodge's, example we shall find
A keen reproof of human kind.

He lived in town, yet ne'er got drunk,
Nor spent one farthing on a punk;
He never filched a single goat,
Nor bilked a taylor of a coat;
His garb when first he drew his breath
His dress through life, his shroud in death.

Of human speech to have the power,
To move on two legs, not on four;
To view with unobstructed eye
The verdant field, the azure sky
Favoured by luxury to wear
The velvet gown, the golden glare -
--If honour from these gifts we claim,
Chartres had too severe a fame.

But wouldst though, son of Adam, learn
Praise from thy noblest powers to earn;
Dost thou, with generous pride aspire
Thy nature's glory to acquire?
Then in thy life exert the man,

With moral deed adorn the span;
Let virtue in they bosom lodge;
Or wish thou hadst been born a Hodge.

Webliography

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ye_Olde_Cheshire_Cheese

Wikipedia article on “The Cheese”

http://www.bbc.co.uk/london/content/articles/2005/08/15/charingcross_feature.shtml

Charing Cross article. More generally the bbc website is a great source of information about London.

<http://www.nmm.ac.uk/>

National Maritime Museum official website. Loads of good information on the history of the Thames in London. Also the home of the Royal Observatory.

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.12861>

English Heritage is the keeper of many of the UK’s most interesting cultural resources and monuments. They’re similar to the National Park System in the US. This brief article shows information about Winchester Palace.

<http://www.tate.org.uk/>

Home of the Tate Modern

http://historictavel.suite101.com/article.cfm/london_landmarks_stpauls

Interesting website that helps to plan historical vacations.

<http://www.thames-path.org.uk/>

Volunteer organization that has put together several walks along the Thames Path.

<http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/ThamesPath/>

Official website of the Thames Path National Trail

<http://www.coventgardenlife.com/info/history.htm>

Interesting article on Covent Garden’s history. The rest of the site is more of a travel guide centered on Covent Garden.

<http://www.walks.com/>

The home of London Walks.

<http://www.boroughmarket.org.uk/>

Borough Market’s official website.

<http://www.lordamory.org/>

Home of the Dockland Scout Project

<http://www.londoneye.com/>

London Eye’s website

