

## EAST END PHILANTHROPY WALK BY DR PETER GRANT

### Contents

Bunhill Row .....	7
Braithwaite House.....	9
Peabody Buildings.....	9
Bunhill Fields Graveyard .....	10
Wesley Chapel and museum of John Wesley. ....	15
Worship Street.....	16
Folgate Street and Elder Street.....	18
Spitalfields Market .....	20
St Mary Spital.....	21
Brushfield Street. ....	22
Commercial Street .....	22
Whitechapel (Jack the Ripper) Murders and ‘the worst street in London’ .....	22
Fournier Street.....	26
Princelet Street .....	27
Brick Lane.....	28
Fashion Street .....	31
Wentworth Street.....	32
Commercial Street .....	34
Petticoat Lane Market .....	36
Devonshire Square.....	37
Hoop and Grapes Pub .....	38
Philanthropy Walk Extension – 1 The City and the Slave Trade .....	39
Philanthropy Walk Extension – 2 Whitechapel.....	45

## Highlighted sections can be omitted for a shorter walk

### Pre-Walk Briefing

#### The East End

An area of great poverty, at least in the past, and successive waves of immigration. Main ones being:

#### Huguenots

- The late 17th century saw the coming of the Huguenots, as French Protestants were nicknamed by their Catholic enemies.
- The origin of the word is from a supporter of a group in Geneva opposing annexation to Savoy, which was led by Hugues Besançon. It came to mean a confederate or ally.
- The Huguenots described themselves as 'réfugiés' (seekers of refuge) which has given us our word, refugee.
- During and after the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572 as many as 30,000 Protestants may have been killed.
- In 1598 French King Henry IV, who had converted from Protestantism, signed the Edict of Nantes which guaranteed Huguenot rights.
- But in 1685, the Catholic King Louis XIV revoked the Edict and outlawed the practice of Protestantism. The Huguenots' services were banned and their churches torn down. All French children were now required to be raised as Catholics.
- Starting significantly from about 1687 around 200,000 French Protestants fled abroad, smuggling themselves out hidden in bales of straw or empty beer barrels and wine vats. Around 50,000-80,000 of them settled in London. By 1700 they formed around 5% of London's population.
- Many of the Huguenots who made Spitalfields their home came from Lyons, centre of the French silk industry. They set up business as silk weavers, using handlooms to weave raw silk imported from Italy. Silk weaving flourished until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Immigration brought both tensions and philanthropy. In 1683 English weavers came close to rioting and in 1697 riots did break out with English weavers laying siege to the headquarters of the East India

Company in Leadenhall St. On the other hand in 1687 over £240,000 was raised to assist the refugees.

## Jews

- Jews had been expelled from England in 1290 and an Act of 1401 made practising the Jewish religion punishable by burning at the stake. But in 1641 during the Long Parliament this Act was repealed and Cromwell was more tolerant and from the 1640s Jews, mainly from Portugal, Spain and Amsterdam, began settling in London. Even so numbers were small – around 760 in 1695.
- Following the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881 Russia passed a series of anti-Jewish laws remarkably similar to those of the Nazis in the 1930s. Prompted by economic hardship and increasingly ferocious persecution more than 2 million Jews left Eastern Europe between 1881 and 1914.
- Many Jews landing in England actually intended to go to America, but about 120,000 stayed in this country. Attracted by the East End's reputation as a place for cheap living, and by the fact that it had been home to a Jewish population in previous centuries, large numbers settled in Spitalfields and Whitechapel, often finding work in the 'rag trade'.
- By 1900 Jews formed around 95% of the population in some parts of the East End.
- One combination between the French and Jewish immigrants' food preferences created Britain's national food – bringing together French fried potatoes with the East European Jewish staple of battered and fried fish. Fish and chips was supposedly first sold in the 1860s by a Jewish immigrant called Joseph Malin.

## Bengalis and others

- Irish from the 17<sup>th</sup> century but notably in the 1840s following the potato famine

- In the 20<sup>th</sup> century it became a centre for Bengali immigrants, mainly from the Sylhet region of Bangladesh.
- Already had roots in pre-war Spitalfields but the first main arrivals were immediately after the turmoil following Indian independence in 1947.
- The major catalyst came in 1971. In that year East Pakistan (known today as Bangladesh) went to war against West Pakistan (Pakistan) for independence, in what was known as the Bangladesh Liberation War. The Pakistani infantry started to occupy the Sylhet region and large numbers of Sylhetis fled the country, arriving in the UK during the 1970s.
- In 1961 there were 800 people from Pakistan in the borough but by 1991 Bangladeshis formed the majority of Spitalfields residents 5,379 out of a total population of 8,861 and a total of 38,000 in the wider area.
- Also many others including Maltese, Greek Cypriots and Somalis.

## The changing face of the East End

### **16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Century**

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century this area was still fields, rough ground where archery was practised or 'tenter grounds' where washing and newly manufactured and dyed cloth was dried. There were also a number of windmills.

As we are outside the walls of the City of London the area between Bishopsgate and Moorgate was also one where the first theatres were established – before moving on later to the more famous South Bank.

Built by actor-manager James Burbage, near the family home in Holywell Street, The Theatre is considered the first theatre built in London for the sole purpose of theatrical productions in 1576. After a dispute with the landlord, the theatre was dismantled in 1599 in just 2 days and the timbers used in the construction of the Globe Theatre on Bankside.

Both William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe lived for a while in Hog Lane, now called Worship Street, which we'll be walking down later, and Marlowe famously killed the son of a Hog Lane innkeeper.

At this time the dominant building in the area was still the former Priory of St Mary's to the East of Bishopsgate. Founded in 1197 it was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1539. More about the Priory later when we visit the site.

### **18<sup>th</sup> Century**

By the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century things had changed dramatically. Though there were many gardens, reflecting the relatively high status of the area at the time and the open fields of both the Old Artillery Ground (near Spitalfields Market) and New Artillery Ground (to the west in Bunhill Row) a network of streets had been built including over the old Priory grounds and buildings.

### **19<sup>th</sup> Century**

Another century on and the area had transformed again. Virtually all of the gardens and open spaces had gone, far denser and much more 'down market' housing had gone up and many of the older, Huguenot dwellings were now occupied by multiple families. In 1889 Charles Booth drew the first of his 'poverty maps' of the East End and though higher class properties, including many shops, lined the main streets such as the (relatively newly constructed)

Commercial Street (running north from Whitechapel High Street); much poorer and denser housing filled in the back streets, alleyways and courts.

There had been a dramatic increase in the Jewish population – concentrated in specific areas such as Flower and Dean Street and Fashion Street, both of which we'll visit, where Jews formed over 95% of the population. Whereas in the streets around Bethnal Green Road – also very poor areas – the concentration was less than 5% as these were the streets where the British working class lived.

## Start of Walk

### Bunhill Row

The site of the Business School was formerly the De La Rue printing works where Bank of England notes were printed. On 11 September 1940 the works were destroyed by German bombing with thousands of notes going up into the air and floating over the East End.

The poet John Milton lived at No 125 Bunhill Row between 1663 and 1675. He finished *Paradise Lost* here as well as writing *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*. The current housing on the east side, 20 and 21-29, was built in 1830–31 for the Honourable Artillery Company.

Where the Tesco Express now stands was the site of William Caslon's type-foundry, established in 1730. Caslon was commissioned by the Christian Knowledge Society to make a new font which was subsequently used to print the American Declaration of Independence.

#### **Philanthropy Note**

In *Paradise Lost*, stereotypes of male/female interaction dissolve. The manner in which Milton accomplishes this task is by asserting that an undeveloped intellectual and emotional capacity leads to the inappropriate enactment of discipline and charity, which are the means by which the individual accomplishes the purpose of existence. Milton believed the essential requirement of every person was the possession of Christian virtue. By acquiring this indispensable trait, the individual enjoys the self-completion of ethical righteousness, the benefit of enlightened self-knowledge, and the affirmation of spiritual affinity with the divine.

*Leave Bayes building and turn left. Cross road to:*

### **Artillery Fields, HQ & Cricket Ground of the Honourable Artillery Company**

The Hon Artillery Company is the oldest regiment in the British Army (founded in 1537) and 2nd oldest in the world after the Swiss Guard at the Vatican.

This is actually the 'new' Artillery Ground having been created in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The 'old' Artillery Ground (used for gun manufacture and practice) in

the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries is now the site of Spitalfields Market and the land to its south which we shall be visiting later.

Artillery House (facing the green) dates from 1735.

These fields were the site of some of the first major cricket matches in London.

In 1743 10,000 people watched 3 of England play 3 of Kent for a purse of 500 guineas and in 1744 “the greatest cricket match ever known” between full Kent and England teams took place.

In 1751 Frederick, Prince of Wales, the father of the future George III played here. He was struck on the head by a ball and died shortly afterwards. A poem was composed to mark his death and though he was far more popular than his father sums up the thoughts about the royal family at the time:

Here lies poor Fred who was alive and is dead,  
Had it been his father I had much rather,  
Had it been his sister nobody would have missed her,  
Had it been his brother, still better than another,  
Had it been the whole generation, so much better for the nation,  
But since it is Fred who was alive and is dead,  
There is no more to be said!

In 1774 Kent met All England in the first match under an accepted written code of laws but major matches ceased being played here mainly because of the difficulty of charging spectators, as the area was open fields.

On 15 September 1784 Vincenzo Lunardi made the first ascent in England by balloon from here. During the voyage — a two hour and fifteen minute flight — Lunardi dined on cold chicken. He also wrote letters, three of which he dropped from the balloon “trusting to the chance that some kind Samaritan might pick them up and post them.”

### **Philanthropy Note**

As a relatively wealthy regiment the HAC Benevolent Fund was especially active during the First World War. One of their short lived members was the composer Havergal Brian whose satirical opera *The Tigers* is partly based on his time in the regiment.

### Braithwaite House

For a brief time in 1968 this was the most infamous address in London. It was here on 8 May that the gangster twins Ronnie and Reggie Kray were arrested at their mothers flat. True to form Reg was asleep with a girl from Walthamstow and Ron with his latest boyfriend. Beside the bed his jacket had his 'blacklist' of those he wanted to see murdered.

### **Philanthropy Note**

The twins were always noted for their charitable works and contributed to many causes, though occasionally when they staged charity events they also took a cut. The largest single donation to the Aberfan disaster fund came from the twins.

*Cross back over road to assemble opposite The Artillery Arms pub to give students a view of*

### Peabody Buildings

The dramatic growth of London's population in the first half of the nineteenth century – from 959,000 in 1801 to 1,948,000 in 1841 – had brought immense problems, not least in housing. Housing legislation was 'ill-conceived, uncoordinated and well-nigh useless'.

Into this void stepped a number of philanthropic and quasi-philanthropic organisations all of whom practised varying forms of social finance.

In 1862 George Peabody established his famous Trust Fund. Peabody was a wealthy American merchant banker, a partner of Junius S. Morgan, who had set up operations in London and he appointed a group of trustees to administer a fund originally amounting to £150,000 (later increased to £500,000 so about £50m today) for the benefit of the London poor.

The Trustees made two key decisions. Firstly that housing was the priority and secondly that the fund should be self-perpetuating. Their first enterprise, in Commercial Street Spitalfields, was opened in 1864.

This project was followed in the same decade by four large estates in Islington, Shadwell, Westminster and Chelsea. All these developments were not dwellings for the very poor but for the 'respectable' working class which was emphasised by the rents of 2s 6d for a single room to 5s 0d for three when a night in a common lodging house would perhaps cost 4d.

Financial independence in the form of Peabody's endowment meant his Trust was more financially stable than other housing bodies and that a return of three per cent (adequate to maintain the value of the endowment) was acceptable as opposed to the five per cent of less secure funds. It also meant that the Peabody Trust had the confidence of the banks from whom large loans, £265,000 in 1881 and £390,000 four years later, could be obtained to fund further projects. Overall the Peabody Trust achieved a 'pre-eminence in the housing world which was unique' it was the first large-scale and independent housing agency and today still retains a significant presence in the London social housing sector with 50,000 properties under its management and assets of nearly £2 billion.

The majority of this estate was constructed in the 1880s, although Dufferin Court dates from 1898. P and Q blocks on the south side are of a very different character as these were rebuilt in 1956 and have recently had major enveloping works completed.

*Return to Bunhill Row and cross road into:*

### [Bunhill Fields Graveyard](#)

In 1549 a large quantity of bones were moved here from St Paul's churchyard and the fields became known as 'Bone Hill', later Bunhill. It was originally intended as a burial ground for victims of the 1665 Great Plague but look around and what familiar symbol of graveyards is missing? (Crosses) This is because in the 1660s it was instead purchased for non-conformist burials.

When it closed in 1854 over 150,000 had been interred here. It is now a Grade 1 listed site and in addition 75 graves are Grade 2 listed.

*Proceed down the main avenue turn left to view the tomb of Dame Mary Page. She requested the inscription herself.*

*Continue a few meters north and point out the grave of: Joseph Hardcastle (1752-1819). Hardcastle was a Yorkshireman who became the first Treasurer of what became the London Missionary Society in 1795. Hardcastle was a close friend of the abolitionist Thomas Clarkson and Clarkson wrote his history of the Abolition of the Slave Trade whilst saying with Hardcastle and his wife. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Society became one of the largest and best funded charities in the world. It still exists today as the Council for World Mission.*

*Opposite is:*

Tomb of Thomas Bayes: 1701 – 1761 was an English statistician, philosopher and Presbyterian minister who is known for formulating the theorem that bears his name: Bayes' theorem. Bayes never published what would become his most famous accomplishment; his notes were edited and published after his death by Richard Price. His theorem describes the probability of an event, based on prior knowledge of conditions that might be related to the event. For example, if the risk of developing health problems is known to increase with age, Bayes' theorem allows the risk to an individual of a known age to be assessed more accurately than simply assuming that the individual is typical of the population as a whole.

*Continue with the open green on the left to the grave of:*

### **William Blake 1757-1827**

William Blake was born at 28 Broad Street (now Broadwick St.) in Soho, the third of seven children. Blake was a poet, illustrator, engraver, draughtsman, writer and painter whose efforts, due to their idiosyncratic and unorthodox nature, were largely unappreciated in his own lifetime. Of the three significant memorials here Blake's is by far the simplest as they represent the relative standings of Bunyan, Defoe and Blake in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when they were put up. Since then Bunyan and Blake have swapped places with Defoe,

perhaps, staying in the middle. By 2002, Blake was placed at number 38 in the BBC's poll of the 100 Greatest Britons.

Reverent of the Bible, he did an illustrated version of Bunyan's *Pilgrims Progress*, but hostile to the Church of England (and almost all forms of organised religion), Blake was influenced by the ideals and ambitions of the French and American Revolutions. The knowledge Blake gained from working as an engraver enabled him to produce his own work in which he surrounded his poems with his own hand-coloured illustration, though often also done by his wife Catherine. His extraordinary and powerful imagination is evident in every aspect of Blake's work. Among his most important works are the Illustrations of the *Book of Job*, and the hundred or so watercolours to Dante's *Divine Comedy*. His social and political conscience railed against the prevailing academic painting of the eighteenth century. He saw it as representing all that he came to despise about the rational, materialistic age in which he found himself.

Blake has been claimed by those of various movements who apply his complex and often elusive use of symbolism and allegory to the issues that concern them. In particular, Blake is sometimes considered (along with Mary Wollstonecraft – whose writings he certainly greatly admired - and her husband William Godwin) as a forerunner of the 19th-century "free love" movement.

Many people are now campaigning for his poem 'Jerusalem' to become the official national anthem of England though I'm not sure how many of them are aware of his radical views on religion and morals.

The new memorial for Blake was erected in 2018 on the site of his rediscovered grave.

#### **Philanthropy Note**

Sir Hubert Parry composed the famous setting of William Blake's *Jerusalem*. It was originally composed for the 'Fight for Right' movement in 1915 which was intended to boost morale in the armed forces. But Parry began to have misgivings about Fight for Right and withdrew his support entirely in 1917. There was even concern that the composer might withdraw the song, but the situation was saved by Millicent Fawcett of the National Union of

Women's Suffrage Societies. The song had been taken up by the Suffragists and Fawcett asked Parry if it might be used at a Suffrage Demonstration Concert on 13 March 1918. Parry was delighted and after the concert, Fawcett asked the composer if it might become the Women Voters' Hymn. Parry wrote back:

“I wish indeed it might become the Women Voters' hymn, as you suggest. People seem to enjoy singing it. And having the vote ought to diffuse a good deal of joy too. So they would combine happily.”

Accordingly, he assigned the copyright to the NUWSS. When that organisation was wound up in 1928, Parry's executors reassigned the copyright to the Women's Institutes, where it remained until it entered the public domain in 1968.

*Move on to obelisk commemorating:*

### **Daniel Defoe 1660-1731**

Daniel Defoe was born in the East End (though we don't know exactly where) and certainly enjoyed one of the most remarkable careers in history. At various times he was a businessman, one of the world's first novelists and journalists, a political activist, pamphleteer and a spy. He is most famous for his novel *Robinson Crusoe*, which is second only to the Bible in its number of translations.

His father was a prosperous tallow chandler and a member of the Worshipful Company of Butchers. He attended Morton's Academy, a school for Dissenters at Newington Green (just to the north), with the intention of becoming a minister, but he changed his mind and became a hosiery merchant instead.

On 1 January 1684, Defoe married Mary Tuffley, at St Botolph's Aldgate. She was the daughter of a London merchant, receiving a dowry of £3,700—a huge amount by the standards of the day. With his debts and political difficulties, the marriage may have been troubled, but it lasted 50 years and produced eight children.

In 1685 Defoe took part in the Monmouth Rebellion against the catholic James II but gained a pardon, by which he escaped the Bloody Assizes of Judge George Jeffreys. In 1688 he joined William III and his advancing protestant army that removed James from the throne. Defoe became popular with the

king after the publication of his poem, 'The True Born Englishman'. The poem attacked those who were prejudiced against having a king of foreign birth.

However, the publication of Defoe's *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* upset a large number of powerful people. In the pamphlet, Defoe, himself a Dissenter, ironically demanded the savage suppression of dissent. The pamphlet was judged to be critical of the Anglican Church and Defoe was fined, put in the pillory and then sent to Newgate Prison.

In 1703 Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, a Tory government official, employed Defoe as a spy. With the support of the government, Defoe then started the newspaper, *The Review*, published between 1704 and 1713. Defoe also wrote several pamphlets for Harley attacking the political opposition resulting in the Whigs taking Defoe to court and in him serving another prison sentence.

In 1719, and now in his late 50s, Defoe turned to writing fiction. His novels include: *Robinson Crusoe*, *Journal of the Plague Year* (a novel rather than a journal) and the best of all, *Moll Flanders*. The titular heroine is a whore, bigamist, and thief, lives in The Mint, commits adultery and incest, but through her clever manipulation of men and ultimately becomes wealthy. Moll struggles with the morality of some of her actions and decisions and, like Robinson Crusoe, she finally repents. But the book is a pivotal work in the development of the novel, especially in the way in which it challenged the common perception of femininity and gender roles in 17th-century British society.

#### **Philanthropy Note**

Defoe was an early proponent of charity lotteries. In 1697 he published his 'Essay on Projects' which, among many other things, proposed that a charity lottery be run by the City of London which would raise the huge sum of £100,000 to be spent mainly on the establishment of hospitals for the poor.

*Cross to the other side of the main path to tomb of:*

Point out the tombs of members of the Cromwell family (the nearer of the two white tombs under the trees).

#### **John Bunyan 1628-1688**

Preacher and writer. While imprisoned for preaching the Gospel without receiving permission from the Established Church (under Charles II), he wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress* which has some claim for being the most successful (certainly best known) allegory in the English language.

*Cross Moorgate by pedestrian crossing and enter courtyard of:*

[Wesley Chapel and museum of John Wesley.](#)

### **John Wesley 1703-1791**

John Wesley - Anglican clergyman, evangelist, and cofounder of Methodism – was the 15th child of a former nonconformist minister. He graduated from Oxford University and became a priest in the Church of England in 1728. From 1729 he participated in a religious study group in Oxford organized by his brother Charles, its members being dubbed the 'Methodists' for their emphasis on methodical study and devotion. He often preached here in the open fields round here before crowds of up to 10,000. The chapel was founded in 1777 and he is buried here too.

#### **Philanthropy Note**

According to Wesley, everything ultimately belongs to God, resources are placed in our care to be used as God sees fit. God desires that we use part of these resources to meet our basic needs in life (providing food and shelter for ourselves and our families) but then to help other people in need. Thus, for Wesley, to spend our resources on luxuries while other people remain in need is actually robbing God. At the same time, Adam Smith viewed the accumulation of wealth as being a foundation of economic well-being, whereas for Wesley it was a mortal sin. He would further articulate this idea in the last decade of his life by writing several warnings against this habit by suggesting that the increasing tendency of Methodists to retain wealth instead of sharing it with those in need was a direct correlation with the decline of their spiritual growth and the spread of the revival. Wesley and Methodism thus became corner stones of the early Labour movement whereas Smith became Margaret Thatcher's favourite historical figure

*Exit courtyard turning left down Moorgate*

Point out Finsbury Barracks (HAC). Built by Her Majesty's Commission of Lieutenancy for the City of London to be the headquarters of the Royal London

Militia. Completed in 1857, it was designed by the architect Joseph Jennings and built in Kentish ragstone.

*Turn left into:*

### Worship Street

Formerly called Hog Lane where Shakespeare and Marlowe both lodged. It may have taken its name from John Worshop, a merchant tailor, who owned over six acres of land in the area during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century mainly breweries making porter (a drink invented at the Old Blue Last in Great Eastern Street just round the corner) were sited here but these were redeveloped in the 19<sup>th</sup> as specialist workshops in a range of mechanical instruments especially clocks and watches.

### **32 Worship Street**

Was the site of Barnett Samuel and Sons Musical instruments and gramophone makers.

In 1819 Barnett Samuel (not to be confused with Samuel Barnett who we'll hear about later) was a Jewish immigrant from Russia who was later naturalised as a British citizen.

In 1878 the firm moved to 32 Worship Street, and Nelson Samuel was given a partnership. He proved to be a force behind even greater expansion of the firm's activities. By then they were dealing in every type of musical instrument and musical merchandise. In 1878 the firm opened the first English harmonium factory.

In 1914 Barnett Samuel and Sons began manufacturing a portable gramophone called the Dulcephone, which they patented as the first portable gramophone; and sold it under the trade name Decca. This major breakthrough in the technology of recorded sound gave good-quality reproduction and the convenience of portability: the Decca could be carried around like a briefcase. Many were taken overseas by soldiers in WWI

In 1927 sales of these portable gramophones was enormous and dwarfed the sales of all other goods made by the company, although the manufacture of banjos was thriving because of the dance-band boom. By 1928 Barnett

Samuel's gramophone interests had been renamed the Decca Gramophone Co which was floated in 1928 as a public company.

*On corner of Clifton Street stop to point out:*

### **Clifton House, 75-77 Worship Street**

This substantial six-storey block was built in 1899 as a printing works for Wertheimer Lea & Co (now Williams Lea part of DHL Deutsche Post), letterpress and lithographic printers. The firm was founded by the Anglo-Jewish printer John Wertheimer in 1820, and they were pioneers of foreign language printing in London.

The buildings on the left just before the large new block are typical of what the street used to look like. They are now Grade 2\* listed and were designed by architect Philip Webb sometimes called the Father of Arts and Crafts Architecture. He is particularly noted as the designer of the Red House at Bexleyheath, southeast London in 1859 for William Morris, and – towards the end of his career – Standen (near East Grinstead in West Sussex).

*Continue along Worship Street then turn right into Appold St then left into Primrose St. Stop outside new Bishopsgate Tower.*

In a house in Primrose Street (we don't know exactly where), on 27 April 1759 Mary Wollstonecraft was born in the house of her paternal grandfather who was a master weaver.

Wollstonecraft was a writer, philosopher, and advocate of women's rights. During her brief career, she wrote novels, treatises, a travel narrative, a history of the French Revolution, a conduct book, and a children's book. Wollstonecraft is best known for *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), in which she argues that women are not naturally inferior to men, but appear to be only because they lack education. She suggests that both men and women should be treated as rational beings and imagines a social order founded on reason.

Until the late 20th century, Wollstonecraft's life, which encompassed several unconventional personal relationships, received more attention than her writing. After two ill-fated affairs, with painter Henry Fuseli and Gilbert Imlay

(by whom she had a daughter, Fanny Imlay), Wollstonecraft married the philosopher William Godwin, one of the forefathers of the anarchist movement. Wollstonecraft died at the age of 38, eleven days after giving birth to her second daughter, leaving behind several unfinished manuscripts. This daughter, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, became a writer herself and, as Mary Shelley wife of the poet, the author of *Frankenstein*.

*Cross Norton Folgate turn left and then right into*

### Folgate Street and Elder Street

This land was occupied by the inner precinct of the Priory and Hospital of St Mary Spital. This was dissolved during the Reformation, but the land, reverting to the Crown, retained its status as an extra-parochial liberty (ie under local rather than crown rule). The Liberty of Norton Folgate was not a place where law and order didn't apply but an area where attitudes were more relaxed which is one reason several theatres were established here. Hence the Madness album 'The Liberty of Norton Folgate' whose 10-minute title track recounts the social history of the area.

The name is recorded circa 1110 as Nortune and means 'north farmstead'. It is formed from the Old English 'north' and 'tūn', with the affix 'Folgate' perhaps derived from the manorial family name Foliot.

In 1471 during the Wars of the Roses Thomas Neville, illegitimate son of the Earl of Kent and known as the Bastard of Fauconberg, led a Lancastrian army in an invasion. He captured Canterbury and burnt Southwark before trying to force his way into London through Bishopsgate. The battle was fought here and resulted in the Bastard's defeat. He fled the field but was captured in Southampton and beheaded.

Folgate Street was developed in the 1720s and still gives a very good impression of what London's streets looked like 300 years ago. But it wasn't always like this. When the writer Dan Cruickshank first came here in 1969 he described Folgate and Elder Streets as empty and desolate streets whose historic houses were partly derelict 'gloomily awaiting a fate that did not look promising.'

How Cruickshank and others helped save the area I'll say more about in a few minutes.

No 18 used to be the house of the American artist Dennis Severs (see-vers) who lived as close as possible to the life of an 18th century silk master called Isaac Jervis. Severs died in 2000 and the house is now a fascinating museum owned by the Spitalfields Historic Buildings Trust (limited opening but totally unique).

*Turn left into Blossom St. Point out 19<sup>th</sup> century warehouses and gas lamps*

Blossom Street is has now been redeveloped but when Charles Booth walked the area in the 1880s he noted that both this street and the next, Fleur-de-Lis Street, had gone down in the world since his first visit ten years earlier. Courts and passages had been built in the gardens of earlier, grander dwellings and it was inhabited by 'rough Irish' though gradually giving way to Jewish residents.

There was a battle over redevelopment and thankfully the initial scheme to build 14-storey offices was changed after much local opposition and despite Mayor Boris Johnson siding with the developers.

*Turn right into Fleur de Lis St then right into Elder St.*

Elder Street was at the heart of the battle to save historic Spitalfields in the 1970s. The Spitalfields Trust was founded in 1976 and the following year occupied several of the Huguenot houses in the street to prevent their demolition. Ultimately they won the battle and all the houses were preserved.

The writer Dan Cruickshank, one of the protestors, whose book on Spitalfields is an excellent, highly detailed history lives at No 15. Most of the houses were built in the 1720s and were occupied by a mixture of well-to-do English and Huguenot families.

32 Elder Street is where the Jewish painter Mark Gertler lived. He was born in Gun Street (we'll see it shortly) the son of a Polish Jewish master furrier. After a short spell in Poland he returned to London in 1896 at the age of 5. Gertler was one of the amazingly talented group of artists who all attended the Slade School of Art in the years before the First World War. Others included Christopher Nevinson, Paul Nash, Stanley Spencer and Dora Carrington with

whom Gertler fell passionately in love. Unfortunately Carrington was in love with the writer Lytton Strachey who was gay and in love with Ralph Partridge. Carrington married Partridge but when Strachey died she killed herself in 1932. Gertler gassed himself in his Hampstead studio in 1939. All very sad really but has made at least one very good film.

*Turn right, back into Folgate Street then left into Spital Square. At junction with Bishops Square stop by Kalliopi Lemos' 'Wooden Boat with Seven People'.*

Part of her series, 'Navigating the Dark', this boat was used to transport refugees from Turkey to Greece and was acquired by the artist after being abandoned on the Greek shore. Its intention is to make direct reference to the successive waves of migrants who have arrived in Spitalfields through the centuries, narrating humanity's continuing perseverance for survival and dignity.

**(Opportunity for a toilet break. Toilets are located just inside the north of the central aisle of the market – between the new and old parts – on the left)**

## Spitalfields Market

The area that is now Spitalfields was mainly fields and nursery gardens until late in the 17th century when streets were laid out for Huguenot silk weavers.

Daniel Defoe said that in his childhood (the 1670s) "the lanes were deep, dirty and unfrequented; the part now called Spitalfields Market was a field of grass with cows feeding on it. Brick Lane, which is now a long well paved street, was a deep dirty road, frequented chiefly by carts fetching bricks that way into Whitechapel from brick kilns in the fields."

Spitalfields market was established in 1638 and specialised in fruit and vegetables (especially bananas). It was taken over and rebuilt by former market porter Robert Turner in the 1870s and the old market buildings we'll see from Brushfield Street were completed in 1893. After it was taken over by the LCC a newer extension was added in 1926. In 1991 the market moved to Temple Mills, Leyton. There was then a battle over re-development which has resulted in a compromise with half of the site (the 1926 extension) being re-developed and half keeping its cosmopolitan and attractively shabby look. The area is now a haven for artists the most famous being Gilbert and George

whose house is close by and whose favourite haunt was the Los Barilles tapas bar, now sadly closed.

*Turn right into Stothard Place then left into Spital Yard to:*

This is one of the oldest surviving houses in Spitalfields and it was where Susanna Annesley was born on January 20th 1669. She was the youngest of 25 siblings and herself had 19 children. For some time her and her husband, an Anglican minister, were estranged because of her support for the Jacobites but they reunited in 1702. His name was Samuel Wesley and two of their sons were John and Charles. She ensured all her children got a good education, daughters included, they all learnt Latin and Greek and were well tutored in the classics. At her death in 1742 only 8 of her children were still alive. She too is buried at Bunhill Fields.

Following on the theme of recent conservation the building next door now houses the Architectural Heritage Fund (formerly HQ of CFA Appointments, the major charity recruitment agency). Round the corner in Spital Square you may have noticed the headquarters of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

*Continue past the right hand side of the house and turn left on Bishops Square go down steps ahead to view remains of St Mary Spital*

## St Mary Spital

In 1197 on the site of a Roman cemetery a priory called The New Hospital of St Mary without Bishopsgate, or more simply as St Mary Spital, was founded by Walter Brunus and his wife Roisia. This was one of the biggest hospitals in medieval England and was the focus of a large medieval cemetery which included a stone charnel house and mortuary chapel which we see here. The main Priory buildings were slightly to our north east. The infirmary adjoined Norton Folgate and lay between Spital Square and Folgate Street.

The Priory and Hospital were dissolved in 1539 under Henry VIII. Although the chapel and monastic buildings were mostly demolished, the area of the inner precinct of the priory maintained an autonomous administrative status as the Liberty of Norton Folgate. The adjacent outer precincts of the priory, to the south, were re-used as the Artillery Ground and placed under the jurisdiction of the Tower of London as one of the Tower liberties.

*Continue around the market into*

### [Brushfield Street.](#)

*Turn left along Brushfield Street. Point out Gun St and mention site of original Artillery Ground.*

The area to our south was where the Old Artillery ground used to stand, commemorated in the street names, Gun Street, Artillery Lane and Artillery Passage. In later Tudor and early Stuart London the monarch's Master Gunner lived and worked here building and testing new ordinance and was responsible for all guns both on land and at sea, for example those used to thwart the Spanish Armada of 1588. In the wake of the Great Fire of 1666 the whole area was transformed. Vast quantities of debris from the fire were deposited over the area raising the ground level by perhaps a couple of meters.

*Point out original shop front of Verde and the older market buildings. Cross Commercial Street.*

*Stop outside Christ Church and Ten Bells pub [nb if particularly busy this next section can be delivered from a suitable spot in Brushfield St]*

### [Commercial Street](#)

Commercial Street is the result of Victorian traffic improvement and slum clearance. Linking Old Street in the north with Aldgate and the docks to the south construction took place between 1843 and 1845. As a traffic scheme it was certainly successful but as to improving the areas slums less so. As with other schemes it built new and better properties but merely displaced the existing poorest inhabitants who instead made their way into streets such as the one that used to exist over the road.

### [Whitechapel \(Jack the Ripper\) Murders and 'the worst street in London'](#)

The building ahead is the site of former London Fruit and Wool Exchange built when Spitalfields market was re-developed in the 1920s. However in the 19th century this was an area of dense slum housing. The road behind the Fruit and Wool Exchange (it went down the centre of the new building where the building is slightly set back from that either side) was called Dorset Street.

Charles Booth described it in 1898 as ‘The worst street I have seen so far, thieves, prostitutes, bullies, all common lodging houses.’ Many of the properties in the street were owned in the 1880s and 90s by Jack McCarthy, known as the ‘Godfather of Spitalfields’ – an earlier version of the Krays.

In 1901 in a famous article in the *Daily Mail* Frederick A McKenzie christened it ‘The Worst Street in London’ ‘where our criminals are trained’. A place ‘which boasts of an attempt to murder on an average once a month, of a murder in every house, and one house at least, a murder in every room.’ He famously coined a phrase when he said that ‘policemen go down it in pairs’.

The most famous murder in the street was actually in a dark and dingy cul-de-sac that led off Dorset Street called Miller’s Court. It was here that the last of the ‘Jack the Ripper’ murders, that of Mary Ann Kelly took place on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1888. Many people have been suggested as the perpetrator of these crimes including some rather sensational ones including Dr Thomas Barnardo, the Duke of Clarence, the painter Walter Sickert and even Lewis Carroll and William Gladstone.

*(If pressed: To be a credible suspect you have to pass two tests: intimate knowledge of the area – almost certainly living there – and being prevented from carrying out further murders after 1888 through, basically, death, incarceration or emigration. To me the closest suspects to meeting this test are firstly Jewish hairdresser Aaron Kosminski. He was committed to an asylum in 1891 but appears to have been very docile there which reduces his likelihood. Secondly David Cohen a Jewish tailor who was incarcerated in an asylum immediately after the murders and died the following year. It’s also very possible that the real killer may not be any of the over 100 suspects various people have suggested.)*

By the way the best book about the Ripper murders is definitely ‘The Five: The Untold Lives of the Women Killed by Jack the Ripper’ by Hallie Rubenhold, which concentrates on the lives of the victims rather than glorifying the murderer.

#### **Philanthropy Note**

In some respects the Ripper murders served as a force for change. The fact that this particular set of murders generated a huge amount of press

coverage that, in turn, led to a massive surge in public interest, meant that many journalists entered the area to cover the murders and were confronted by the horrific social conditions in some of the Victorian Metropolis's worst slums.

Reporting back to their readers on the conditions they encountered, some these journalists began calling for change, and several newspapers began focussing public attention on the efforts of the philanthropists who were battling to improve the living conditions of the poor of Whitechapel and Spitalfields.

It is almost certain that several of the changes that took place in the area over the next ten years came about as a direct result of the attention that the Jack the Ripper murders attracted.

George Bernard Shaw even went so far as to suggest, albeit very tongue in cheek, that this was the reason that the murders were committed, to attract attention to the area and bring about social change.

During the Second World War the basement of the Fruit and Wool Exchange was used as an air raid shelter but only after local people forced the authorities to use it. At first the 10,000 people who crammed themselves in were faced with appalling conditions more reminiscent of the old Dorset Street but thanks to the tireless work of one man it became a model shelter visited by Clementine Churchill and both the US and Soviet Ambassadors. That man was Mickey Davis, affectionately known as 'Mickey the Midget'. Originally Mikhail Valpiensky Davis was an optician by trade and though only three feet three inches tall became one of the most respected community organisers in the East End. In addition to the shelter Davis organised a canteen provided by Marks and Spencer and free milk for the children as well. Assisting Davis in making the shelter a model for others to copy as well as providing free medical services for the residents was Vera Weizmann, wife of Chaim Weizmann, later the first President of Israel.

After the war Davis became Councillor for the Spitalfields ward and deputy mayor of Stepney Borough Council. His philanthropic work continued and one of his projects was the Vallance Club for young people. Two young boxers who used the club were Ronnie and Reggie Kray. They were both impressed by Davis and Reg wrote in his memoirs:

‘He was a really nice Jewish fella who also happened to be a midget. I was impressed by the way he dressed. He might have been small but you never saw him in anything but a sharp tailored suit, shirt, tie and highly polished shoes. He had a reputation as a judo expert, which must have been an asset against potential piss-takers.’

He died in 1956 at the age of just 49.

There was also a battle over this redevelopment. The proposed building was opposed for being too large and not containing a single dwelling. Tower Hamlets Council voted the plans down only for Boris to overturn the overwhelming democratic vote. Immediately after planning was granted the owners sold the site for £55 million making over 100% profit on the deal. In 2021 the developers, Exemplar properties, contributed £891,000 to the Tory Party.

### **Ten Bells Pub**

Some accounts of the Jack the Ripper story link two of his victims, Annie Chapman and Mary Jane Kelly, to the pub: Annie Chapman may have drunk at the pub shortly before she was murdered; and it has been suggested that the pavement outside the pub was where Mary Kelly picked up clients. Between 1976 and 1988, the pub was named "The Jack the Ripper", and memorabilia relating to the case were displayed in the bars. The brewery ordered the change back to its original name after a long campaign by Reclaim the Night demanded that a murderer of women should not be commemorated in such a fashion.

The pub is mentioned in the graphic novel *From Hell*, about Jack the Ripper, by writer Alan Moore and artist Eddie Campbell. The film adaptation of *From Hell* (2001), also features the pub, including a scene showing Johnny Depp (as Inspector Abberline) having a drink with Ripper victim Mary Kelly, though the film was shot in Prague not Spitalfields. The Ten Bells was also featured in the Jamie Oliver series ‘Jamie's Great Britain’ because Jamie's great great grandfather was the landlord of the Ten Bells during the 1880s.

## **Christ Church Spitalfields**

Took 15 years to build from 1714-29 and was designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor (1661-1736). Assistant to both Christopher Wren (on all his major projects) and Sir John Vanburgh (on Blenheim Palace and Castle Howard). His own works include the Clarendon building and All Souls College Oxford, the west front of Westminster Abbey and five other London churches. Also the subject of Peter Ackroyd's novel.

It is now the main venue for the biannual Spitalfields Festival.

*Turn right into*

## **Fournier Street**

The gentrification debate:

In 1981 the Spitalfields ward of Tower Hamlets was the most deprived area in the whole of London. But as Jerry White says in 'London in the Twentieth Century': 'Within a decade a few streets in the midst of London's Bangladeshi community had seen an unimaginable rise in property values, to the delight and enrichment of a few and the disgust and chagrin of others.... Where the super-rich turned out impoverished Bangladeshi settlers, where houses were restored to a pristine Georgian state they had never known in reality.' (Jerry White, p 82).

Formerly Church Street.

Built by prosperous Huguenot silk masters from the 1720s on. Now restored with their wooden door-cases, segment-headed windows and, on the north side, attics built to give more light for the looms.

The 'Golden Age' of the silk industry was from about 1690 to 1760 with a revival from 1800 to 1820. There were still 17,000 looms in Spitalfields in the 1830s though only 3% of workshops contained more than five.

After a decline and the introduction of mechanisation in the 1760s there were riots and loom breaking in 1768 leading to four men being hanged in 1769 and the gruesome murder of one of their accusers, Daniel Clarke, by a mob of whom two were also hanged in 1771.

After the silk industry declined in the 19th century the houses became less salubrious, though never really slums. In 1898 Charles Booth noted that the houses here were owned by 'well to do Jews who kept servants' with, unusually for the area, only one family per house.

Now very pricy and trendy, recently a four bedroom house in the street sold for £6.2 million, with artists like Tracy Emin and Gilbert and George. Films such as 'The Crying Game' and 'Longitude' have been filmed here in recent years.

Nos 1 and 3 built 1755 for silk master Peter Lekeux III

No 2 built by Nicholas Hawksmoor himself and he lived here while Christ Church was being constructed.

Nos 4-6 built by Marmaduke Smith in 1726 and grander than most of the other properties. By 1914 it was a banana warehouse. This house was used in the film 'Longitude' about the watchmaker John Harrison who produced the first accurate chronometer enabling seafarers to calculate their position and who was eventually awarded the £20,000 prize by parliament for the accomplishment. In 2002 Harrison was voted 39<sup>th</sup> 'Greatest Briton', one place behind William Blake. Mind you in 17<sup>th</sup> place was Michael Crawford.

*Turn left into Wilkes Street then right into*

## Princelet Street

4 Princelet Street is the former home of Anna-Maria Garthwaite. Garthwaite (1688 – 1763) was an English textile designer known for creating vivid floral designs for silk fabrics and was acknowledged as one of the premiere English designers of her day.

No 4 is unrestored and often used for photoshoots and as a creative space for exhibitions but it's also available for private hire. Scenes from the 2015 film 'Suffragette' were filmed here using No 4 and No 11 as the interior and exterior of the chemist shop.

Nos 6-10 was the Hebrew Dramatic Club in the late 19th century, the major local entertainment centre for the Jewish community. It contained a grand orchestra pit, library and restaurant. In January 1887 seventeen people were crushed to death during a performance of the operetta *The Gypsy Princess* after a false cry of fire.

17 was the home of Miriam Moses (1884-1965) a local Progressive Party politician and feminist. Born in Whitechapel, she was the daughter of a Jewish immigrant tailor, Mark Moses, and when he died in 1921 Miriam was elected to his vacant Spitalfields East seat on Stepney Borough Council. She was Mayor of Stepney in 1931-32.

19 Princelet Street. An unrestored 1719 Huguenot silk merchant's home also contains a concealed synagogue dating from 1869. At 19 Princelet Street nothing had changed since 1963 when the Elders of the United Friends Synagogue departed, leaving in residence their caretaker, and his wife, together with a Mr Rodinsky, a scholar and inhabitant of the garret. In the late 1960s Rodinsky disappeared but 20 years later his room was discovered. Rodinsky's table was still laid for a meal, his bedcovers turned down and his pyjamas still on his pillow. The room was littered with evidence of his studies, which included Sanskrit and Japanese. In the synagogue, built over the garden in 1862, religious accessories – prayer books and wall hangings – were scattered about on the pews. The story is told in Rachel Lichtenstein and Iain Sinclair's book 'Rodinsky's Room'.

*Turn left into*

## Brick Lane

Named after the sixteenth century brick works it grew after Ben Truman established the Black Eagle Brewery at the junction with Hanbury Street in 1724.

*Until opposite row of shops 106-122 (between off licences)*

This block is one of the oldest surviving buildings in the street dating from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The door between numbers 114 and 116 used to lead to one of the area's first philanthropic institutions, the Spitalfields Soup or Ladling Society. Founded by William Allen, a Quaker and son of a silk merchant, Allen was also active in the Society for the Abolition of Slavery, founded a number of schools for the poor and later became the first President of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society.

Allen established the Soup Society in 1797. Soup was sold at 1d. per quart and potatoes at 2d. for 15 lb. to families whose need had been established. The members of the committee (which included the banker Samuel Hoare) visited homes in Spitalfields to discover worthy cases, as well as personally supervising

the making and distribution of the soup. Members were fined for any failure to carry out their part of the work or to attend the monthly meetings of the committee. At its peak in 1812, they served 6,000 people daily. In the same year Allen also established the Spitalfields Association for the Relief of the Industrious Poor. The Soup Society lasted until 1883 when the work was handed over to the rector of Christ Church.

Round the corner is **Hanbury Street**.

No 12 (now Rosa's) was where the comedian Bud Flanagan (Flanagan and Allen, 'Underneath the Arches' and 'Who do you think you're kidding Mr Hitler?') was born Reuban Weintrop in 1896. Flanagan took his name from a particularly obnoxious Sergeant Major he encountered during WW1 vowing to exact revenge by ensuring everyone would laugh at his name.

No 29 (ugly 60s building) where the body of the fourth victim of Jack the Ripper, Mary Ann Chapman, known as Dark Annie, was found a week after Polly Nicholl's murder in Buck's Row.

No 22 (Hanbury Hall) is now occupied by Hanbury Community Project, but was built as a Huguenot church in 1719. The main hall still contains a plaque with the royal coat of arms dating back to James II. It became Christ Church Hall in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was let out for public meetings. Charles Dickens gave readings here and in 1888, Annie Besant and Eleanor Marx-Aveling, the daughter of Karl Marx, used the hall to hold meetings of the match girls on strike at the Bryant and May factory in Bow. These meetings and the strike helped to develop trades Unions in Britain.

Further on you can see the chimney of

### **Truman's Black Eagle Brewery**

The site's first associations with brewing can be traced back to 1666 when a Joseph Truman is recorded as joining William Bucknall's Brewhouse in Brick Lane. The Black Eagle Brewery was constructed in the early 18th century and eventually employed over 1,000 people, becoming the largest brewery in London and the second biggest in Britain.

Since its closure the 11 acre site that has become the creative hub of London's East End with more than 200 small, creative businesses. Fashion designers, artists and D.J's work alongside graphic designers, architects and recording and photographic studios.

*Turn back south.*

*At the end of Fournier Street*

### **Jamme Masjid (Brick Lane Great Mosque)**

The only building other than in Jerusalem to have housed the world's three major monotheist faiths.

Built by Huguenots in 1742-3 as the Neuve Eglise it hosted the earliest Methodist services led by John Wesley in 1755 and became a Methodist chapel full-time in 1819.

In 1897 it was bought by the ultra-orthodox Machzike Hadath (Strengtheners of the Faith) community and, in 1898, it reopened as the Spitalfields Great Synagogue.

The synagogue closed in 1965 and it was sold to the local Bangladeshi community and reopened as a mosque.

It's one of the largest mosques in the capital, 3,000 worshippers can be accommodated in the prayer hall.

The sundial above the entrance reads Umbra sumus - "We are shadows." A saying of the original Huguenot worshippers.

#### **Philanthropy Note**

In the 1970s Bangladeshi's in the East End were increasingly subjected to racist attacks by the Nazi 'National Front' organisation and associated vicious racist skinhead groups. This culminated on 4 May 1978 with the brutal murder of Altab Ali. But the murder made the Bangladeshi community determined to win the battle of Brick Lane, a 1970s equivalent of the 'Battle of Cable Street' in the 1930s when East End Jews and others combined to resist Oswald Moseley's Black Shirts. The community organised a National Demonstration to protest against racist attacks which marched on Parliament. Today there is a foundation named after Altab Ali which is committed to promoting partnerships between voluntary, public and private sector organisations in order to advance the wellbeing of the minority ethnic communities through the development of sustainable community organisations. The small park at the end of Brick Lane is also now named after Altab.

*Turn into Fournier Street*

No 39 are the offices of the Bangladeshi Welfare Association, the oldest and largest Bengali community organisation in the UK founded in 1954. There was a Huguenot charity based here in the 18th century and a Jewish charity in the 19th, the charity equivalent of the Church/Synagogue/Mosque.

No 33 retains its original Jewish shop front

No 14 a 1726 weavers house where the silk for Queen Victoria's Coronation gown was woven.

No 8 is Gilbert and George's studio and home which they bought in 1968 when the street was very far from fashionable. The house has been fully restored to its 18th-century decor. They even restored the kitchen, though they have never cooked in the house – not even boiled an egg. The only amenity they use is the kettle, for instant coffee. "It took 300 years to go downhill," explained George. "We've prepared it for the next 300 years, see? We've used the same paint as they used originally, the same plaster, everything is as it would've been originally."

No. 23 Fournier Street is perhaps the best surviving example of a classic, single-fronted early Georgian town house of simple but elegant design. This house retains the original, typical arrangement of cellar-basement, three brick storeys and a mansard garret with a weather boarded front and wide weaver's windows.

The Spitalfields Trust acquired this house in 1981. Now the largest surviving in Spitalfields, this five bay double-pile house was built in 1725 and contains most of its panelled 18th-century interiors as well as a very fine George I staircase. It was altered in the early 19th-century when it became the property of the London Dispensary, a pioneer, which offered cheap medicines and medical advice to the poorer inhabitants. It continued its work until the creation of the National Health Service in 1946.

*Return to Brick lane and turn right. And on right*

## Fashion Street

In 1851, Charles Dickens described Spitalfields' "squalid streets, lying like narrow black trenches... where sallow, unshaven weavers... prowl languidly about, or lean against posts, or sit brooding on doorsteps." Fashion Street remained a slum even after an attempt at rejuvenation in 1905 by entrepreneurs Abraham and Woolf Davis, who built its unusual Moorish-style

red-brick retail arcade with characteristic horseshoe arches. Fashion Street's market shut down in 1909, four short years after opening. Though utilised by Jewish fashion and fur traders and later by Bangladeshi garment traders the abandoned buildings lay disused for many years until being restored in 2003 for business use. The street was also the childhood home of Israel Zangwill (1864-1926), known as the 'Jewish Dickens' and, later, of the playwright Arnold Wesker (1932-2016). Zangwill coined the term 'melting pot' to describe the area and several of Wesker's works are set in the East End including his most famous play *Chicken Soup with Barley* (1956) which includes a dramatization of the Battle of Cable Street.

*Continue down Brick Lane*

Cafe Naz 46-48 Brick Lane

Outside here one of the bombs planted by neo-Nazi David Copeland exploded in 1999 injuring six people. Fortunately, Copeland was as stupid as most fascists and he planted it on a Saturday thinking that was the main market day. The bomb was discovered on Hanbury Street by a passer by who put it in his car because the police station was closed.

*Point out on left*

### **Chicksand Street**

Where Bram Stoker's Dracula slept in a coffin of Transylvanian earth in the novel.

*Turn right into:*

[Wentworth Street](#)

*On the left point out*

### **Providence Row**

One of the most dynamic charities in the East End. Dating from 1860 they now work with homeless people with a major concentration on self-help initiatives.

*Stop by*

### **Flower and Dean Street and the Four Per-Cent Dwelling Company**

Called Flower and Dean Street after John Flower and Gowan Deane, bricklayers of Whitechapel who were granted building licences for the area in 1655.

By the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it had declined. At the 1871 census the street contained 31 common lodging houses and had a population of 1,078. In 1883 journalist James Greenwood noted that it had been a slum for 50 years and was 'perhaps the foulest and most dangerous street in the whole metropolis.'

In 1877 a scheme to improve the area was finally agreed but demolition didn't take place until 1883. Things sped up after the Ripper murders and local historian Jerry White has suggested that 'Jack the Ripper had done more to destroy the Flower and Dean Street Rookery than 50 years of road building, slum clearance and unabated pressure from Police, Poor Law Guardians, vestries and sanitary officers'. By 1894 nearly all of Flower and Dean and adjacent Wentworth Street had been rebuilt.

The Four Per Cent Industrial Dwellings Company was founded by Nathan Mayer Rothschild in 1885 following the United Synagogue's enquiry into 'spiritual destitution' of 1884. This scheme provided homes for Jewish artisans who made up more than 95% of the inhabitants.

The company was founded not as a charity but a private company, with capital of £50,000 in shares of £10 each.

In these redevelopments Rothschild faced significant opposition, and no little anti-Semitism. Though slums these properties (and ones like them) were goldmines for their owners – yielding higher rents per sq foot than even those in Mayfair. This was because of the large number of occupants crammed into each dwelling. Many of the landlords were pillars of the community including several Members of the House of Lords including the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, one of the wealthiest men in Britain.

By 1905 the Four Per Cent Industrial Dwellings Company had built six large blocks comprising 1,500 flats and 3,800 rooms. In 1952 the Company was renamed the Industrial Dwellings Society (1885) Ltd and is today known as IDS (no connection to Ian Duncan Smith though). It manages over 1,400 properties in four London boroughs, including Tower Hamlets, as well as in Hertsmere and Barnet. Its current President is Sir Evelyn de Rothschild, a direct descendent of the founder.

The Dwellings were spacious and provided tenants with all the most modern conveniences: each flat had its own toilet, scullery, and balcony. Over time,

more facilities were provided, such as gas lighting, drying rooms, and public baths.

The current scheme replaced the Rothschild housing in the late 1970s which by then had become very run down if not quite slums though historian Jerry White called them 'oppressive and starkly repulsive'.

As the nineteenth century moved into the twentieth the London County Council (formed in 1889) began to build housing and after the First World War it was councils as opposed to private philanthropic organisations who increasingly supplied homes for the working classes.

*Continue along Wentworth St and turn left into:*

## Commercial Street

### **Canon Barnett School and Toynbee Hall**

Samuel Augustus Barnett (1844 – 1913) was an Anglican clergyman and social reformer who with his wife Henrietta (1851-1936) established the first university settlement, Toynbee Hall in 1884. It was named in memory of their friend and fellow reformer, Oxford historian Arnold Toynbee, who had died the previous year.

The architect was Elijah Hoole and, like the shops we saw in Worship Street, was designed in the Arts and Crafts style.

The Barnett's had been particularly influenced by the publication of Congregationalist clergyman Andrew Mearns pamphlet *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London*.

Barnett managed to raise the £6,000 required to buy the site in just a fortnight

Toynbee was run on the same lines as an Oxford college with a range of educational and social activities as well as accommodation for its workers who were recruited from the University to live and work among the poor.

They assisted Charles Booth in his research which exposed many of social ills of the area.

The Workers Educational Association, the Youth Hostel Association and the Child Poverty Action Group were all founded here and the model was copied with many other University settlements in both London and other cities. By 1900 there were over 100 settlements in the United States and across the UK.

Both William Beveridge, the welfare state pioneer and Labour Prime Minister Clement Atlee were residents here and Lenin was a visitor for its lectures in 1902-3.

It was where the deal that ended the general strike in 1926 was agreed between the TUC and government.

Quentin Crisp, the flamboyant homosexual, posed naked for art classes here leading to the title of his book 'The Naked Civil Servant'.

Following the 1963 scandal John Profumo began work as a volunteer here continuing his involvement until his death.

**To return to Bayes follow the route below. For the route to the Hoop and Grapes see further down**

**For Cass**

*Cross road and turn left into continuation of Wentworth Street,*

### Petticoat Lane Market

From the mid-18th century, Petticoat Lane became a centre for manufacturing clothes. The market served the well-to-do in the City, selling new garments. About 1830, Petticoat Lane's name changed to Middlesex Street, to record the boundary between Portsoken Ward, in the City of London, and Whitechapel, which coincided with the Lane. But the old name continues to be associated with the area.

When Jewish immigrants entered the local garment industry they maintained the traditions of the market. Israel Zangwill wrote evocatively about Petticoat Lane in the early 1900s in this book *Children of the Ghetto*:

‘The Lane was always the great market-place, and every insalubrious street and alley abutting on it was covered with the overflowing of its commerce and its mud. Wentworth Street and Goulston Street were the chief branches, and in festival times the latter was a pandemonium of caged poultry, clucking and quaking and cackling and screaming. Fowls and geese and ducks were bought alive, and taken to have their throats cut for a fee by the official slaughterer.’

In these times the market was unpopular with the authorities, as it was largely unregulated and in some sense illegal. As recently as the 1930s, police cars and fire engines were driven down The Lane, with alarm bells ringing, to disrupt the market.

The rights of the market were finally protected by Act of Parliament in 1936. As late as the 1990s, if Christmas Day fell on a Sunday many of the local Jewish traders would still assert their right to open on a Sunday. 'The Lane' was always renowned for the 'patter' and showmanship of the market traders. Some, selling crockery, would pile an entire setting onto a large plate, and then send the lot, high into the air. Catching the construction on its way down demonstrated the skill of the vendor, and the robustness of the porcelain.

One young Jewish lad, Alan Sugar, got his start as a stall holder in the market. The market remains busy and vibrant, reflecting both its immigrant history and its continuing popularity with locals and tourists.

The market is open Monday to Friday on Wentworth Street; on Sunday it extends over many of the surrounding streets, with over a thousand stalls. It is closed on Saturday.

*Turn right on Middlesex Street then left on Harrow Place. Cross road and turn right through narrow iron gates. Go through first section of Devonshire Sq and stop by main converted section.*

## Devonshire Square

The British East India Company was a private corporation formed in December 1600 to establish a British presence in the lucrative Indian spice trade, which until then had been monopolized by Spain and Portugal. The company eventually became an immensely powerful agent of British imperialism in South Asia and the de facto colonial ruler of large parts of India. Partly because of endemic corruption, the company was gradually deprived of its commercial monopoly and political control, and its Indian possessions were nationalized by the British crown in 1858 following the so-called Indian Mutiny.

At its height, the East India Company oversaw half of the world's trade. With its own private army it controlled much of India and brought back to England a wide variety of goods and produce notably cotton, silk, indigo, salt and tea. These items needed to be stored somewhere, and the East India Company amassed substantial property holdings in London. Among these holdings were warehouses – several of which have been restored and repurposed as office, retail and residential spaces known as Devonshire Square. The Company was depicted in the Tom Hardy TV series 'Taboo' which, though fictional, was an excellent depiction of early 19<sup>th</sup> century London.

*To return to Cass continue through Devonshire Square onto New Street. Cross Bishopsgate turn left past Liverpool Street station. Turn right onto Liverpool Street. At the end turn right onto Eldon Street and follow the road round to the left after which it becomes South Place. At Moorgate cross the road into Ropemaker Street. At the end turn right into Moor Lane. Turn left on Chiswell Street then cross pedestrian crossing and turn right into Bunhill Row.*

### ***For Hoop and Grapes***

*Return to Commercial Street. Turn left until junction with Whitechapel High Street. Turn right and cross road at a convenient point. The Hoop and Grapes is on this side just after Mansell Street.*

### **Hoop and Grapes Pub**

The Hoop and Grapes is the oldest licensed house in the City of London, built in 1593. The cellar has brick vaults built in the thirteenth century probably as part of a Friary. Together with the two adjacent buildings it survived the Great Fire of London in 1666 which stopped just 50 yards away and so is one of the very few pre-Fire timber framed buildings still in existence.

Among its notable features are a concealed listening tube which it is thought was installed during the English Civil War. London was strongly anti-Royalist but Royalist spies used the pub (just outside the City walls) for clandestine meetings.

*Aldgate tube station is slightly further along the High Street. For Aldgate East retrace steps to junction with Commercial Street.*

## Philanthropy Walk Extension – 1 The City and the Slave Trade

*If walking from the 'Hoop and Grapes' walk along Aldgate High Street passing*

St Botolph without Aldgate

St Botolph was the patron saint of boundaries and journeys, hence several churches dedicated to him just outside city walls. St Botolph's was completely rebuilt between 1741 and 1744, to a design by George Dance the Elder. It was often referred to as the "Church of Prostitutes" in the late Victorian period. The church is sited on an island surrounded by roadways and the ladies used to walk around it.

*Continue along Aldgate into Fenchurch Street passing*

The Aldgate Pump

The metal wolf head on the pump's spout is supposed to signify the site of last wolf shot in the City of London.

*Turn into Fenchurch Street and pass*

East India Arms pub

The pub is next to the place (now occupied by the Lloyd's Register building) where the East India Company had its headquarters. On the outside of the pub is a plaque to the East India Company and its history. The East India Arms opened on this site about 20 years before the end of the Company in 1874. It is therefore very likely that employees of the Company frequented it in its early days.

informally known as John Company or simply The Company it was founded in 1600. The company seized control of large parts of the Indian subcontinent, colonised parts of Southeast Asia and Hong Kong after the First Opium War, and maintained trading posts and colonies in the Persian Gulf Residencies. The company rose to account for half of the world's trade during the mid-1700s and early 1800s, particularly in basic commodities including cotton, silk, sugar, spices, tea, and opium.

The company came to rule large areas of India, exercising military power and assuming administrative functions. Company rule in India effectively began in 1757 after the Battle of Plassey and lasted until 1858 when, following the Indian Rebellion of 1857, the Government of India Act 1858 led to the British Crown assuming direct control of India in the form of the new British Raj.

The East India Company was involved in the East African slave trade but also collected slaves from the West Coast of Africa for its settlements in South and East Africa and in India and Asia.

*Continue down Fenchurch Street turning right into*

Fen Court and Fen Court Garden

### **'Gilt of Cain' Monument – Fen Court**

The Court is the site of former St Gabriel Fenchurch which was destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666. The sculpture commemorates the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade in 1807 and is a collaboration between sculptor Michael Visocchi and poet Lemn Sissay, the words being an extract from his poem 'The Gilt of Cain'. The platform could represent either a pulpit or slave auctioneers podium and the pillars either the congregation or stems of sugar cane. It was unveiled by Archbishop Desmond Tutu in 2008.

*Leave Fen Court by same exit and continue along Fenchurch Street. Cross Gracechurch Street into*

Lombard Street

So named because it formed a plot of land granted by King Edward I to goldsmiths from the part of northern Italy known as Lombardy.

*turn right into*

### **George Yard**

The church on the corner is St Edmund, King and Martyr, named after the king of East Anglia from about 855 until his death in 869. In that year the Great Heathen Army advanced on East Anglia and Edmund, by later tradition, met his death at an unidentified place known as Haegelisdun, after he refused the Danes' demand that he renounce Christ: the Danes beat him, shot him with arrows and then beheaded him, on the orders of Ivar the Boneless and his brother Ubba. According to one legend, his head was then thrown into the forest, but was found by searchers following the cries of an ethereal wolf calling out in Latin, "Hic, Hic, Hic" – "Here, Here, Here".

The building that once stood at 2 George Yard was a bookstore and printing shop. The proprietor was James Phillips, publisher and printer for Britain's small community of Quakers. It was following a meeting here on 22 May 1787 that the British abolitionist movement was formed, led by Thomas Clarkson. Two years later Phillips published one of the most important books of the movement, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*.

Equiano was born in the Kingdom of Benin and was kidnapped at the age of 11 being transported first to Barbados then Virginia. After being bought by a Royal Navy officer (and renamed several times) Equiano arrived in England and served with his owner in the Seven Years War. He was sold twice more but after being taught to read and write took part in trading in the West Indies was able to purchase his freedom. After further service in the Royal Navy, even travelling to the Arctic, he settled in London in the 1780s and became involved in the abolitionist movement. He married an Englishwoman and died in 1797.

[Say that we will now move on to pass]

### **St Mary Wolnoth**

The present building is one of the Queen Anne Churches, designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor. Its connection with abolition is through John Newton, its rector from 1779. Newton was remarkable among abolitionists because of his earlier direct involvement in the slave trade. At 18 he had been press ganged into the Royal Navy before becoming a virtual slave himself in West Africa. Rescued in 1748 he became first mate on a slave ship making three voyages. After a spell as a tax collector he was ordained as a priest in 1764 however, until 1788 he kept his views on slavery quiet. In that year he published *Thoughts Upon the Slave Trade* a powerful abolitionist pamphlet in which he expressed his remorse for having participated in the trade himself. He sent copies to every MP and became an ally of William Wilberforce. But perhaps his most lasting contribution to the campaign was as a composer. Together with the poet William Cowper he composed hymns including 'Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken', 'How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds' and 'Amazing Grace', one of the most influential songs of all time.

*Return to Lombard Street continuing to pass St Mary Wolnoth, turn right to the Bank and then cross the intersection to the north side of*

Poultry

Poultry takes its name, like other roads nearby such as Milk Street and Bread Street, from the various produce once sold at Cheapside.

*Turn right into*

### **Grocers Hall Court**

This was the site of the Poultry Compter a small prison that operated from the 16<sup>th</sup> century until 1815. Its connection to slavery is through the abolitionist Granville Sharp. Sharp's brother William was a doctor who ran a clinic for the local poor and when visiting him Granville met a slave, Jonathan Strong. Strong has been badly beaten by his master, a lawyer called David Lisle, and left on the street. After a four month stay at Barts Hospital paid for by the Sharps Strong was employed by a Quaker apothecary friend. In 1767 Lisle saw Strong in the street, had him captured and intended to sell him to a Jamaican plantation owner, James Kerr. Strong was imprisoned in the Poultry Compter and Sharp fought a two-year legal battle with Kerr which eventually resulted in Strong's freedom, though he died only five years later at the age of 25.

Sharp went on to be known as 'the protector of the negro' and pursued several other successful legal cases. Perhaps the most famous, and most appalling, was the Zong massacre. In 1781 the crew of over-capacity slaver ship Zong threw 132 slaves overboard to their deaths. The ship's owners then filed an insurance claim for their loss of 'property'. The case was brought to Sharp's attention by Olaudah Equiano. In court at the Guildhall the Solicitor General, John Lee, notoriously declared that 'the case was the same as if any assets had been thrown overboard' and that 'a master could drown slaves without a surmise of impropriety'. Though Sharp won the insurance case no one was ever prosecuted.

*Return to Poultry cross road and pass No 1 Poultry into Queen Victoria Street.  
Enter Bucklersbury to reach*

### **St Stephen Walbrook**

The present domed building was erected to the designs of Sir Christopher Wren following the destruction of its medieval predecessor in the Great Fire of London in 1666 and was basically his 'practice' before the construction of the much larger dome of St Paul's. It has a remarkable white polished stone altar commissioned from the sculptor Henry Moore in 1987. In 1953 the Samaritans charity was founded here by its rector, Dr Chad Varah. The first Samaritans

branch operated from the crypt beneath the church before moving to Marshall Street in Soho. In tribute to this, Varah's original telephone is preserved in a glass box in the church.

*Enter Walbrook and on right*

### **The London Mithraeum**

The Roman deity Mithras appears in the historical record in the late 1st century A.D., and disappears in the late 4th century A.D. Unlike the major mythological figures of Graeco-Roman religion, such as Jupiter and Hercules, no ancient source preserves the mythology of the god. All of our information is therefore derived from depictions on monuments, and the limited mentions of the cult in literary sources.

The temples of Mithras were always underground, featuring a relief of Mithras killing the bull. This "tauroctony", as it is known today, appears in the same format everywhere, with only minor variations. The cult was all male and there were seven degrees of initiation. Different ritual meals were associated with each stage.

The temple site was uncovered in September 1954 during excavation work for the construction of Bucklersbury House, a 14-storey modernist office block to house Legal & General. Excavated by W. F. Grimes, director of the Museum of London, it was initially hoped to have been an early Christian church. It was built in the mid-3rd century and dedicated to Mithras or perhaps jointly to several deities popular among Roman soldiers. Then it was rededicated, probably to Bacchus, in the early fourth century.

As a compromise between redesigning the new building and abandoning the archaeological site, the ruin was dismantled and moved 100 metres to Temple Court, Queen Victoria Street, where in 1962 the foundations were reassembled at street level for an open-air public display. The reconstruction was not accurate and drew criticism for the materials used.

In 2010 the site was purchased by the Bloomberg company, which decided to restore the Mithraeum to its original site as part of their new European headquarters. The new site is 7 metres below the modern street level, as part of an exhibition space beneath the Bloomberg building.

The ruins are reconstructed as they appeared at the end of the excavation in 1954, reflecting the first building phase of around AD 240 without any later

Roman additions to the site. A large majority of the stones and bricks are original. The wood, render and lime mortar are new, but based on mortar samples from contemporary Roman London structures.

## Philanthropy Walk Extension – 2 Whitechapel

Start at Aldgate East tube station crossing to South side of Whitechapel High Street and Whitechapel Road

Walk will really only cover one main streets: Whitechapel High Street/Road

- An area brimming with historic places and fascinating stories and former residents, many of them on the wrong side of the law.
- Area of great poverty, at least in the past, and successive waves of immigration.

*Cross road to Whitechapel Road South side*

### **Altab Ali Park**

- Site of St Mary Matfelon, the original White Chapel that gives the area its name which was destroyed in the Second World War.
- Park is named after local Sylheti textile worker who was murdered by National Front thugs in 1978, a period of great racial tension in the area and fascist activity. Led to demonstrations against racism reminiscent of the 1930s and the fight against Moseley's Blackshirts that culminated in the famous 'Battle of Cable Street' in 1936.

### **Whitechapel Bell Foundry**

- Was Britain's oldest manufacturing company, having been established in 1570 (during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I) and being in continuous business since that date.
- One of the most famous bells in the world, Big Ben, was the biggest bell ever cast at Whitechapel in 1858, and the gauge used to make the mould for the bell still hangs on the wall of the foundry moulding shop to this day.
- Another of the world's most famous bells, the Liberty Bell - which is on permanent display in Philadelphia - was cast at Whitechapel in the 18th century.

- The foundry closed on 12 June 2017, with the final bell cast given to the Museum of London along with other artefacts used in the manufacturing process, and the building has been sold.

### **East London Mosque**

- Completed in 1985 following a £2 million donation from King Faud of Saudi Arabia
- Had been planned since 1940 when three houses on Commercial Road had been purchased.
- The London Muslim Centre was opened in 2004 and the prayer capacity is now 4,000

### **London Hospital**

- Dates from 1752.
- Thomas John Barnardo, became a medical student here in 1866 and set up the first of his Dr Barnardo's homes in Stepney Causeway.
- John Merrick, the so-called Elephant Man, lived here after being rescued by hospital surgeon Frederick Treves from a freak show at 259 Whitechapel Road. Merrick died here in 1890 and his remains are kept in the hospital museum.

### **The Hospital Tavern (Urban Bar)**

- Our first encounter with the Kray brothers.
- It was a regular haunt of East End villains and scene of a 1960 showdown between the Kray twins 'firm' and the Watney Street gang from nearby Shadwell.
- The Krays were avenging Ronnie's 3-year sentence for attacking a member of the Watney Street mob.

- Both gangs arrived armed with knives, chains and knuckle-dusters and the Krays overwhelming 'victory' helped cement their reputation.

### **Idea Store**

- Opened in September 2005 to replace the historic Whitechapel Library (which we'll see later)
- Designed by the architect David Adjaye and constructed at a cost of £12 million by William Verry with engineering by Arup.
- It was nominated for the 2006 Stirling Prize.

### **Cavell Street**

- Renamed to commemorate the heroine of WW1 who trained at the London Hospital.

### **Sidney Street**

(View from remaining old house in Raven Row).

- On 16 December 1910, a gang of Latvian revolutionaries led by George Gardstein (real name Poolka Mourrewitz) attempted to break into the rear of a jeweller's shop at 119 Houndsditch.
- Nine unarmed officers — three sergeants and six constables (two in plain-clothes) — converged on Exchange Buildings. The first two to enter, Sergeants Bryant and Bentley were shot. In the street, constable Woodhams ran to help Bentley, but was himself wounded by one of the gang firing from the cover of the house, as was Sergeant Tucker, who died almost instantly. Sergeant Bentley also died as a result of his injuries (on his wedding anniversary — his wife had also given birth to a baby boy on the previous Wednesday).
- The gang then attempted to break out of the cul-de-sac, Gardstein being grabbed by Constable Choate almost at the entrance. In the struggle Choate was wounded several times by Gardstein, before being shot five more times by other members of the gang, who also managed to hit their compatriot in the

back. They then dragged Gardstein three-quarters of a mile to 59 Grove Street, where he died the next day.

- Constable Choate and Sergeant Bentley died in separate hospitals the same day. An intense search followed, and a number of the gang or their associates were soon arrested.
- On 2 January 1911, an informant told police that two or three of the gang, possibly including Peter the Painter (Peter Piaktow) the most notorious anarchist leader, were hiding at 100 Sidney Street.
- On 3 January two hundred officers cordoned off the area and the siege began. At dawn the battle commenced.
- The defenders, though heavily outnumbered, possessed superior weapons and great stores of ammunition.
- The Tower of London was called for backup, and word got to Home Secretary Winston Churchill, who arrived on the spot to observe the incident first hand, and to offer advice.
- Churchill authorised calling in a detachment of Scots Guards to assist the police. Six hours into the battle, and just as the field artillery piece that Churchill had authorised arrived, a fire began to consume the building.
- When the fire brigade arrived Churchill refused them access to the building. The police stood ready, guns aimed at the front door, waiting for the men inside to attempt their escape. The door never opened. Inside the remains of two members of the gang, Fritz Svaars and William Sokolow (both were also known by numerous aliases), were recovered. No sign of Peter the Painter was ever found.
- Jacob Peters one of the original Houndsditch robbers later became Deputy Chairman of the Bolshevik secret police the Cheka, forerunner of the KGB.

*Cross Whitechapel Road to north side*

### **The Blind Beggar**

- From one notorious murder to another.

- Built in 1894 on the site of another inn, established before 1654, and named after the legend of Henry de Montfort, a son of Simon de Montfort. He was wounded and lost his sight in the Battle of Evesham in 1265. He became the Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green and used to beg at the crossroads.
- It is also the pub outside which William Booth first began selling the War Cry in the late 1890s.
- But it's most famous for what happened here on the evening of March 9, 1966. George Cornell, an associate of the South London Richardson brothers' gang, and his friend Albie Woods entered the Saloon Bar, ordered some light ales and then sat upon stools situated next to the bar.
- At around 8:30pm Ronnie Kray and Ian Barrie entered the pub. Upon seeing Kray, Cornell sneered with sarcasm "Look who's here". Barrie fired a shot into the ceiling as Ronnie Kray walked towards Cornell took out a 9 mm Mauser and calmly shot him once in the forehead, just above his right eye.
- Cornell slumped against a nearby pillar, the bullet, apparently, passing straight through him. Moments earlier the barmaid, who was later to become a key witness in the trial, had put a new record on the jukebox, 'The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine Anymore' by The Walker Brothers; after Cornell was shot, the record stuck on the words "anymore...anymore".
- Cornell was taken to a nearby hospital, where he later died in the early hours, the time has been given at around 3:30am. It was only a matter of hours before the news spread, everyone knew who had murdered George Cornell but no one was prepared to talk. Although Ronnie Kray was identified by several eyewitnesses as he calmly left the public house, no one would agree to testify against him and the police were forced to release him.
- The motive for the killing is still in some dispute. It may have been attributed to the shooting of Richard 'Dickie' Hart, at a South London nightclub club called "Mr Smith's", the night before Cornell's murder. Dickie Hart, a member of the Kray gang and also a cousin of the Kray twins, was killed after a violent dispute ended in shots being fired. The alternative is that it was simple revenge for Cornell having once called Ronnie a 'fat poof', but this is disputed by some people who should know.

### **Mann, Crossman & Paulin Ltd, Albion Brewery, 172 Whitechapel Road**

- Albion Brewery built 1808 by Richard Ivory, landlord of the Blind Beggar.
- Acquired by Blake & Mann of the Stanbridge Brewery, Lambeth in 1818. Robert Crossman, manager of the Border Brewery Berwick-upon-Tweed became a partner in March 1846 and Thomas Paulin of the Isleworth Brewery joined the partnership in the same year.
- Merged with Watney, Combe, Reid & Co. Ltd. 1958 to form Watney Mann Ltd.
- The Brewery closed in 1979 but the building (Grade II listed) still stands.
- During the siege of Sidney Street in January 1911 a detachment of Scots Guards used the brewery tower to fire into the besieged house.

### **Former Grave Maurice Pub No 269**

- Supposed to be pronounced Graave Mo Reece. Named after Graf Maurice a German Royalist mercenary of the English Civil War.
- The Whitechapel area was famed for the associations with Jack The Ripper - and a middle aged TV pundit and writer called Martin Fido used to run a tour - he would arrange to meet American tourists outside The Grave Maurice and walk them around all the murder sites - and then bring them all back and tell improbable tall tales about The Ripper and the Krays and The Grave Maurice - they loved it and he made a packet - until one night he was leading them down a dark and grimy backstreet behind the pub and stumbled across a real dead body. The tourists thought it was part of the 'act'. It was an old tramp who had died of natural causes.
- The tenant for many years was an eccentric polish Woman called Christina. They had a visitors book for the many celebrities that came in including Diana Dors and Richard Widmark (he was a regular patient across the road). Christina was very popular and very eccentric - she did her own butchering in the cellars and would often have a half cow delivered down the trapdoor (sorry vegetarians), it was difficult to change a beer barrel with bacon hanging from the ceiling. She had a daughter called Louise who was a casino croupier in the West End and had a long affair with a youngish Jeff Goldblum during his marriage to Geena Davis - very strange to see him propping up a bar.

- Ronnie Kray was interviewed here by TV presenter Michael Barrett.
- Also famous from the Martha Grimes crime novel 'The Grave Maurice' and the cover of Morrissey's album 'Under the Influence'.

### **Jewellers - International Saree Centre (No 259)**

- The shop where John Merrick, the Elephant Man, was displayed in 1884 and made to act like a dog to entice people into the freak show.
- Deprived of its prime exhibit by Frederick Treves in 1889 it displayed waxwork models of Jack the Ripper's victims instead.

### **Jewish Socialist Club (corner of Fulbourne Street)**

- Site of the 5th Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party in May 1907. The delegates included Lenin, Maxim Gorky, Rosa Luxemburg, Leon Trotsky and Joseph Stalin. The first meeting between Trotsky and Stalin is depicted brilliantly in the film 'Nicolas and Alexandra', goes: Trotsky: 'Hello Lenin', Lenin: 'Hello Trotsky, this is Stalin' – real economy of dialogue!
- 12 Tsarist spies attended as did several Scotland Yard officers disguised as Russians to check up on the Tsarist spies. Experts now believe there were more police at the Congress than revolutionaries.

*Turn right into Vallance Road then right again into*

### **Durward Street**

- Location of the 2nd Jack the Ripper murder when it was known as Buck's Row
- Mary Ann Nichols, known as Polly, a 44-year-old prostitute had been drinking in a pub in Brick Lane. At 6.40 am on 31 August 1888 her body was found in front of a stable entrance.
- Theorists have put forward 176 named suspects

### **Vallance Road**

- Known as ‘deserters corner’ in WW2 one of whom was Charles Kray the father of the twins who lived with his family at number 178. As Charles was often unavoidably absent the twins grew up very much under the influence of their mother Violet.
- House was demolished in 1966 and is now a housing association property.

### *Return to Whitechapel Road*

#### **Davenant Foundation School**

- In February 1680 the Reverend Ralph Davenant drew up his will leaving all of his household goods and plate to his wife with the provision that it should eventually be sold and that the monies raised should be used to build a school for 40 poor boys of Whitechapel.
- Where the monitorial system (with older children assisting the masters) was developed in the early 19th century
- 1,000 children (600 boys and 400 girls) were educated by this system in a new building which was erected in Davenant Street.
- The Charity School continued to function in the original buildings which were eventually enlarged in 1818 to accommodate 100 boys and 100 girls. The school by now maintained two institutions educating 1,200 children — extraordinarily large for 1818
- In 1944 the school became Davenant Foundation Grammar School for Boys, a title which it retained until 1980. By now it educated only some 200 boys.
- In 1966, at the invitation of the Essex County Council, the school moved to the leafy suburb of Loughton

#### **Whitechapel Gallery**

- Brainchild of Victorian philanthropists the Barnetts (Canon Samuel and his wife Henrietta) and financed by John Passmore Edwards.

- Built in Art Nouveau style by Charles Harrison Townsend who was also the architect of the Horniman Museum in Forest Hill.
- Renowned for avant-garde exhibitions (Bomberg, Wyndham Lewis and the Vorticists before WW1) it was for example where Picasso's Guernica was exhibited.
- Next door was the Whitechapel Library known as the 'University of the Ghetto' as it was where hundreds of Jewish immigrants came to study including poet Isaac Rosenberg, sculptor Jacob Epstein, novelist Israel Zangwill and, later, scientist and author of 'The Ascent of Man' Jacob Bronowski.
- Now nearing completion of a major renovation to incorporate it into the Art Gallery. The library has moved to the Idea Store and, despite the change, is still heavily used by the local immigrant community.

### **No 90 Site of former Bloom's Restaurant**

Bloom's restaurant was a kosher Jewish deli restaurant in London. Until its last branch closed in summer 2010, it was the longest-standing kosher restaurant in England, and was well-known beyond the Jewish community.

### **Gunthorpe Street**

- Gunthorpe Street still retains some of its 19th century character. The arch that goes into it from Whitechapel High Street could be an entrance to a bygone era.
- On its left stands the White Hart pub where in 1890 George Chapman, apparently a favoured suspect of Inspector Abberline, is said to have had a barbers shop in the basement.
- It was on a landing George Yard buildings, a block of apartments off Gunthorpe Street that have now been demolished, that the body of Martha Tabram, who some historians maintain was the first of the victims of Jack the Ripper, was discovered in early August 1888.

