

1920s

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# The London Guidebook

## 1920s Roleplaying in the Capital of the World



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GUIDEBOOK

**Lucya Szachnowski**  
**Gary O'Connell**

Daye Carson illus.

# **The London Guidebook**

**1920s Roleplaying in the Capital of the World**



**H. P. Lovecraft**

1890 – 1937

# The London Guidebook

**1920s Orientation for Roleplayers in  
the Capital of the World**

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— Lucya Szachnowski, Gary **O'Connell**.

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*Hell is a city much like London—  
A populous and smoky city.*

— Percy Bysshe Shelley.

*London is the paradise of individuality, eccentricity, heresy, anomalies,  
hobbies and humours.*

— George Santayana.

*'And this also,' said Marlowe suddenly,  
'has been one of the dark places of the earth.'*

— Joseph Conrad.



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# Introduction

IN THE 1920s, London was the largest city in the world and one of the most important, with nearly seven and a half million inhabitants.

This metropolis was extremely cosmopolitan, attracting people from all parts of Europe, the Empire, and America. A center of commerce and finance, London was also the hub of the fashionable world. Nevertheless, the British of the time were renowned for their xenophobic arrogance—left over after being the world's greatest military and economic power in the Victorian era—and tended to regard all foreigners as somehow less respectable than Britons.

Despite the fact that in 1926 the sun did indeed set on the British Empire, when it became the British Commonwealth, many Britons seemed unaware of their country's declining importance. *Black's Guide to London*, 1926, seemed to feel it was quite acceptable to claim London's superiority to New York on the basis that "London is essentially a British city, while New York is, to a large extent, a curious dumping ground of nationalities." This attitude variously amused and annoyed foreigners from around the globe.

The whimsy and romance of London has not dimmed. The city of the 1920s

remains a very popular setting for *Call of Cthulhu* games. This book details that London and the people, locations, events, and organizations that might be relevant for investigations. The text suggests many ideas for scenarios, along with information diverse enough that keepers should be able to find inspiration on nearly every page.

Unless specifically stated otherwise, every word of this book is based on fact or on genuine London legends. Some things of particular relevance to a horror game or to London and which happened earlier or later than the 1920s or outside the city also have been included.

The capital city complements the reputation of the British Isles as a place where ghosts, specters, and phantasms seem to thrive. Ghost stories are a passion of the British and many are willing to be open-minded about such things. (A large number of haunts and things similar can be located using the index heading *Supernatural*.) If investigators say they are ghost-hunting, they are likely to be regaled with local yarns. If, however, they try to explain their attempts to thwart the cosmic threat from ancient alien beings, they will receive the reception familiar the world over to such claims—people will think them insane.

Tales of the supernatural are not intended as a claim that such things as ghosts exist. They too are part of

London's mythology and as such suitable material for a *Call of Cthulhu* game.

A definition of the role of the Mythos in London has been avoided. Suggestions of Mythos interpretations of London legends and allusions to the potential sites of Mythos activity occur on many pages. However, individual keepers must choose the nature and significance of any Cthulhoid menaces within London. A list of already-published scenarios and supplements referring to London appears in the bibliography at the end of this book.

## Weather

It is true to say that the most acceptable polite small-talk in London is about the weather. London's weather is mild but extremely changeable and unpredictable, especially in spring and autumn. It can be warm with bright sunshine one minute and overcast and rainy the next. Londoners carry umbrellas as a matter of course. In summer the temperature can reach 80°F, while winter temperatures usually drop below freezing only at night.

## Fog

In the 1920s, London was famous for its pea-soup fogs, sometimes called *London* peculiar, now known as smog. These were caused by coal fire and factory smoke and pollution, when

banks of the stuff did not rise from the low-lying land of the city. Sometimes Big Ben was lost to sight from the street but easily seen from the third or fourth floor of an office block. The coverage of such fogs could be unpredictable, but those trapped within these thick fogs found seeing very difficult, and movement almost impossible. This pea-soup fog varied in color from off-white through sepia to the sickly green which gave it its name. Sometimes mists would creep up from the Thames and lend everything a damp, dank smell.



*Typical London street; note the 3. Lyons tea shop on the left.*



# After the Great War

LONDONERS felt that the Great War had changed their city and the way they lived. Having huddled together in fear that the German Zeppelin raids would destroy London, they realized for the first time that London was vulnerable. Despite the minor damage done by the Zeppelins, these raids had significant psychological impact.

Victorian values seemed to have died in the trenches along with three quarters of a million Britons—almost a generation of young men. Most Londoners had lost a friend or relative. The losses affected every class, from the young sons of the aristocracy to their working class servants.

The need for workers in munitions factories, as well as people to replace those who had been called up, meant that many women worked for the first time during the war. Wartime slaughter meant that young men were now outnumbered by young women.

In the brief economic boom after the Great War, foreign travel was again unrestricted and rationing ended. The capital's economy benefited from foreign investment and the new consumer economy swelled the amount of office work available. The growing number of middle class workers in the city began to eat out and meet friends after work. Modestly priced restaurants, such as J. Lyons' famous chain of tea shops and large Corner Houses, opened to cater to them. West End cinemas and nightclubs sprang up in response to the public's heightened desire for entertainment. Morals and manners seemed to become free and easy, personified by the flapper dressed boyishly and dancing to a jazz band.

However, the grave of the unknown soldier in Westminster Abbey and the Cenotaph in Whitehall remained as permanent reminders of how the war had affected everyone.

Each year Armistice Day on November 11 (renamed Remembrance Day in 1946) was marked with two minutes silence at 11am.

## American Influence on London

American investigators could find more reasons than they might expect to visit London. The 1920s were the first decade in which the United States strongly influenced the British economy, society, and fashions.

The British aristocracy, though still rich, found that war time tax increases and the fall in value of their income had eroded their wealth. Well-heeled American millionaires pursued the daughters of British gentry and transatlantic heiresses sought titled husbands. Many rich Americans were attracted to

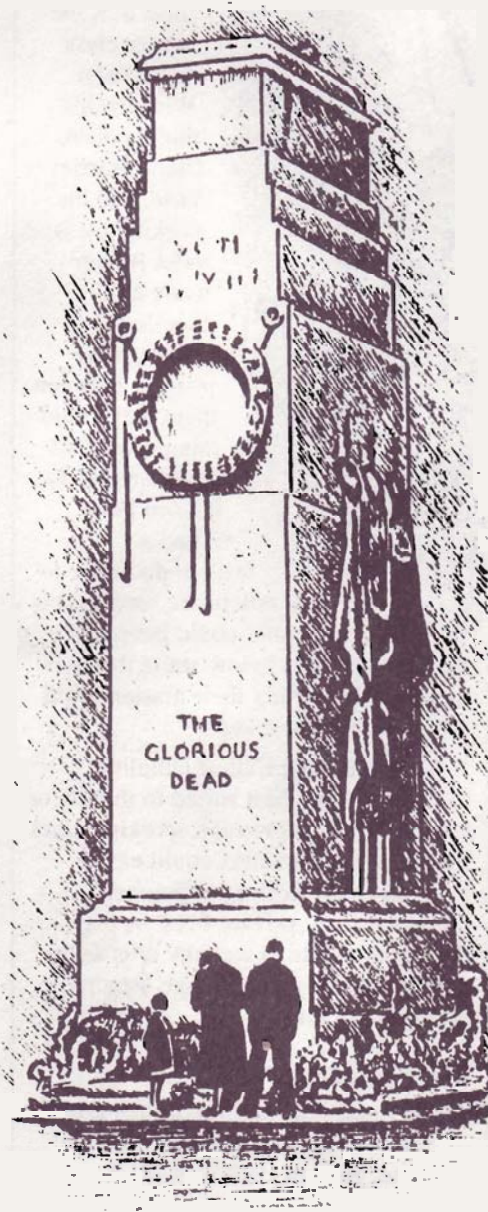
London for its traditions, culture, and high society.

Americans transformed high society during the 1920s. The whole of 'the Season'—the great gathering of the Upper Crust in the West End—was jazzed up and social life played out less and less in big houses and more and more in big new hotels where music was often provided by American bands. American hostesses provided lavish parties that were less stuffy than traditional British social events. Cocktail parties became popular. More entertaining revolved around hotels and fashionable, glamorous night clubs which were less expensive than house parties. However, many stories emphasized American misunderstandings of British society, such as whether one should tip the butler.

American businessmen opened companies in Britain and took over existing firms. This first shocked British pride in 1901 when the giant American Tobacco Company under the flamboyant James Buchanan attempted to buy the British industry. Similar things happened throughout the 1920s. Many large, fashionable, London department stores, such as Selfridges, were created by Americans. For the middle and lower classes, chain stores such as Woolworth's were also imported from America to cope with the rise of consumerism. American investigators could be hired by an American businessman who preferred to employ fellow countrymen to investigate some delicate matter.

Hollywood dominated inter-war cinema and its films promoted American culture. American entertainers might come over to perform, socialize, or appear at the London premiere of their new film. However, young British aristocrats often eclipsed Hollywood film stars in popularity and were sought after by American advertising agencies.

If none of the above seem appropriate ways to get an American Mythos investigator to London, he or she could be invited by someone they knew who had moved there.



*The Cenotaph.*

# Way of Life

**E**NGLAND has traditionally been class conscious. In the 1920s it was practically the only country where accent was determined more by class than region. Class affected the way people were expected to behave, the clothes they wore, the places they went, and what they thought of each other.

Hats were an important sign of social class. Working men wore cloth caps, middle class clerks wore felt hats, managers in City firms wore bowler hats, while the directors and partners of the firm wore silk top hats.

Londoners would also sort themselves out by class at meal times. The working classes took their main meal at midday, while the upper classes dined in the evening. Drinkers of beer divided themselves by the saloon and public bars. For lunch, working class people tended to bring a packed lunch from home or buy buns from a cheap bakery. Italian cafes and J. Lyon's tea houses were used by women and lower middle class men. Pubs and chop houses in the city were used by middle class men. Men from the upper levels of management would probably dine at their club after work.

People were also educated according to their class. Although by the 1920s everyone in England received an education, rich and poor did not go to the same schools. Working class children were educated in free day schools up to the age of 14, after which they would almost certainly leave to get a job.

Day grammar schools were used by the middle classes and a few poor children who got scholarships. If they

did well they could hope to go on to a university such as London University. Oxford and Cambridge universities were attended largely by the most privileged, the children of the ruling classes who had gone to expensive private 'Public Schools' such as Eton or Harrow. Afterwards they could hope to land Government positions via the 'old school tie' network of former fellow students.

When designing characters for a 1920s London campaign, as with 1890s characters, it is important to decide their class, though there is no reason why 1920s investigators

should not have working class origins. For instance, the upper class Lord Peter Wimsey, his middle class friend Harriet Vane, and his working class valet Bunter made an excellent investigative team as between them they could mingle with all strata of society. If Lord Peter

visited a well-to-do house to talk to the owners, his valet could have tea

with the servants below stairs to see if they knew anything their master could not or would not reveal.

Although most Call of Cthulhu occupations are best suited to middle or upper class backgrounds, working class investigator characters could easily have taken up work as policemen, bodyguards, or private eyes, or play drivers or valets to wealthy dilettantes with whom they might have fought alongside in the war.

## Religion

There were three main religious groups in England, the established Church of England, Roman Catholics (RC), and

dissenters (Methodists, Presbyterians, etc.). Being a Jew, to a lesser extent an RC, or to a greater extent an avowed atheist was a social handicap, although there were no laws against holding unorthodox views. Christianity was generally losing strength and churchgoing declined, though most people still held to a vaguely Christian morality.

However, many people felt a hunger for something new and there was a fascination with unusual religions. Many odd cults arose during the 1920s and gained brief popularity. See Occult, page 72. In cosmopolitan London, this atmosphere would be ideal for attracting new devotees to Mythos-worshipping cults. Religious toleration offered safety to cultists as well as to everyone else.

## Upper Class Society

Upper class society has always been about having access to a vast information network—information about jobs, personalities, investment possibilities, and secret political decisions. Traditionally the members of high society were always from upper class families and the only way to join was to be born or to marry into a ranking family. The gentry would visit London for 'The Season' which ran from early spring until early August, after which they would leave for the country or abroad. In previous centuries London was unbearable during August due to the stench from the city's sewers. Although this was no longer a problem by the 20th century, the tradition remained.

During the London Season the upper classes would be expected to attend certain social events. These included the preview of the Royal Academy painting exhibition, private and public balls, political, charity, or private dinners, lectures, concerts, theater, military tournaments, the Horse Show, cricket, Wimbledon, the Henley Regatta, Royal Ascot, Speech Day at Harrow School, ballooning at Hurlingham and Ranelagh, and countless garden parties. See Special Occasions, page 60.

The London-centered series of events ended in August when many of the wealthy went to Europe or to Cowes on the Isle of Wight for yachting. On August 12th, it was traditional to go



north for grouse shooting. Autumn was for country house parties and hunting culminating in the Hunt Ball.

The London Season was traditionally when the daughters of the wealthy were introduced to society so that they could find suitable husbands. They were known as 'debutantes' and their first season was called their 'coming out'.

Being presented to His Majesty was still essential to a debutante's 'coming out' and cars choked the Mall on such occasions. Debutantes were groomed by department masters to be presented at Court, fitted for special gowns with veil and tiara, and escorted to the Palace. There they would wait in an anteroom surrounded by magnificently dressed court functionaries before being presented to the King. They curtsied, shook hands, and then retreated. They emerged fully fledged into adult society.

The social season had been severely disrupted by the war but was revived with fervor in the 1920s, "to set an example to the lower classes and to the world." It was seen as a national tradition that was good for the economy. However, debutantes and 'Bright Young Things' were far more interested in pursuing pleasure for its own sake at parties and nightclubs. See Recreation, page 66.

There was also more sexual liberty; "You can do anything you like so long as you don't do it in the streets and frighten the horses" was a common quip. Dalliance could have obvious repercussions. Abortions were legal in Paris and 'a trip to Paris' became a cliched euphemism. Whether from high society or working class, fallen women (unmarried mothers) still bore heavy stigma. However, it was acceptable for society men to sow their wild oats. One aristocrat bought an actress's contract and spent six weeks of passion with her on the Riviera for £60,000.

Socialites in the 1920s wanted to be seen by the public. Their fashionable life of pleasure was publicized and recorded in the smart magazines such as the *Bystander* and the *Tattler*. Ascot and Henley had private enclosures for the wealthy, but those inside could be viewed over the railings by the public. Debs were almost celebrities for a season and were given glamour treatment wherever they went. This

should be reflected as high credit rating for characters who are debutantes. A proper debutante was supposed to keep a season album to record fellow guests' signatures, houses visited, sketches, and witty remarks.

Balls and dances were arranged for them to find a suitable marriage match. A debutante had two or three seasons at most to find a husband or she was considered a failure — an unmarried thirty-year-old was a confirmed spinster. After the war many debs wanted to take jobs after their first season rather than immediately get married.

The war had also eroded the wealth of many old families. The rich had paid 8% income tax before the war. By the 1920s that tax had increased to about 30%. Many society fathers welcomed wealthy suitors for their daughters without worrying too much where that money came from. The *nouveau riche* threw large public balls and cocktail parties and formed a new breed of elite.

Sons of the British aristocracy, despite allowances from their parents, took jobs in the city to supplement their means. They rented bachelor apartments in London and frequented night clubs. Their servants had to fit in with the new lifestyle, learn to mix cocktails, and assist their masters in keeping up with the latest fashions.

Young men living alone often dined at their club because they could not cook and sometimes had no kitchen. See Clubs, page 71.

## Middle Classes

Compared to the upper and working

classes, middle class men were the least affected by the upheavals forced by the Great War. Middle class occupations had greatly increased during the war, especially in London, and most middle class men were happy to reclaim their former jobs in the city after the war ended.

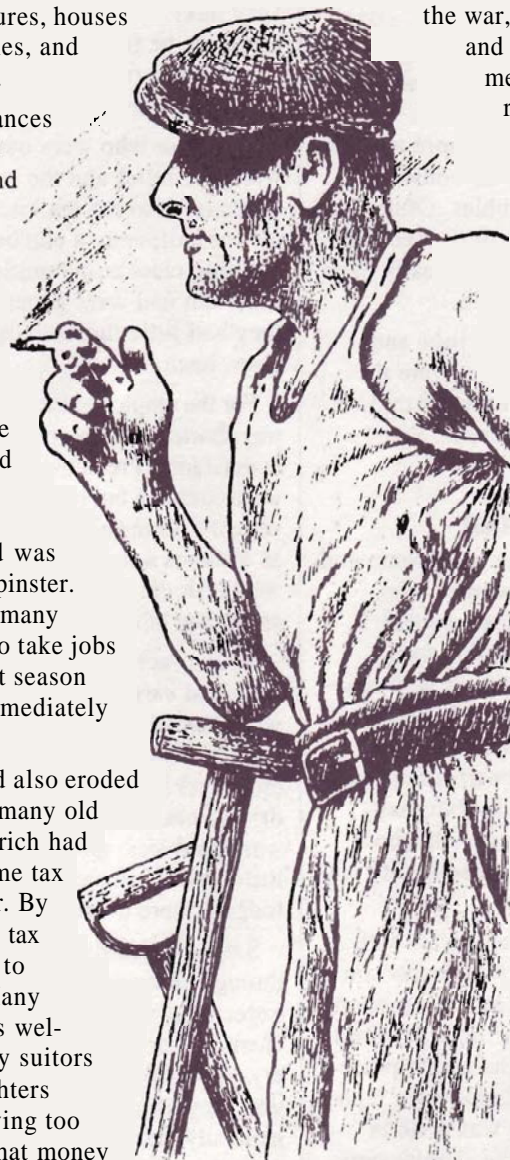
Men in the 1920s wore conventional black jacket and striped trouser suits to work in the city. Oxford Bags, light colored suits, cheerful ties, and correspondent shoes were worn casually. Their hair was short back and sides. In the street a gentleman always walked on the road side of the lady and opened doors for her and got up when she entered a room.

Middle class women enjoyed a great increase in freedom in the 1920s. Housewives' lives were made easier by new electrical household appliances which

meant that they had more free time on their hands. By 1928 women got equal voting terms with men. The Sex Disqualification Removal Act removed the legal barriers for

professions were open to them, and they received equal opportunities at most universities except Oxford and Cambridge (these two had all-women's colleges). For the first time there were women police officers. Nevertheless there was still prejudice against working women and it was harder for a woman to get promoted.

Women's new found independence was reflected by 1920s fashions — hair was Eton cropped or bobbed and covered by a cloche hat. Straight up and down-dresses were worn, those



who could afford them wore silk stockings while others wore cotton or wool stockings. Skirts rose to above the knee by the mid-1920s then lowered after 1925.

Working middle class women smoked and drank in public, went to cocktail parties and tried to be 'toujours gai'—to appear more wicked than one really was. Even housewives had time to take up hobbies. Often this was amateur dramatics or the Women's Institute but it could just as easily have been mystery investigation.

There was more leisure time and better transport. The 1920s were the first time when it was easy for middle class people to travel abroad. See Transport, page 58.

## Working Class

Street life in slum areas was dominated by matriarchs—older women who congregated daily to discuss local comings and goings, to mull over social standing, hardship, or misbehavior. Gossip and rumors could spread like wildfire. The fact that everyone knew everyone else's business did not necessarily lead to malice but many families had black sheep with whom they had little to do. Respectability was an important concept.

Cleanliness was synonymous with status and it was especially important to keep the doorstep clean. Possessions were also a mark of position. All sorts of things were put on the mantelpiece or hung on the wall. Pianos were high status items. Shopping was done in local shops and since the shopkeepers knew all their customers, they would allow credit. Cooperative stores started in the 1920s and introduced money-saving incentives.

Cooking was done in a small oven next to the grate. Many families only had meat on Sunday. The rest of the week it was bread, margarine, and sometimes sausages. However poor families in the 20s might not have their own oven and would have to take their Sunday dinner along to the local baker to be cooked. For the slightly better-off, breakfast could mean porridge or the breakfast cereal Force with the Sunny Jim trade mark. If the family was at home at lunch, that was the main meal of the day.

Saturday night drunkenness was a

continuing problem. Then disillusioned men started fights and rows. This was just accepted behavior. The use of weapons in such circumstances was very rare, and unacceptable. On Sunday all might be forgotten and everyone would dress in their best to go to church and have Sunday lunch.

For those who were out of work there was poor relief and the workhouse. Charities also ran tea kitchens selling tea for halfpenny a cup but most working class communities helped each other out and were generous even if they had little themselves. See The Poor, page 65.

For the employed the working week was shorter than before the war, even for manual jobs. Previously 54 hour weeks were common but by the 1920s, 48 hours were the norm and some worked as few as 40 hours a week. People usually got weekends off unless they were in service or worked in shops.

Young factory workers in London's East End earned as little as 10s per week, though a typical working man's wage was £2 or £3. Skilled people like engineers in the dock yards or railway drivers could earn £4 per week. Women were paid less: domestic wages of as little as £26 per year plus board and lodging were common.

Safety standards were poor, often through ignorance, and people could be expected to work with dangerous chemicals or unguarded heavy machinery. Some bosses were ruthless and unscrupulous, though that was not generally the case. Many behaved like strict school teachers, others were dogmatic and ignorant. A few owners took a paternal attitude toward their workforce. Regardless, workers commonly took great pride in their effort and skills, even if the pay was poor.

Traditionally, jobs were for life and promotion went to the longest serving. When the younger men returned from the war, they had different outlooks on life and a few new skills they could use to get better jobs elsewhere. This could lead some to take up investigating for a wealthy patron or in concert with an old army colleague. Some took opportunities to better themselves at evening classes and encouraged younger siblings to improve their education. There were some scholarships for the poor at predominantly middle class

fee-paying grammar schools.

Those who got better jobs often chose to leave home and sometimes their family would reject them, thinking that it was their children's duty to stay and help support the family. The young now also wanted more leisure time. For the first time young men and women were going into pubs or visiting dance halls. Times were changing and the roaring twenties were not just for the affluent, they were for the young of all classes.

## Occupations

LITTLE difference exists between people of the same professions on either side of the Atlantic. However, some occupations possess idiosyncrasies particular to Britain. The notable additional occupation is the Butler, a quintessential part of upper class British life.

### Butler

**Skills:** Accounting, Drive Auto, First Aid, History, Law, Library Use, Listen, Persuade, Psychology, Spot Hidden, Other Language.

**Description:** butlers are the highest rank of servant. Their manners are impeccable, they are well versed in etiquette, and are paragons of discretion. They often have their masters' complete confidence and would never be so indiscreet as to break that trust. They are in charge of the household servants, greet guests, and fend off those their masters do not wish to see. In the 1920s butling was an exclusively male profession.

There is only one butler per household. In a great house the butler is a true administrator, directly responsible for the staffing and discreet functioning of the household. He holds the keys to the wine cellar, a great privilege since medieval times. Valets will naturally assist their masters as they are able, but there may be more than one valet in a house, since each is responsible for the personal upkeep and well-being of a particular master. In a great house, a female housekeeper would be in charge of the female staff, but the butler was in charge of all.

In a small or single-person household, one manservant may act as butler,

valet, housemaid, messenger, cook, and driver. Bertie Wooster classified his simply by saying, "That's my man Jeeves."

Butlers are typically inscrutable and unflappable so a high POW is important. They also are renowned for coming up with helpful suggestions so a good INT is also appropriate. Never issuing orders to their masters, they always couch advice so as to merely imply that their suggestion might be the wisest course of action. They will often say, "Might I suggest, sir...", "Perhaps, sir, it might be a good idea if..." or "I took the liberty, sir, of packing the elephant gun." "Sir" or "Madam" are their standard forms of reference, to be included in almost every spoken sentence.

Butlers and their masters are rarely separated for long, so it is often best if a butler character's master, usually a dilettante, is part of the team, either being controlled by another player or the keeper. Some may find butlers difficult characters to play if the other players are inexperienced role-players who are likely to over-exploit their servant. However, the occupation can be rewarding among thoughtful role-players.

Butlers make excellent characters through which keepers may offer words of caution or advice to the investigators. The keenest examples in literature are Jeeves from the P.G. Wodehouse novels and Lord Peter Wimsey's manservant, Bunter, from the Dorothy L. Sayers mysteries.

## Social Anthropologist

Skills: Accounting, Anthropology, Library Use, Other Language, Persuade, Psychology, Spot Hidden, plus two other skills as a personal speciality.

Description: social anthropologists have a fascination for the social life of people. This could mean studying strange or foreign cultures, but could just as easily involve an investigation into working class behavior or patterns of behavior at the Henley Regatta.

Social anthropologists could be professional researchers

working for a learned institution or university but could be just interested amateurs.

During the 1920s and 1930s this became quite fashionable, especially for middle class people with a social conscience.

George Orwell spent some time living as a tramp in and around London as part of an investigation into conditions in workhouses and hostels for the homeless.

The Mass Observation movement involved ordinary men and women writing accounts of the things they observed in their everyday lives. Some took things further and

deliberately infiltrated things like political meetings or odd religious sects to write about what went on there. Most of those involved were unpaid volunteers from all walks of life, though a few were eventually taken on as full-time, professional Mass Observers. The Mass Observation reports were collected centrally and many were published as sociological documents.

A Call of Cthulhu investigator choosing Social Anthropologist as an occupation should decide if he or she is a professional academic or an amateur with another full-time job. See page 65 for more about Mass Observers.

## Athlete

Skills: see that occupation in the Call of Cthulhu rulesbook.

Description: all societies have held some form of the pursuit of sporting excellence in high regard. However in England there was a difference in the attitude one adopted to sport, exemplified by the phrase, "The important

thing... is not the winning but the taking part." This was especially true of cricket, where one was either a Gentlemen or a Player.

Gentlemen were wealthy amateur sportsmen who could afford to play cricket full-time purely for pleasure, and had the higher status. Players were professionals who made a living from their sport. Cricket teams could include both Gentlemen and Players but the captain was almost certainly a Gentleman. The two sorts used different dressing rooms. It is recommended that Gentlemen should take Credit Rating as one of their personal speciality skills.

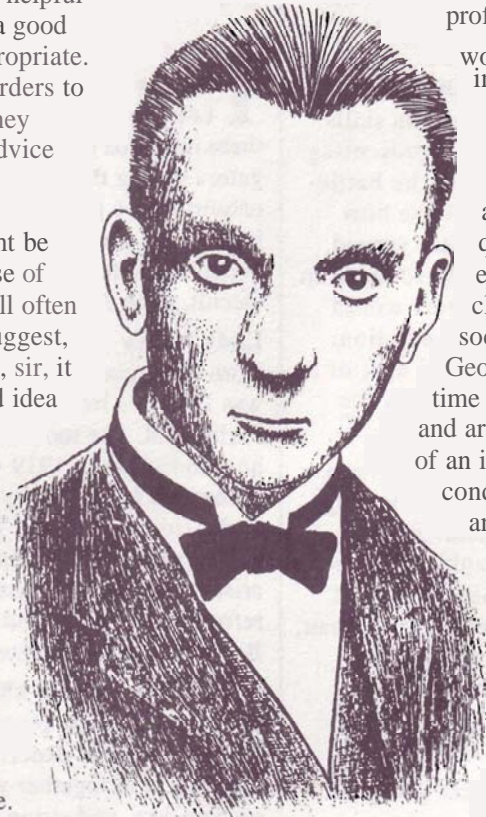
The type of sport one played was often dictated by class. Although cricket was universal, football, and boxing were primarily working class, tennis was largely middle class and polo, grouse shooting, and horse riding were upper class. For more about British sports, see Sport on page 70.

Cricket Bat is a weapon skill, base 25% damage 1D8+db.

## Dilettante

Skills: as per the rulesbook.

Description: British dilettantes are likely to be members of the aristocracy. Below the Royal Family, the highest ranks of the aristocracy were known as Peers and consisted of five degrees of



hereditary nobility: Duke, Marquis, Earl, Viscount, and Baron. A Duke would be addressed as "Your Grace" while the rest would be referred to as "Lord" or "Lady".

Below the Peers were Knights, who were technically commoners, and were addressed as "Sir" while their wives would be called "Lady." These were not hereditary titles and knighthoods were conferred by the King on people who had served the country in some outstanding way.

The Landed Gentry were families who traditionally owned large amounts of land, were well respected in society, and were usually wealthy but untitled.

By the 1920s, many untitled people had sufficient money to behave as dilettantes. See People, page 8.

## Police

A police detective would be called a Police Inspector in England and a police patrolman would be called a Police Constable. British police were not normally armed with guns but would have had truncheons (nightsticks). Neither Inspectors or Constables would have a handgun skill as part of their standard occupation package, but Inspectors should have a base Truncheon (Nightstick) skill of 25%, while Constables should automatically receive Ride Bicycle or Motorcycle 20%. See Law and Order, page 62, for more information about the London police.

## Private Investigator

While skills remain the same as in standard Call of Cthulhu, a few cosmetic differences between British and American PIs exist, usually in the types of cases they handled. See Law and Order, page 62.

## Revolutionary

The most common revolutionary causes in Britain in the 1920s were the IRA,

communism, and possibly anarchism, although the last was declining.

## War Experience

The following are a set of optional rules to simulate the effects of the Great War on investigators.

Any male character who reached the age of sixteen by 1918 may have served in the Great War. If so, add one point to his EDU, and grant a corresponding 20 points to spend on skills for each year of service, representing the experiences gained on the battlefield. The player may choose how many years his investigator served, but as conscription was introduced in England in 1916, characters would need a good excuse for exemption: this might be ill-health, old age, or a job in an exempt trade such as the civil service.

The additional skill points can be used on any of the following skills: Climb, Credit Rating (representing rank or decoration), Drive Auto, First Aid, Handgun, Mechanical Repair, Navigate, Operate Heavy Machine, Other Language, Pilot, Ride, Rifle, Sabre, Sneak, Spot Hidden.

For every year of service make a Sanity roll based on the likelihood of having seen a close friend die and experiencing the futility of trench warfare (0/1D6 SAN). A character who is thereby made temporarily insane may suffer from the effects of shell shock afterwards. See Hospitals, page 65.

Weapons that were kept as a souvenir. Probable weapons include a Lee-Enfield .303 bolt-action rifle, a Webley-Fosbery .455 revolver, or a liberated German Luger 9mm automatic.

Women did not fight as soldiers in WW1 but some nursed in military

hospitals, drove army supply vans, or worked in munitions factories. Female investigators could have gained appropriate skills in this way, also at 20 points per year.

## Famous People

THE FOLLOWING are historical figures who lived or worked in London during the 1920s. Any of them might be encountered by investigators during the course of their enquiries as a patron, consultant, or local color. People connected with the occult are listed separately under The Occult, page 72.

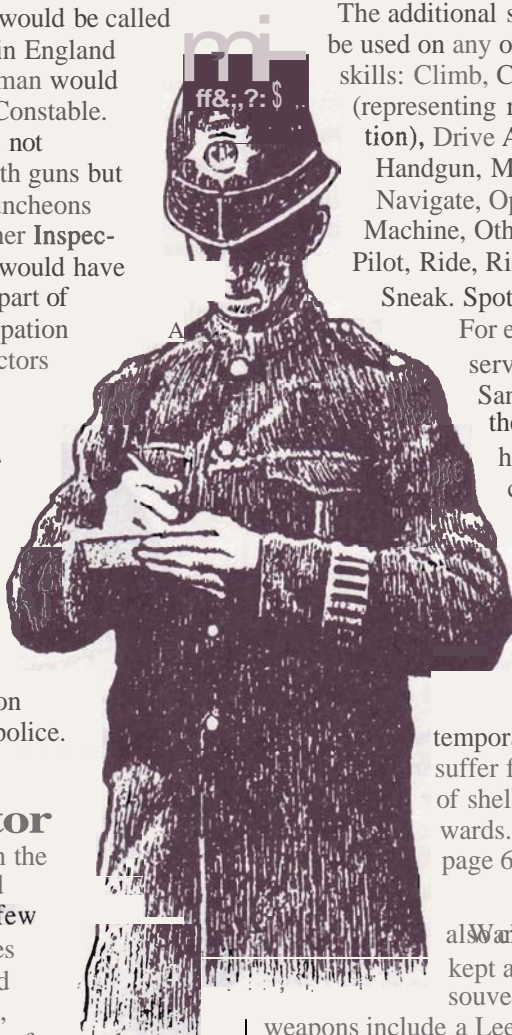
**Lady Nancy Astor** (1879-1963) — Born in Virginia, U.S.A. Lady Astor was Britain's first woman Member of Parliament. She took over her husband's seat in 1919 when he succeeded to the family title and moved to the House of Lords. Though a Conservative and a member of the aristocracy she was a committed reformer, a close friend of George Bernard Shaw and other socialists.

**John Logie Baird** (1888-1946) — Scottish television pioneer. In the 1920s he used to experiment with a machine held together with glue, sealing wax, and string from his home in Frith Street, Soho. His 30-line mechanically scanned system was adopted by the BBC in 1929. Other areas of research initiated by Baird in the 1920s included radar and infra-red television (*noctovision*).

**Stanley Baldwin** (1867-1947) — Conservative Prime Minister 1923-4 and 1924-9.

**Tallulah Bankhead** (1903-1968) — American actress who lived in London for much of the 1920s. Tallu (nickname) was famed for her hell-raiser lifestyle which included drug taking and sexual promiscuity irrespective of gender. She became a symbol of 1920's sexual liberation. In 1924 Tallulah appeared in Michael Arlen's *The Green Hat*. Newspaper tycoon Lord Beaverbrook said that the three most recognizable people in the Empire were Bernard Shaw, the Prince of Wales, and Tallulah Bankhead.

**Lord William Maxwell Beaverbrook** (1865-1964) — Canadian newspaper magnate and millionaire by the age of





Contemporary photograph of Tallulah Bankhead.

28. He acquired the ownership of the *Daily Express* in 1916 and eventually became the foremost press baron of the age.

**Horatio Bottomley** (1860-1933) — Liberal MP from 1918-22 and newspaper publisher of humble origins who went on to build a financial empire and lived lavishly by swindling rich and poor alike with his eloquence and persuasiveness. He founded *The Financial Times* and launched *John Bull*, which he edited and used as a platform for his outspoken opinions. His biggest con was his War Savings Certificates and Victory Bonds in 1918 which cost £1 each. Numbers were supposedly drawn and winners published but it became clear that they were fictitious. Bottomley pocketed over 30% of the half a million pounds

invested before a former partner exposed him. He was charged with fraud in May 1922 and sentenced to seven years penal servitude. In 1928 he tried again with *John Bull* magazine but it flopped. He died in poverty in 1933.

**George, 5th Earl of Carnarvon** (1866-1923) — Wealthy amateur Egyptologist educated at Eton and Trinity College (Cambridge). He became the 5th Earl of Carnarvon in 1890. His other passion was owning racehorses. From 1907-22 he financed Howard Carter's work first in Thebes and then in the Valley of the Kings. Shortly after the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb he was bitten on the cheek by a mosquito and died from infection in the wound. Some claim he fell victim to the young Pharaoh's curse.

**Howard Carter** (1874-1939) — English Egyptologist, Carter worked for the Egyptian Inspectorate of Antiquities as a draftsman. From 1907 he supervised Lord Carnarvon's excavations. This culminated in the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb in the Valley of the Kings in 1922 which occupied him for the rest of his life.

**G.K. Chesterton** (1874-1936) — English writer best known for his mystery books featuring the detective-priest Father Brown. Published his own *GK's Weekly* in 1925 and also wrote *Heretics and Orthodoxy*. He became the first president of the Detection Club in the late 1920s. See Soho, page 34.

**Agatha Christie** (1890-1976) — The world's most famous mystery author. Her first book was *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* (1920) which introduced the detective Hercule Poirot. Shortly after the publication of *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (1926) she disappeared for nine days and claimed to suffer amnesia about what happened. She consulted Harley Street psychiatrists but to no avail. Any keeper worth his elder sign must be able to make an adventure out of this!

**Winston Churchill** (1874-1965) — Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill became a member of Parliament in 1900. As First Lord of the Admiralty he was responsible for arming the Royal Navy before the war. From 1917-29 he held a number of cabinet posts including Minister of War from 1918-21 and chancellor of the Exchequer. In the 1930s he became less popular due to his views on labor relations and independence for India. He gained renown with the outbreak of WW2 as First Lord of the Admiralty and then as Prime Minister in 1940.

**Noel Coward** (1899-1973) — Leading playwright and satirist of the 20s. His plays often featured unconventional subjects and scandalous behavior. His first play was *I'll Leave It to You* (1920), followed by *The Vortex* (1924) and *Hay Fever* (1925).

**Nancy Cunard** (1896-1974) — Leading society hostess among the Bright Young People. The patron of many authors and poets, her love affair with black jazz singer Henry Crowder scandalized polite society.

**"Super Tramp" William Henry Davies** (1871-1940) — English poet of a respectable middle class family, emigrated to the United States at age 22 where he became a hobo. He almost starved in the Arizona desert and thought he saw rocks turn into loaves of bread. In the **Klondike** he panned for gold and traveled by jumping trains. This lost him his leg in 1898 and he returned to England where he continued to live as a tramp while saving money to have his books published. His first work *A Soul's Destroyer* was published in 1907 by G.B. Shaw. In 1926 he published *Adventures of Johnny Walker, Tramp*. He had a phobia of cats, negroes, and police. From 1916 to 1922 he lodged in Great Russell Street in rooms below a Belgian prostitute.

**Alexander Fleming** (1881-1955) — Scottish bacteriologist of St. Mary's Medical School, London University. He discovered penicillin in 1928 when he accidentally left a bacterial culture dish uncovered and noticed that around a culture of fungus spores an area appeared which was free of bacteria. Unfortunately, no means of mass producing the drug was discovered until WW2. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for medicine and was also a pioneer of chemotherapy.

**David Lloyd George** (1863-1945) — Leader of the Liberal Party from 1916-30. Prime Minister 1916-22.

**Robert Graves** (1895-1985) — Shot to fame with his autobiographical account of WW1 *Goodbye to All That*, in 1929. He was a classical scholar and was fascinated with mythology. He is most famous for his novels set in Rome, *I, Claudius* and *Claudius the God*. Later he wrote *The White Goddess*, interpreting Celtic religion.

**Alfred Hitchcock** (1889-1980) — Master of suspense films, Alfred Hitchcock was born in London, educated in a Jesuit seminary, and studied aesthetics and engineering. He began his directorial career in England in the 1920s with films including *Blackmail* and *The Lodger*.

**Aldous Huxley** (1894-1963) — Author of *Brave New World*. Huxley was a socialist but later also became interested in mysticism and perception, using narcotics such as peyote. During the 1920s he wrote *Limbo* (1920), *Chrome Yellow* (1921), *Antic Hay* (1924) which satirized London charac-

ters, and *Proper Studies* (1927) an essay on human intellect.

**Thomas Edward Lawrence** (1888-1935) — Known as Lawrence of Arabia. Wrote the semi-autobiographical *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1927), loosely based on his military exploits in the Middle East. After working briefly as an advisor to the Colonial Office on Arab affairs from 1921-22 he joined the Air Force and then the Tank Corps under assumed names. He died in a motorcycle accident in 1935.

**Ramsay MacDonald** (1866-1937) — Leader of the Labour Party 1922-31. Prime Minister in 1924 and 1929-35.

**Lord Northcliffe** (1865-1922) — Irish newspaper tycoon, who pioneered mass circulation journalism with his brother Lord Rothermere. Founded numerous papers including the *Daily Mail* and became proprietor of *The Times* in 1908. Directed British propaganda in 1918. He died in a wooden shack on top of N° 1 Carlton Gardens, officially of appendicitis but it was well known that he was mad and took drugs. Shortly before he died he phoned one of his papers asking them to cover the story that "I am off my head".

**Laurence Olivier** (1907-1989) — The great Shakespearean actor trained in London and later had his greatest theatrical successes there. His first professional performance was in the play *Byron* in 1924.

**Sir William Finders Petrie** (1853-1942) — Petrie worked in Egypt for many years before the war. From 1892-1933 he was Professor of Egyptology at the University of London and was knighted in 1923. After 1926 he turned his attentions from Egypt to Palestine.

**Dorothy Leigh Sayers** (1893-1957) — During the early 1920s she lived in Bloomsbury and worked at Benson's advertising agency. She invented Lord Peter Wimsey in the story *Whose Body?* in a desperate effort to write a best seller and stave off financial difficulties. It was published in 1923 and brought her rapid success. See Bloomsbury, page 33.

**George Bernard Shaw** (1856-1950) — Respected playwright and committed intellectual socialist. His 1923 play *Saint Joan* won him the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1925.

**Sir Bernard Spilsbury** (1877-1947) — Home Office forensic pathologist. He made his name at the Crippen trial in 1910 and appeared as expert witness for the Crown in many famous 1920s cases.

**George V** (1865-1936) — King of England 1910-1936 and the last British king to play an active role in the governing of the nation. Despite his long reign he was never fully trusted by the people as he was the cousin and close friend of the Kaiser of Germany.

**The Prince of Wales** (later Edward VIII) (1894-1972) — During the 1920s he was regarded as the most eligible bachelor of the age and was invited to the best society parties. In the 1930s he caused scandal and was forced to abdicate over his marriage to the American divorcee, Mrs. Simpson.

**Edgar Wallace** (1875-1932) — The famous thriller writer was found abandoned as a baby in Greenwich (southeast London), and never knew who his parents were. In his detective stories and mystical tales such as *The Green Archer*, *Traitor's Gate*, and *The Dead Eyes of London* he portrayed London filled with fog, darkness, and shadows.

**Evelyn Waugh** (1903-66) — Famous novelist, author of *Vile Bodies* and *Brideshead Revisited*, which studied upper class life during the 1920s. Before literary success he worked as a schoolmaster from 1925-27 during which time he attempted suicide.

**Virginia Woolf** (1882-1941) — She came from a wealthy and cultured London family. After her marriage to Leonard Woolf she set up the Hogarth Press and worked as a critic with the *Times Literary Supplement*. She was an essayist, diarist, and novelist. Her work in the 1920s included *To the Lighthouse*, *The Waves*, *The Years*, *A Room of One's Own*, *Orlando*, and *Mrs Dalloway*, and made her one of the most celebrated English authoresses. The last novel follows the lives of several Londoners on a single day in spring 1925. Its characters include a madman who thinks he realizes the truth about human existence and commits suicide. Virginia Woolf committed suicide after her house was destroyed during WW2.

The Bloomsbury Group, a circle of publishers, writers, and intellectuals, used to meet in her house in



Bloomsbury. They included E.M. Forster, Victoria Sackville-West, Bertrand Russell, and John Maynard Keynes. See Bloomsbury, page 33.

## Districts of London

**E**ACH AREA of London has its own distinct character. The following sections describe some of these districts and locales, including the City, the Tower, Temple, **Mayfair**, Westminster, Bloomsbury, West End, Parks and the Zoo, Kensington and Chelsea, and the more general areas of Suburbia, North London, the cemeteries, South London, the Thames, and Subterranean London.

"London the city" and "the City of London" mean different things. The City of London is the oldest part of the capital, once bounded by the city walls of Roman-era Londinium. London the city encompasses the City as well as all other districts of the capital.

It is also quite common for **Londoners** to refer to "South London" or "North London" when a place is, strictly speaking, in southeast London or northwest London. In common parlance there is a south of the **Thames**/north of the Thames divide. Almost everything south of the Thames is declared "South London". "East London" is considered entirely north of the river, for example.

## The City

**T**HE *raison d'être* of the City has always been to trade and make money. 'The Square Mile,' as it is known, was the financial heart of Britain's Empire. The City is densely built but few people actually live there.

In the 1920s different classes worked different hours and the City came to life as they arrived. From midnight onwards market traders started work at large markets such as Leather Lane, Petticoat Lane, and Whitecross Street. Postmen and printers also began their day in the early hours of the morning.

The clerks got in at **8:30am**, middle

management by **9am**, and the bosses by **10am**. They also took different lunch hours, though never more than one hour. From 5pm on was the rush hour home. Some men went to pubs until about 7pm. The night watchmen lit the gas lamps around **10pm**. From then until midnight the City was practically deserted except for the firemen and the police. By the 1920s the city had been declared a 'Fire Zone' and had five fire stations. The City police have always been separate from the Metropolitan police. They take orders directly from the Home Office and wear different helmets and crests. See Law and Order, page 62.

## The Bank of England

Located in Threadneedle Street. The Old Lady of Threadneedle Street' is a fortress-like, windowless building. In the 1920s new offices were being constructed within this facade under Montagu Norman, who was elected Governor of the Bank of England in 1920.

The coin of the realm is produced at the Royal Mint, near the Tower of London, but is distributed through the Bank of England. During the 1920s, the Bank was garrisoned at night by a detachment of Royal Foot Guards. The officer in command was allowed to order dinner for himself and a guest each night at the Bank's expense.

The bank's garden is said to be haunted by Sarah Whitehead, a young woman who went mad looking for her brother who, unknown to her, had been hanged for forging checks.

## Stock Trading

The city's two main institutions for financial trading are the Stock Exchange and the Royal Exchange. The more venerable of the two is the Stock Exchange where stocks and shares have been bought and sold since 1773. The Royal Exchange has an impressive classical building. Inside a covered court the cloister walls have frescoes depicting London history. The Royal Exchange Assurance Corporation have offices here as did Lloyds of London until they moved to their own headquarters in 1927. Its bells, which were rung four times a day at **9am**, noon, **3pm**, and **6pm** were a daily feature of 1920s city life.

## The Mansion House

In Walbrook. This is the official residence of the Lord Mayor of London, the most prestigious office that London can bestow. Mansion House is not open to the public. See Occasions, page 60.

## Halls of the City Companies

The legacy of the medieval guild system persists in the numerous buildings within the City, each devoted to the company of a given trade. Goldsmiths Hall is most magnificent with a sumptuous banqueting hall and a preserved Roman altar found when the hall was built. Leatherseller's Hall is modern but stands on the crypt of an ancient nunnery. Fishmonger's Hall displays numerous ancient relics including the 12-inch ribbed dagger with which the rebel leader of the 1381 Peasants' Revolt, Wat the Tyler, was stabbed by Lord Mayor Walworth, Prime Warden of the company.

## The Guildhall

In Bassinghall Street. Its ancient library has a comprehensive collection of books, sketches, and drawings relating to London, while the museum contains historic City relics. The crypt was restored in 1909 and houses some of the finest architectural remains of Roman London. Nine foot wooden statues of the giants **Gog** and **Magog** have presided over Guildhall ceremonies since its start in 1411. **Gog** represents an ancient Briton and **Magog** a Trojan invader. The Guildhall, picture gallery, museum, library, and news room are open all day at no charge.

## The General Post Office

The General Post Office HQ stood in three blocks between Aldersgate and Holborn. An underground railway was built to transport post to Paddington and Whitechapel, see References, page 82. Godliman street housed the Post Office Special Investigations Unit where MI5 opened letters and tapped phones; see Law and Order, page 62. The telephone exchange, owned by the GPO, was operated from Faraday house near St. Paul's.

## Fleet Street

Fleet Street got its name from the River



Fleet which runs beneath the pavement; see Subterranean London, page 37. In the 1920s this was the heart of journalism in London. Many newspaper offices such as the *Daily Express* building were the epitome of fashionable art deco architecture. Fleet Street cafes stayed open all night to cater for newspaper staff working on the next day's papers. Reuters Press Agency is to the south of Fleet Street. The offices of *The Times* were in Printing House Square near Queen Victoria street. Graham Greene worked there in the late 1920s.

The Cheshire Cheese Pub in Fleet Street is one of London's most famous. It has low ceilings, trestle tables, and sawdust on the floor. The 14th century crypt of Whitefriar's monastery lies under the cellar bar. In the 1920s the pub had a particularly foul-mouthed parrot, a gift to the landlord from an old sailor who posted it to him in a cigar box. The parrot's profanities became an integral part of tavern life. Journalistic investigators will probably have been insulted by it several times. It might even know them by name!

## The Old Bailey

The Central Criminal Court known as the Old Bailey is built on the site of the old Newgate Prison. The court's domed roof is topped with a bronze statue of Justice, often incorrectly depicted as being blindfolded. Inside the hallowed marble halls are four oak-paneled court rooms. Public admission is allowed if the court proceedings permit. See Law and Order, page 62.

A doorway from St. Sepulchre's Church crypt once lead to a secret passage in the condemned cells of Newgate prison which was south of here. A hand bell known as the Execution Toll of Old Newgate was carried down the passage and tolled, in accompaniment to various chants and prayers, outside the cells of prisoners about to die. The tunnel still exists but is bricked up.

## Hatton Garden

Hatton Garden is the center for goldsmiths and jewelers. Historically, Elizabeth I gave the area to Sir Christopher Hatton and, according to legend, Lady Hatton entered into a pact with the devil on this site. At the height of a ball at Hatton House the devil appeared

dressed in black and carried her off leaving only her bleeding heart behind. The place where the manifestation occurred is now called Bleeding Heart Yard. In the world of the Cthulhu Mythos, Nyarlathotep is often mistaken for the devil.

## Bartholomew's Hospital

In Giltspur Street. Known as Bart's, this is the oldest hospital in England. It was founded in the 12th century by Rahere, King Henry I's jester, after he survived malaria on a pilgrimage to Rome when he had vision of St. Bartholomew rescuing him from a winged monster. In the 18th century grave robbers sold bodies at Bart's.

Bart's also has world famous chemical laboratories and many of the country's most illustrious physicians and surgeons have worked here. See Hospitals, page 65.

## St. Paul's Cathedral

On Ludgate Hill. There has been a place of worship here since Roman times when at one time a temple to Diana stood here. The cathedral was rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren in 1675-1710 after the Great Fire. Its dome is a London landmark.

It was built on poor foundations and there was danger of it collapsing due to vibration from traffic. Restoration work started in 1923 and progressed in stages over several years. It was reopened 25 June 1930 with a live broadcast mass.

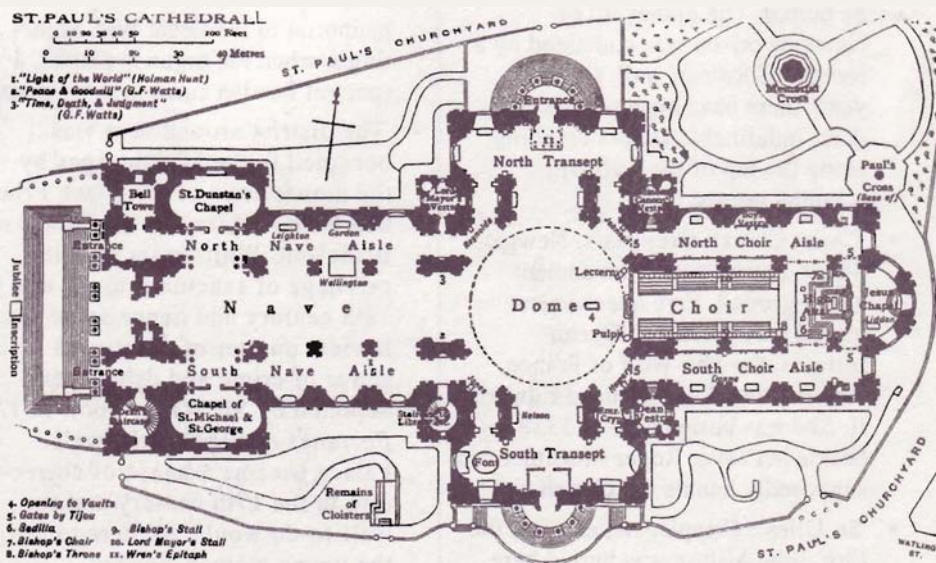
Immediately inside the west door in the chapel to Lord Kitchener is a secret door leading to the dome. It was discovered only because the ghost of a clerk was observed to disappear into the wall there, and the spot was examined during the renovations. A party of investigators could be the ones conducting the probe.

Exactly 627 steps lead from the ground floor to the top of the dome. St. Paul's is famous for its Whispering Gallery, encircling the interior of the dome, where a low whisper on one side is clearly audible on the other 107 feet away. A flight of steps leads from there to the Stone Gallery, which encircles the outer dome. At the head of the cupola is the golden gallery. More steps lead to the ball at the base of the cross.

Many illustrious dead are interred here including Wren himself, Reynolds, Turner, Millais, Nelson, and Wellington. There is an impressive manuscript library over the Chapel of the Order of St. Michael and St. George.

St. Paul's Cathedral is open daily 9am to 6pm. Admission charges during the 1920s were: Crypt 6d, Galleries 6d, Golden Gallery 1s, Ball of Dome 1s. Services were held weekdays 8am, 10am, 1:15pm and 4pm, and Sundays 8am, 10:30am, 3:15pm, and 7pm.

In the 1920s St. Paul's was hemmed in by Victorian office buildings, shops, and warehouses and labyrinths of tiny streets and alleys. Some of the streets were so narrow that they got no sun and mirrors were placed to reflect light to the street level.



## City Churches

The City has a large number of very old churches which were often built on ancient sites of worship. Many of them were destroyed or damaged by the Great Fire of 1666 and later rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren. Several of these were demolished in 1899, for the number of actual inhabitants of the City had dwindled. In 1919 a further 19 churches were listed for demolition, but architectural and historical opposition hardened during the early 1920s. The House of Lords defeated the measure in 1926. During the 1920s a number of archaeological excavations took place in City churches as a result of the demolition threats. Archaeologists unearthed pre-Great Fire vaults, crypts, and ancient foundations.

Many of the City's older churches have supernatural, macabre, or bizarre stories attached to them. Any of the following could be adapted to form the basis of a Call of Cthulhu investigation.

- Three stone devils with faces contorted in rage sit on top of the office block facing St. Peter's church, Cornhill, reputedly the oldest church in London, dating from AD 179. The architect who designed the office block placed the gargoyles there to spite the rector who disapproved of his building plans and forced him to alter them under archaic church law. The rector was caricatured in one of the gargoyles.
- Amen Court was known as Dead Man's Walk as it was the route by which executed felons were taken to be buried. The graveyard of Newgate prison was contained by a section of Roman wall. Over the years there have been reports of dark, indefinable shapes crawling along the top of the wall with scraping noises.
- Christ Church Greyfriars, Newgate Street, covers part of an ancient burial ground. Five queens were buried here including Queen Isabella, the She-Wolf of France, who murdered her husband Edward II. She was buried here in 1358 beside her lover Roger Mortimer and supposedly haunts the church.
- St. Giles', Cripplegate, escaped the Fire. John Milton was buried here

and during renovations in 1790 a female gravedigger called Elizabeth broke open his coffin. She sold off bits of his remains — teeth, bones, and hair — as souvenirs. Some of these are still owned by local families.

- St. Andrew Undershaft derives its name from the fact that beside it was planted a large Maypole which Puritans had cut down as a relic of idolatry. It was probably a survival of the Teutonic worship of Yggdrasil the tree of life.
- Workmen at St. James Garlickhythe, Garlick Hill, discovered a 500-year-old mummified corpse below the church in 1839. No one knew who it was but it gained the name Jimmy Garlick. During the 1920s, it was still kept in a glass-topped coffin in the vestibule.
- Close to St. John's Gate, the ancient entrance to the priory of the Order of St. John, Farringdon, is Clerks' Well. This medieval well gave its name to the surrounding area of Clerkenwell. Rediscovered by builders in 1924, it was thought to be a thousand years old.
- St. Mary Woolnoth, Lombard Street, was designed by the eccentric architect Nicholas Hawksmoor. T.S. Eliot mentioned its clock in his poem *The Waste Land*:  
"...To where St. Mary Woolnoth kept the hours / With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine..."
- All Hallows Church by the Tower of London traditionally has no cross, as it would mask the painting of the Last Supper. There is a large memorial to the Great War. Sometimes, when the organ is played, a spectral Persian cat is said to appear.
- The district around here was occupied in the Middle Ages by the monasteries of the Black Friars and White Friars and the Palace of Bridewell. Whitefriars kept its privilege of sanctuary to the end of 18th century and hence arose the lawless quarter of Alsatia — a sewer of crime and debauchery depicted by Sir Walter Scott in *The Fortunes of Nigel*. Bridewell Palace became a house of correction in the 17th century and the well-to-do would go there to see the young women flogged.

## The Monument

In Monument Street. The Monument is a 202-foot-high Doric column built by Wren to commemorate the Great Fire of London. It stands 202 feet from Pudding Lane where the Fire started.

One of the City's most famous pubs is Dirty Dick's in Bishopsgate, near Monument. It belonged to an 18th century dandy who refused to wash after the death of his fiancée. The squalid pub has been kept in the sorry state it was at his death, with mummified cats, mouse skeletons, and cobwebs.

Five railway termini lie within the City: Cannon Street, Holborn Viaduct, Liverpool Street, Broad Street, and Fenchurch Street.

## Markets

On the north bank of Thames near London Bridge are dozens of narrow streets and warehouses. At the head of the Bridge is Billingsgate Fish Market, Fish Street, and Fishmonger's Hall.

In the 1920s, Smithfield wholesale meat market was London's main meat market. It was busiest Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday. Smithfield was the site for public executions in the 14th century and was where heretics were burnt in the time of Queen Mary in the 16th century.

Middlesex Street became known as Petticoat Lane because of its famous clothes market where new and second hand clothes, wigs, and shoes are sold. The area is surrounded by Jewish cloth workers and dressmakers whose traditional market day is Sunday.

## Tower of London

THE TOWER of London was at one time the palace-citadel of the capital. It was built for William the Conqueror by Gandulf, Bishop of Rochester. The central White Tower is the oldest section.

From the Middle Ages the Tower of London was used to intern royal prisoners including Henry VI who was eventually murdered by his usurper Edward IV. Later Edward's children were allegedly murdered there by their uncle Richard III. The Tudor monarchs were the last to use the Tower as their

# IV. THE CITY

This Plan is based upon the Ordnance Survey Map with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.



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normal residence. The Tower is still a garrisoned fortress and its custody is entrusted to the Yeomen of the Guard who wear traditional "beefeater" style costume. These Yeoman Warders are all long-serving British soldiers of exemplary record.

The public can visit the Tower every day except Sunday. During the 1920s admission was 6d each to the White Tower, the Jewel House, and the Bloody Tower. The Chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula may only be seen in the company of a Warder. The public entrance is at the middle gate or barbican. The Tower is locked every night from 10pm, after which time not even the Warders are allowed in or out.

The Tower moat is crossed by a stone bridge at Byward Gate Tower which has a working portcullis. Between the Inner and Outer walls are the Bell Tower where Queen Elizabeth I was imprisoned, Wakefield Tower, St. Thomas' Tower or River Gate, Traitor's Gate, and Lanthorn Tower near the entrance to the inner ward.

White Tower contains armor and weapons dating from the 15th century, from two-handed swords to modern firearms. The lower floor was once a

guard room. A chapel of St. John is on the second floor and was where Simon of Sudbury, Archbishop of Canterbury, was kneeling when Wat the Tyler burst in and killed him. The adjoining chapel was the hall of this palace-fortress and above that were the royal apartments and council chamber. Below the Tower are gloomy but impressive vaults containing the well which was once the Tower's main water supply. Around the chamber are the insignia of the British Orders of Knighthood. The walls are thirteen to fifteen feet thick. In 1899, workmen discovered a hidden underground passage to a beehive shaped chamber in the southwest corner of the

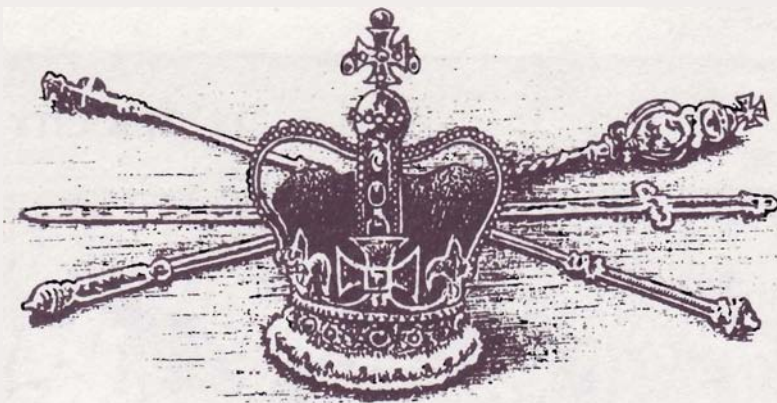
White Tower. This was possibly a rat pit, a dungeon in which prisoners were abandoned to the mercy of hungry rats.

To the north of the White Tower stands the small 16th century church of St. Peter ad Vincula. It was used to bury executed prisoners in Tudor times. In 1876 Queen Victoria ordered that the floor be taken up and the remains decently buried. Two hundred bodies were exhumed but few were identified. Between the wars an officer on night duty investigated illuminations emanating from the window by climbing a ladder and looking inside. He reported seeing people "in fancy dress," one of whom looked like Anne Boleyn, walking in procession. The lights went out after a few moments and he could see nothing else in the gloom.

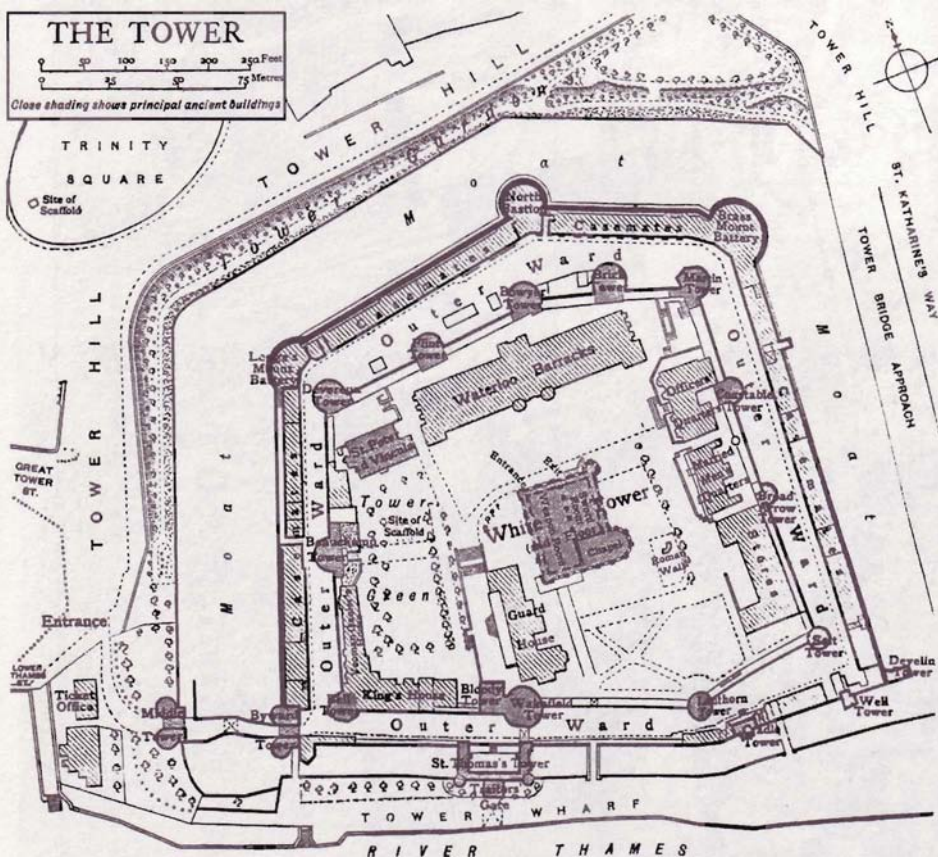
The open space in front of the church, called Tower Green, was used for private executions of royalty such as Lady Jane Grey and Anne Boleyn. The place where the scaffold was erected is paved and enclosed. On moonlit nights Tower Green is said to be overshadowed by the silhouette of a huge axe.

Beauchamp Tower was used for state prisoners and the walls bear their graffiti. The Bloody Tower—properly called the Garden Tower—was used to imprison many famous people including Sir Walter Raleigh who wrote his *History of the World* while captive. A copy of it is exhibited in the Tower. One of the worst judicial murderers, Judge Jeffreys, was incarcerated and died here. He was said to be insane and suffered an agonizing, incurable disease. Prisoners were examined and tortured in Kings House, including Guy Fawkes.

Public state executions generally took place on Tower Hill and the site of



The Crown Jewels.



the scaffold is marked by a stone slab. Lord Lovat was the last man to be publicly hanged there in 1747, although private executions of traitors took place at the Tower up to WW2.

The Imperial Regalia (the Crown Jewels) were kept under heavy guard in the Jewel House, where they could be viewed by the public. The collection includes the Star of Africa, the largest cut diamond in the world, discovered lying on the floor of an African mine in 1905, and the 3000 carat Cullinard Diamond.

The building that was the restaurant in the 1920s was formerly the menagerie. Members of the public were admitted to the menagerie free of charge if they had unwanted pets to feed to the lions.

There are numerous traditions associated with the Tower of London. The most famous is that if the ravens which roost in its grounds ever leave, England will fall. (Their wings are clipped so they cannot fly far.) It is also believed that misfortune will follow anyone who kills one. During the 1920s a Warder who kicked one later walked in his sleep, fell into the moat, and broke his legs. Ravens are associated with the mythical Celtic hero Bran. According to legends he was ritually sacrificed and his undying head carried from Wales to be buried under the Tower.

The Royal Mint used to be situated within the Tower. In the 17th century workers were supplied with cups made from the skulls of condemned criminals which had been spiked on London Bridge. It was believed that

ale consumed this way cured respiratory problems caused by working in a metal foundry.

## Temple

TEMPLE is the center for London's legal profession. Although the district lies across the borders of the City of London and Westminster, the history and character of the area warrants inclusion separately. Temple was the domain of the Knights Templar until the 14th century when they were disbanded and the land was handed over to lawyers.

The Knights Templar were accused of heresy and black sorcery and many of their ceremonies involved secret rituals. Legends surrounding the Templars can be easily adapted to suit Mythos scenarios. Who knows what arcane legacy they have left behind within the bounds of Temple?

Stretching down to the river from Fleet Street, through a Jacobean gateway, lie a labyrinth of silent squares forming Inner and Middle Temple, two of London's four Inns of Court. The other two are Lincoln's Inn and Gray's Inn. These alone possess the privilege of calling to the bar—creating barristers—see Law and Order, page 62. Each possesses a library, chapel, hall, and residential chambers occupied by lawyers. The narrow, gas-lit Middle Temple Lane divides Middle and Inner Temple. Its gates are locked every night.

The circular Temple Church remains much as it was in Templar times and contains the tombs of many knights. It

may be viewed by the public on weekdays. A penitential cell called Little Ease also remains from Templar days. A prisoner could neither stand nor sit in it as it measured less than three by five feet. A sundial in Pump Court, Middle Temple dates from 1686 and has the motto "Shadows we are and like shadows we depart." A furtive, shadowy figure has from time to time been seen nearby at dusk.

## Lincoln's Inn Fields

Many lawyers live or conduct their businesses in the area surrounding this twelve acre park and have jealously protected the fields from development. In summer at lunch time the scene is almost rural as sporty lawyers play tennis while others laze on benches beneath the plane trees. The cafes and pubs around the fields drone with legal gossip. Lincoln's Inn has London's oldest library and possesses many valuable manuscripts.

The Sir John Soane Museum and crypt stands on one side of Lincoln's Inn Fields and contains the collection Soane made during his travels. The building itself was constructed by Sir John Soane himself (1753-1837) in a strange architectural style that incorporates many visual illusions and anomalies. It includes a monastic suite which he called The Monks Parlour and a corridor that opens onto catacombs, once lined with tiers of recesses containing cinerary urns. In the sepulchral chamber stands the alabaster sarcophagus of the Egyptian pharaoh Set I, King of Egypt 1320-1300 BC, whose tomb was the largest found in Egypt until the discovery of



*The old Temple Bar, left, famous portal to the City built by Christopher Wren in 1670. It was long used to display the heads of conspirators and criminals, but was moved to private grounds at Cheshunt in 1888. Interior of the Hall, Lincoln's Inn, at right.*

Tutankhamen. During the 1920s, admission was free and it was open from 10:30am to 5pm.

On the south side of the Fields is the Royal College of Surgeons, built in 1835. It contains a massive library and an eerie anatomical museum, founded by Dr. John Hunter, including the skull of the scholar and murderer Eugene Aram, the skeleton of an Irish Giant, and a dwarf only twenty inches tall. It has 13,687 anatomical specimens, mostly from executed people. Admission could be gained by contacting the secretary or by invitation of a college member. See Hospitals, page 65.

On the western edge of Temple lie Aldwych and Kingsway. Aldwych means "old village" and was a Roman suburb of London. This semi-circular road replaces a former notorious thoroughfare called Holywell street which was named after the holy well which rises here. The well used to be visible from a garden beside the Church of St. Clement Danes, just east of Aldwych, and was an ancient site of worship. The church's chimes are mentioned in the children's rhyme "Oranges and lemons say the bells of St. Clement's." The island at the end of Aldwych was occupied by the offices of *The Morning Post* in the 1920s.

## Somerset House

In the Strand. In the 1920s this was probably the most useful source of investigative information in London. It housed government departments that held records of all of Britain's birth, death, and marriage certificates, and wills and probates. The East Wing was occupied by King's College, part of London University and a rival college to University College. In Strand Lane alongside King's College lies the Roman Bath. In the 1920s this was considered to be the largest relic of Roman London still above ground. See History, page 78.

Chancery Lane contained the Public Record Office in which public records were stored in fireproof chambers. The building was open to researchers from 2-4pm every weekday but not at weekends. There was also a free museum of historic documents, including a copy of the Magna Carta, on the ground floor. The nearby Patent Office had a library of scientific and technical books.

Chancery Lane Safe Deposit lay underground and was patrolled by para-military style guards with sawn-off shotguns. Its 5000 safes held many state papers and secret documents from politicians of this country and others as well as personal items put aside for safe keeping. It was destroyed in WW2. Many owners of the safes' contents could not be traced.

## Westminster

WESTMINSTER is the center of government for the British Empire. Within its bounds lie the Houses of Parliament, Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abbey, and the offices and official residences of cabinet ministers including 10 Downing Street, the home of the Prime Minister. Westminster stretches from Sloane Street to the Thames.

## The Houses of Parliament

In Parliament Square. Parliament met in St. Stephen's Chapel until it was destroyed by fire in 1834 and only St. Stephen's crypt, an original 13th century groined vault, remained. This was restored during the 1920s. The Houses of Parliament were rebuilt in gothic style with long oriel windows and fretted turrets in 1852. The building has two miles of corridors, 1000 rooms, and 100 staircases, with libraries and dining rooms along the river front. Its main architect, Augustus Welby Pugin, died insane in the year it was completed.

The clock tower containing Big Ben surmounts the Houses of Parliament and has always been a major landmark within the capital. The clock used to take twenty minutes to wind twice a week and its bell can be heard all over Westminster. Within the tower of Big Ben are chambers for the detention of members who have offended the House. When Parliament is in session a light is shown at the crown of the clock lantern.

In the 1920s the public were allowed into certain areas of the Houses on Saturdays and some bank holidays from 10am to 3:30pm. In order to gain admission to the public gallery to hear Parliamentary debates it was necessary to write in advance to an MP. For further details of the Houses of Parlia-

ment and the British political system, see Politics, page 59.

The Gunpowder Plot was the most famous historical attempt to destroy the Houses of Parliament. On November 5th, 1605, a squire called Catesby and some Catholics hoped to blow up King James I by digging a tunnel under the Houses of Parliament and stuffing it with gunpowder barrels. They hired Guido Fawkes, an explosives expert, and dug from a house near Parliament Steps but were stumped by nine-foot foundations. They abandoned the tunnel when they discovered that it was easy to hire cellars under the Houses of Parliament instead. Although the plot was foiled by an informant, the tunnel has never been found.

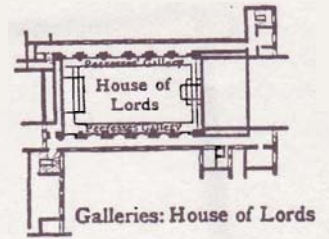
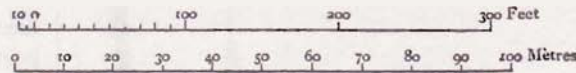
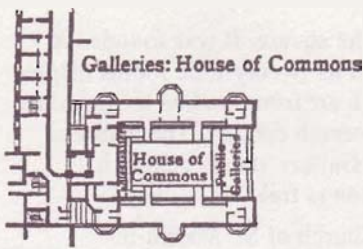
## Westminster Abbey

In Parliament Square. A place of Christian worship has stood on the site of Westminster Abbey from 610. Every monarch of England since the Norman conquest, save one, has been crowned here in the Sanctuary, before the high altar. It also contains graves of monarchs, soldiers, artists, authors, poets, statesmen, and other eminent people. There are numerous cloisters and chapels within the abbey, some dedicated to individual monarchs and many crowded with tombs. The body of an unidentified English soldier from the Great War was interred here in the Grave of the Unknown Soldier on 11th November 1920. A large blue stone called Long Meg is set into the South Walk of the Abbey. It is said to mark the grave of a giantess who lived at the time of Henry VIII but is more probably the tombstone of 26 monks who died of the Black Death. In the vestibule is the Roman sarcophagus of Valerius Amandius found within the abbey precincts. The Jerusalem chamber was the scene of the death of Henry IV. In 1928 the ashes of Thomas Hardy were buried here.

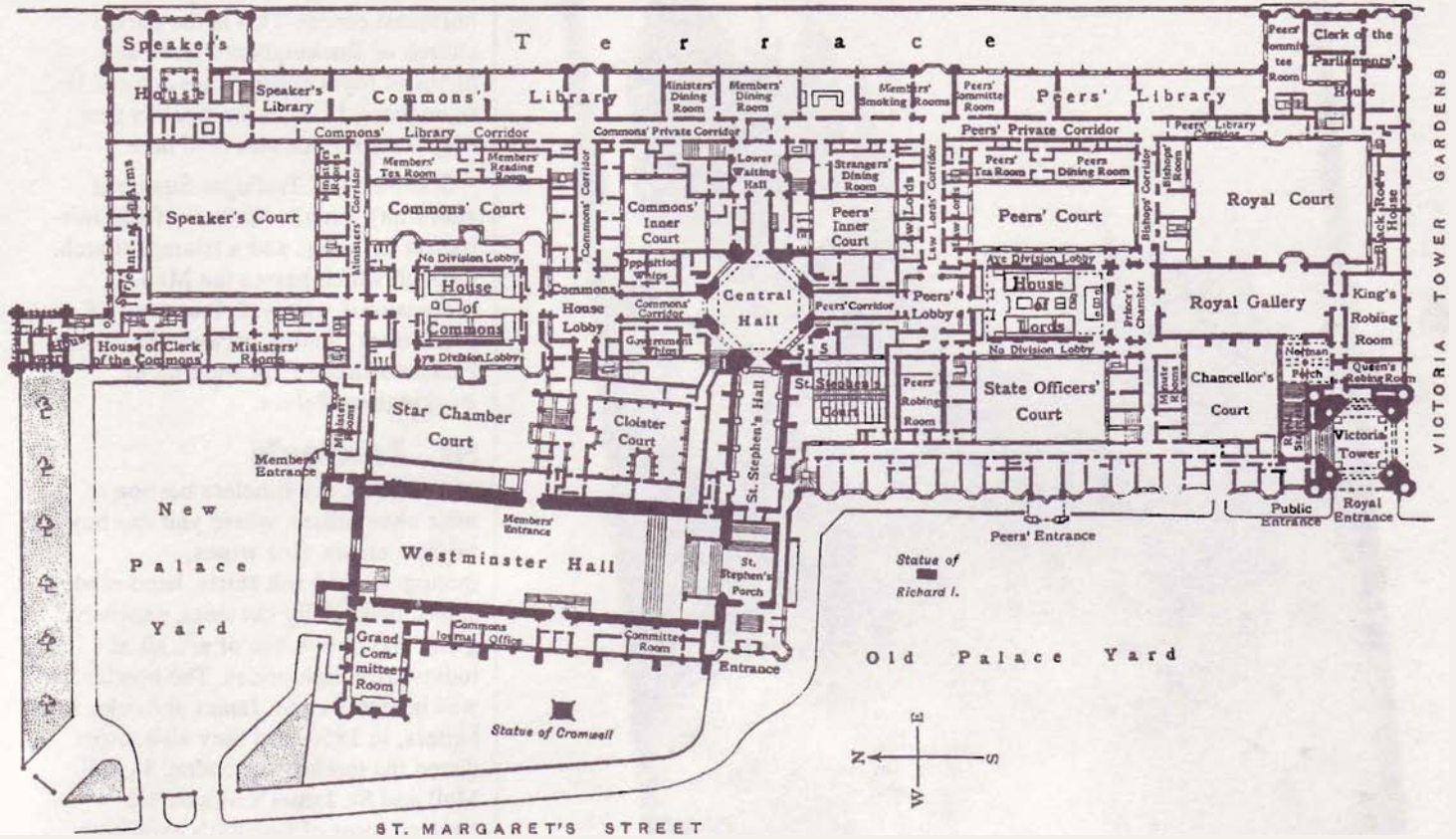
In the Middle Ages, Westminster Abbey was a major repository of holy relics including the Stone of Scone, said to be the stone on which Jacob laid his head when he dreamt. It was the coronation stone of Scottish kings and was captured in 1296 by Edward I and incorporated into the coronation chair on which almost all subsequent British monarchs have been crowned. Other relics deposited in Westminster include:



# HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT (ROYAL PALACE OF WESTMINSTER)



R I V E R T H A M E S



- Stones used for stoning St. Stephen
- Bones of the Holy Innocents
- A tooth of one of the Magi
- The girdle of the Virgin Mary
- Hair of Mary Magdalene
- A vial of holy blood
- A footprint of Christ in stone
- A tooth of St. Athanasius
- The head of St. Benedict
- St. Peter's vestments

**Unexplained Phenomena:** Westminster Abbey is supposed to be haunted by three ghosts. The oldest ghost is that of a 14th century monk, Father Benedictus, who was murdered by men he disturbed robbing the King's treasury in 1303. The thieves were flayed alive and their skins nailed to the church door. His ghost glides several inches above the floor. The

second specter is that of John Bradshaw, who was sentenced to death by Charles I and buried in the abbey, then later disinterred and gibbeted. The last was seen during the 1920s near the tomb of the unknown soldier. He wore **khaki** and was covered in mud. There is also a story that the statue of Daniel Poultney turns the pages of his stone book as the clock strikes twelve on moonlit nights.

## Westminster Hall

In Parliament Square. Westminster Hall dates from 1099 and is a Norman edifice with a history almost as old as England. Parliament previously held session here for several centuries. Here also were held famous trials such as that of Sir Thomas Moore. The ancient hammer beam roof was repaired in 1923 and tennis balls dating from the time of Henry VIII were found in the rafters.

## New Scotland Yard

Embankment. New Scotland Yard was the headquarters of the Metropolitan Police from 1890 to 1967. Its wrought iron gates were guarded by policemen and members of the public were not normally admitted. Investigators should report crimes to a local police station but would nevertheless find having contacts at Scotland Yard invaluable. New Scotland Yard held the Black Museum, a repository for evidence from infamous or grisly crimes.

## Whitehall

A street, Whitehall leads from Parliament Square to Trafalgar Square and contains many government offices. Historically, the most important building in Whitehall is the 16th and 17th century former royal palace which gives it its name, but only the banqueting hall built by Inigo Jones remains.



*A view of the Embankment, showing the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben. See also page 29.*

In 1926 the hall was used as a museum. A subterranean passage came to light in the 1920s during the demolition of some old houses in Craig's Court. The passage was probably part of the old palace.

Downing Street branches off Whitehall. N° 10 Downing Street is the official home of the Prime Minister and N° 11 is the home of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. In the 1920s the War Office stood on the eastern side of Whitehall.

In the center of the wide street is the Cenotaph, which means 'hollow tomb'. It was erected to the dead of the Great War and a wreath is laid there every Armistice Day, November 11. It had a great emotional significance to Londoners in the 1920s and it was usual for people to raise their hats when passing it. It appears angular but is in fact

composed of a series of almost imperceptible curves.

Horse Guards is the headquarters of the Commander in Chief of the Home Forces. Its gates are always guarded by members of the Queen's Life Guard, mounted on horseback.

### **Trafalgar Square**

Trafalgar Square is dominated by the 145-foot-high Nelson's Column, surrounded by Landseer's four bronze lions and statues of heroes. Thousands of pigeons nest in the area. The square has a hollow granite pillar, with room for one person and a number of slits set in its side, which was set up in the 19th century as a secret observation post for the police to observe marches.

The pseudo-classical building of the National Gallery dominates the north

side of the square. It was founded in 1824 and its twenty-nine rooms display European art from the late medieval to the eighteenth century. The National Portrait Gallery stands behind it. Admission is free.

The Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields stands in the square's northeast corner. This is the parish church of Buckingham Palace and births of royal children are entered in its register. In 1924 the world's first broadcast service was held here.

Southwest of Trafalgar Square is Admiralty Arch, a mixture of administration buildings and a triumphal arch, through which passes the Mall, a processional way with four rows of plane trees running between St. James Park and Green Park right up to Buckingham Palace.

### **St. James's**

This district is a timeless bastion of male chauvinism, where you can buy mellow cigars, fine wines, monogrammed silk shirts, hand-made shoes, beautifully cut suits, expensive guns, and rare works of art, all at ludicrously high prices. The bowler hat was invented in St. James at Locks, the hatters, in 1850, and they also introduced the top hat to London. In Pall Mall and St. James's Square are situated most of London's exclusive gentlemen's clubs. See page 71.

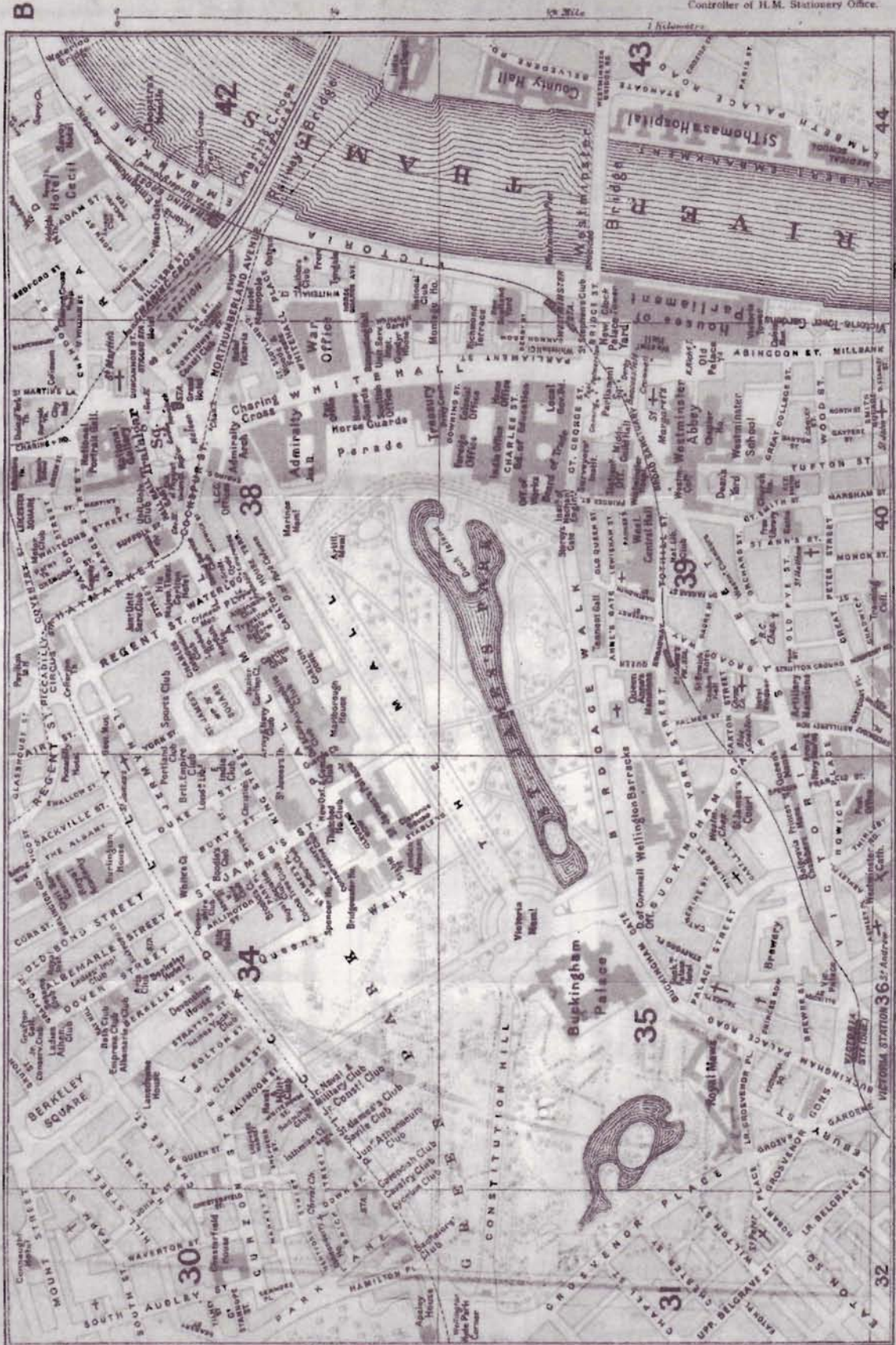
### **James's Palace**

In Pall Mall. St. James's palace used to be the abode of royalty but William IV was the last to live there. The public are allowed into the chapel for services. It stands on the site of a 12th century hospital founded for the detention of fourteen leprous maidens. Their graves, marked by small crosses, can be seen in an inner courtyard.

A gruesome murder took place here in 1810. The Duke of Cumberland was having an affair with the daughter of his valet, **Sellis**. She killed herself when she found she was pregnant and the Duke was attacked from behind shortly afterwards when passing through a darkened state room. Within the hour **Sellis** was found in his bed with his head almost severed from his body. The verdict was murder followed by suicide! Now, **Sellis'** ghost is said to haunt the room in which he died. During the 1920s it was used for

# I. WESTMINSTER AND PICCADILLY

This Plan is based upon the Ordnance Survey Map with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.



Printed by M<sup>r</sup> Lacey & Pinner, St. Albans.

society balls. The haunting could be used as the basis of a scenario taking place at such an event.

## The London Museum

In Green Park. In the 1920s this was housed in Lancaster House, near St. James's Palace. It was given to the nation by Lord Leverhulme in 1913 and was designed to show the social and domestic history of life in London through the ages. It contained items found in London from as far back as the neolithic age and included a Mithraic relief, the remains of a Romano-British barge, and a model of London before the fire of 1666. Admission was free.

N° 12 Waterloo place was the home of politician Anthony Eden's father, Sir

William Eden, Bart., who believed he was "the plaything of unseen forces" and spoke to them.

Christie's international auction house, the famous art auctioneers, was at N° 8 King street. They were open Monday to Friday, 9 to 4:30pm and were closed in August.

## The London Library

N° 14 St. James's Square is the famous London Library, the best subscription library in the kingdom. The books are on display in open shelves and members are allowed to browse at their leisure in a comfortable, club-like atmosphere. Books can also be borrowed for fairly long periods of time.

By the 1920s the library kept books

in the seven basic subject areas of art, history, philosophy, religion, topography, a miscellaneous section including older scientific books, and a section for periodicals which includes a complete set of *The Times*. It also has catalogues of other libraries including the Library of Congress. Its collection of occult books is surprisingly large.

Access is only available to library members who have paid a subscription. In the 1920s there was a two year waiting list for membership which cost £10 per year. Short term membership was sometimes available for foreign visitors or those engaging in specific research.

In May 1875, a young man called Bryan Courthope Hunt committed suicide in the Periodicals Department. He had returned volume one of George Henry Lewes' *Problems of Life and Mind* and asked for the second volume, which was out. He then went upstairs and shot himself in the head with a derringer. The first shot cracked his skull open but he was still conscious. In order to fire a second shot he had to unscrew the barrel of the pistol and reverse it. Five minutes after the first report was heard, Bryan Hunt finally blew his brains out across the library floor.

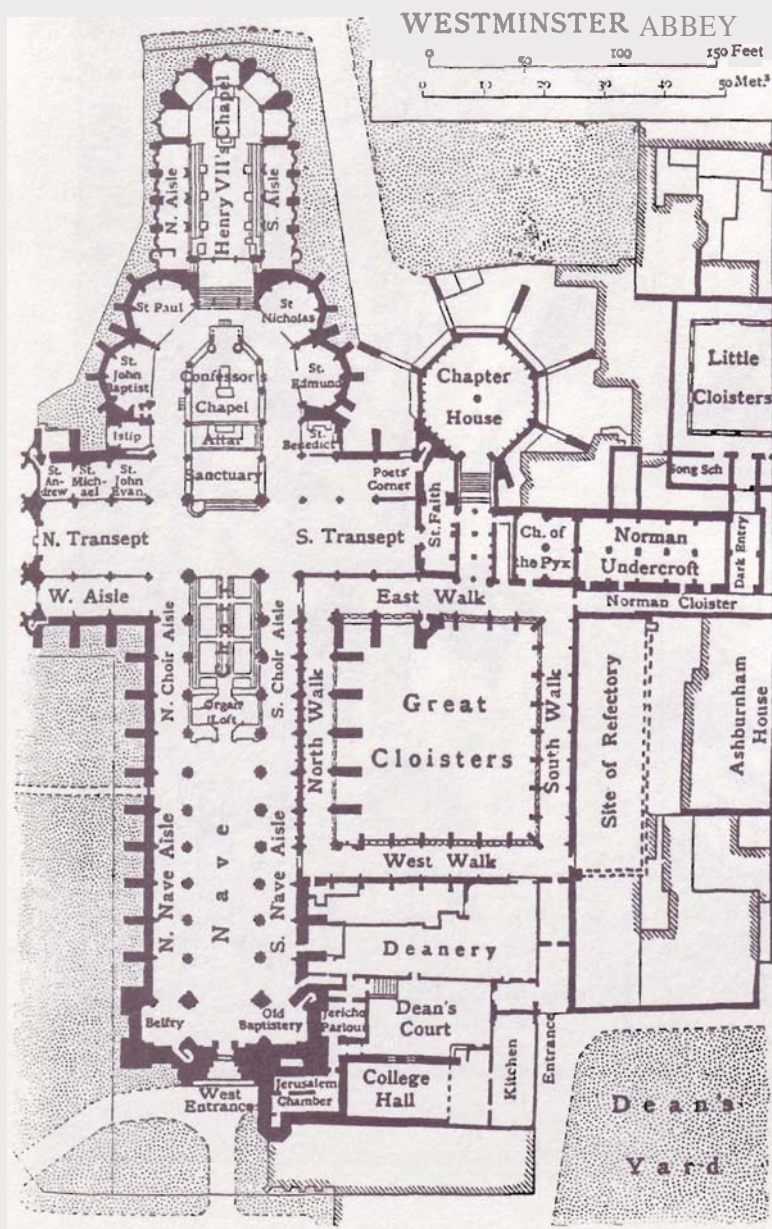
Bryan Hunt, the son of Thornton Hunt, the first editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, had been disturbed for several weeks prior to the incident. He had taken to locking himself away in his room where he had been studying books on psychology in relation to man's free will and instincts for survival. Perhaps some latter day investigator following similar lines of research might discover what lead Bryan Hunt to such a drastic course of action.

## Buckingham Palace

The official residence of the Monarch of England, Buckingham Palace was built in 1703 and purchased by George III in 1761. In the 1920s no part of the palace or its extensive gardens were shown to the public and it was very difficult to gain admission to any part of it unless you were part of the highest echelons of society.

## Belgravia

This area around Belgrave Square contained some of London's most respectable addresses in the 1920s,



with grand 19th century houses in creamy stucco. It is the fictional home of Bertie Wooster's Aunt Agatha.

North of Eccleston St. is **Eaton Place**, which in 1922 was the scene of a dramatic murder. On 22 June, Sir Henry Wilson, a former Chief of the Imperial General Staff, had just stepped out of a taxi outside his home at N<sup>o</sup> 36 when he was shot four times in the back by two Sinn Feiners (IRA). Despite his wounds he fought them off with his sword stick but they escaped by commandeering his taxi. The police arrived and gave chase but Sir Henry died. The two assailants were caught and hanged in Wandsworth prison.

The Grenadier at 18 **Wilton Row**, close to Hyde Park Corner, attracted a fashionable clientele in the 1920s. The 300-year-old pub had a checkered history. The Duke of Wellington's men used it as a mess but when one young officer was once caught cheating at cards he was flogged to death in the cellar by his fellow officers. Landlords have experienced psychic disturbances on the anniversary of his death.

There is a Wellington Museum at N<sup>o</sup> 1 London, Apsley House, Hyde Park Corner, the former home of the Iron Duke.

Until his death in 1933, 121 Ebury St. was home to Irish writer George

Moore. He had two old maidservants and a pet python which liked eating live guinea pigs. He refused to have a telephone in case former mistresses should phone him.

## Pimlico

To the south and west of Parliament Square is Pimlico (occasionally called South Belgravia by snobs). Although it is mostly residential it is less respectable than Belgravia with a combination of wealthy and poor streets. The main thoroughfares are Buckingham Palace Road and Victoria Street which leads from Parliament Square to Victoria Station. Victoria is one of London's largest train stations and a lot of rebuilding was going on around the terminus during the 20s.

The Roman Catholic Westminster Cathedral in Victoria Street was founded in 1895 but only consecrated in 1910 after it was free of debt. The cathedral is in Byzantine style, built of brick with a mosaic decorated arch.

## Along the Embankment

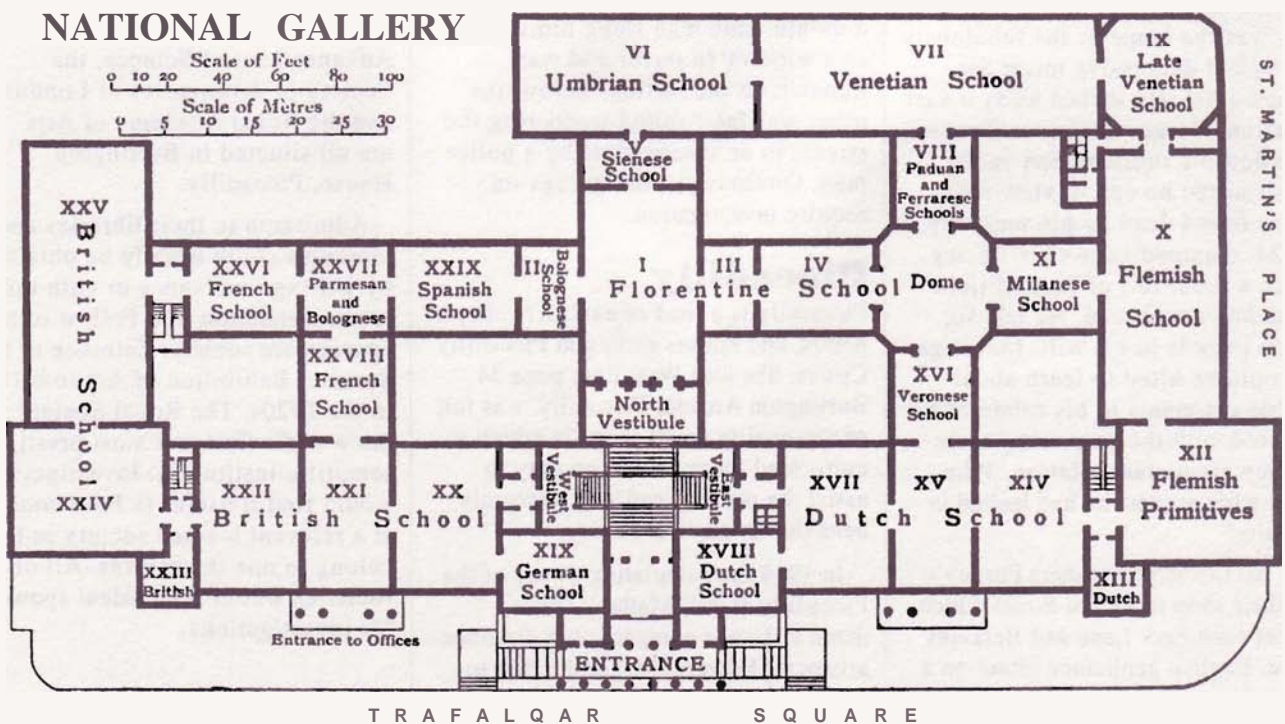
The Tate Gallery is in Millbank. It is devoted to modern British art, mainly from the 18th and 19th centuries, including paintings by Blake, the Pre-Raphaelites, and contemporary

artists. In 1923, Mr. Samuel Courtauld donated £50,000 for the purchase of modern foreign art as well. The gallery was open between 10am and 4 or 6pm on weekdays and 2 to 6pm on Sundays. Admission was free.

A statue of the Celtic Queen Boudicca stands by Westminster Bridge, though she is buried under platform ten of Kings Cross Station.

Cleopatra's Needle stands between Waterloo and Hungerford bridge. It is an obelisk of red granite originally erected at Thebes, capital of ancient Egypt, in 1454 BC and is the oldest monument in London. It was shipped over in 1876, but sunk in a storm in the Bay of Biscay and was recovered in 1878. At that date two earthenware jars were sealed in the base containing a portrait of Queen Victoria, an Arabic translation of the Book of Genesis and other memorabilia. The area around the Needle is said to be haunted by a shadowy figure.

At the south end of Northumberland Street is the Sherlock Holmes pub. This was formerly the Northumberland Hotel where, in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Sir Henry Baskerville stayed when he arrived from Canada. During the 1920s George Bernard Shaw lived in Robert Street opposite J.M. Barrie, the author of *Peter Pan*.



# Mayfair

**M**AYFAIR lies between Piccadilly to the south and Oxford Street to the north. Like Belgravia it was an exclusive residential area known for aristocratic mansions. In the 1920s, however, many of these were being converted into hotels or gentlemen's clubs.

## Park Lane

Park Lane is Mayfair's most famous street. In the 1920s two of its grandest mansions, Grosvenor House, home of the Dukes of Westminster, and Dorchester House were demolished to make way for hotels and flats. The new Grosvenor House Hotel, completed in 1929, was specifically designed with Americans in mind. It was the first hotel in London with separate entrance lobbies to each bedroom, running iced water, and *en suite* bathrooms. The Park Lane Hotel, nicknamed the Birdcage because of its steel skeleton, was one of the most impressive hotels in the area, with a sumptuous ballroom where the Prince of Wales liked to dance.

Many aristocratic owners were known for their eccentricities. Londonderry House was so vast that a footman walked 18 miles a day in the course of his duties and some rooms lay unused and forgotten for decades. Old Brook House, off Park Lane, was the home of the fabulously wealthy but depressive miser Sir Ernest Cassel. He locked away a vast collection of treasures in steel cases in the house's subterranean vaults and permitted no one to view them. He was found dead by his secretary in 1921, slumped across his library desk in a room full of first editions that he had never read. He left six million pounds in his will. Investigators could be hired to learn about possible claimants to his estate or be contacted with the surprising news that they are distant relation. Who knows what secrets he had locked in his vaults?

The exclusive gun makers Purdey's have their shop in Mount Street which runs between Park Lane and Berkeley Square. English gentlemen intent on a grouse shooting trip would purchase their equipment from Purdey's.

## Berkeley Square

Berkeley Square was a prestigious residential square. The garden at its center was mainly used by nannies to perambulate the offspring of the aristocracy. In 1923 it was the subject of *A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square* by Michael Arlen. The future Queen Elizabeth II was born in **Bruton** Street, off Berkeley Square, in 1926.

Prim and proper Berkeley Square also holds what has been called, "The most haunted house in London." N<sup>o</sup> 50 is supposedly so charged with psychic energy that a sensitive person can feel a tingle if he or she touches the exterior brickwork. The house is haunted by a small, unhappy child, a mad woman, and a melodramatic girl who clings by her fingers to a window ledge, desperately evading the attentions of an old man thought to be her guardian.

It was once the home of the late Prime Minister George Canning and later occupied by Maggs & Co. antiquarian booksellers, but remained unoccupied for many years. From time to time lights flashed at the windows and screams, moans, bells, and dragging sounds could be heard from inside. One foggy night two sailors broke in to sleep there and were confronted by a hideous formless creature with a gaping black hole for a mouth. One man flung himself out of a window in terror and was impaled on the railings below, the other was later found wandering the streets in an insane state by a policeman. Obviously, such goings-on require investigation.

## Piccadilly

Piccadilly is a road of exclusive shops, hotels, and houses ending at Piccadilly Circus. See also West End, page 34. Burlington Arcade, Piccadilly, was full of top-quality small shops in which a uniformed footman was on duty to assist the wealthy and stop unseemly behavior by anyone else.

In 1919 the calculating owner of the Piccadilly Hotel, Mallaby Deeley, made a strange compact with dissolute aristocrat Edward Fitzgerald, heir to the Dukedom of Leinster. Edward was on the brink of bankruptcy and agreed

to sell his inheritance of £80,000 per annum for £60,000 in ready cash, thinking that his brother, the current Duke, would live for ages. But the Duke died only three years later in 1922, of a brain tumor. Deeley entered the inheritance and Edward lived in poverty.

In a hidden courtyard to the west of the Piccadilly Hotel lies Albany, a set of exclusive residential chambers in which Graham Greene, J.B. Priestly, and the fictional thief Raffles had rooms.

The Ritz Hotel, which opened in 1906, was one of London's best known luxury hotels by the 1920s and promised absolute comfort. Its Palm Court captivated high society at the start of the century when taking tea at the Ritz was the height of fashion. It was one of the first hotels where it was acceptable for young ladies to go unchaperoned.

Half Moon Street off Piccadilly was a famous Regency address. P.G. Wodehouse's fictional upper class twit, **Bertie** Wooster, lived there with his butler Jeeves.

## Learned Societies

The headquarters of many learned societies including the Royal Society, the Geological Society, Royal Astronomical Society, Chemical Society, the Linnaean Societies, the British Association for the Advancement of Science, the Society of Antiquaries of London, and the Royal Academy of Arts are all situated in Burlington House, Piccadilly.

Admission to their libraries and museums could usually be obtained by writing in advance or with the recommendation of a Fellow of the appropriate society. Entrance to the Summer Exhibition of Art cost 1s 6d in the 1920s. The Royal Society was the world's first and most prestigious scientific institution. Investigators would find it useful to have contacts at a relevant learned society or to belong to one themselves. All of the societies would make ideal sponsors for investigations.

# II. REGENT STREET, OXFORD STREET, AND MARYLEBONE

This Plan is based upon the Ordnance Survey Map with the sanction of the Controller of H. M. Stationery Office



### III. STRAND, HOLBORN, AND BLOOMSBURY

This Plan is based upon the Ordnance Survey Map with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.



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# Bloomsbury

**B**LOOMSBURY, centering on Russell Square, was a smart residential area in the 18th century before losing its fashionable crowd to Belgravia. In the 1920s it was renowned as the abode of intellectuals, writers, and artists. It lies to the north of New Oxford Street and to the east of Tottenham Court Road. At Bloomsbury's northern boundary lies Euston Road in which there are three major railway terminuses — Euston, St. Pancras, and Kings Cross. Investigators probably come to Bloomsbury to visit the British Museum.

## The British Museum

In Great Russell Street. This was founded in 1753 and contains such priceless items as the **Elgin Marbles** and the Rosetta Stone, the latter discovered in Egypt, 1799, and brought to England in 1902. The Rosetta Stone has parallel text on it in Egyptian hieroglyphics, demotic Egyptian, and Classical Greek. This key allowed the hieroglyphics to be deciphered for the first time.

During the 1920s the British Library was part of the British Museum, originally formed from the libraries of Sir Robert Cotton and Sir Hans Sloane. The Royal Library, containing the books of the Kings of England, was added in 1757. Many private libraries have since been bequeathed or donated and, by law, one copy of every book, periodical, and newspaper published in the U.K. and Republic of Ireland has to be deposited there. In 1857 the famous circular, domed reading room surrounded by hanging and rolling book cases in iron stacks was opened to the public.

The museum obtained masses of papyri from excavations in Egypt at the end of the 19th century. Before the Great War a new building to house British and Medieval antiquities was opened. After the war the museum undertook archaeological expeditions, such as one to Mesopotamia which found a third millennium Sumerian temple that lead to discoveries about the rise of early civilization. The library has a vast collection of ancient manuscripts including a unique copy of

*Beowulf* written in AD 1000 and the earliest surviving Greek New Testament, known as the *Codex Sinaiticus*. By 1929 the collection contained 3,200,000 printed volumes and 56,000 manuscripts.

In the 1920s only the reading room was open to the public and only those with readers' passes were allowed there. Anyone who could prove that he or she was a serious researcher could obtain a pass by written application. Admission was free and the library was open from 9am to 6pm.

The reading room only contained a selection of reference works and library catalogues. To select most books, readers filled in applications for each book they wanted to see, giving the shelf number from the library catalogue. A requested book was delivered to the reader's seat, usually within an hour. After 1906, newspapers and journals were held in a separate building and had to be ordered in advance. It says something of the attitude of the staff that when Henry Symons, deputy superintendent of the Reading Room, committed suicide by shooting himself, his superior merely asked if the bullet had damaged the book bindings.

Many eminent writers could be found in the reading room, once referred to as 'The valley of the shadow of books', including George Bernard Shaw, Virginia Woolf, and H.G. Wells, who liked it as a young man because it was comfortable and saved on lighting his own dingy rooms. Under the assumed name of Jacob Richter, **Lenin** studied there at seat L13 before masterminding the Russian revolution. **Karl Marx** wrote *Das Kapital* at seat 07. At times there have been so many political exiles using it that Scotland Yard posted inspectors there to record their movements.

Opposite the British Museum is the Museum Tavern, a popular meeting place for those visiting the museum. In the 1920s the tavern was frequented by members of the Bloomsbury Group (see further below).

## University College

University College of London University is in Gower Street. Academic investigators may have attended or work at University College. It was founded in 1826 to provide an educa-

tion free from religious discrimination and thus became known as "that godless institution." It had progressive attitudes to women and has awarded degrees to them on the same terms as men since 1878.

One of its founders was the utilitarian philosopher Jeremy **Bentham** who believed that the finest memorial to man is man preserved. To this end, his stuffed body was placed in an airtight case of glass and mahogany by the university entrance. The head was wax as the preservation of the real one was not very successful and it became too gruesome. From time to time sharp rapping sounds on the glass have been reported as have sights of his cane-wielding ghost. He was placed in the board room for meetings of the governors of University College Hospital nearby and was recorded in minutes as being 'present but not voting'. See Hospitals, page 65.

Tavistock Square, nearby, holds the headquarters of the British Medical Association and other learned associations such the Association for the Promotion of Hellenic and Roman Studies, the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, and also the YMCA.

## Harley Street

Harley street is a byword for exclusive private medical practices. Specialists of branches of medicine from gynecology to neurology or psychiatry can be found here. A visit to a Harley Street specialist drove one man to suicide in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*. Agatha Christie visited a Harley Street psychiatrist after her disappearance and memory loss in 1926.

## The Bloomsbury Group

This was an artistic community of writers, artists, and intellectuals. Virginia Woolf was its best known member (see Famous People, page 14). She and her husband entertained many of the important literary figures of the day. She lived at 52 Tavistock Square from 1924. E.M. Forster, author of *A Room With a View*, lived at 29 Brunswick Square from 1929-39, and the economist John Maynard Keynes lived at 46 Gordon Square from 1922.

T.S. Eliot's poems were published by Hogarth Press, which was founded by

Virginia Woolf, while he worked in Bloomsbury for Faber & Faber publishers at 24 Russell Square from 1925-1965. A stream of authors and poets came here to see him. Eliot's first wife Vivienne, from whom he had separated, used to waylay him in public wearing a placard reading 'I am the wife he abandoned.'

Dorothy L. Sayers lived and struggled to make her name in Bloomsbury, too, though she was not part of the elitist Bloomsbury Group. After WW1 she moved to a flat at 44 Mecklenburgh Square, a rough district. In "The Vindictive Story of the Footsteps That Ran," she referred to Bloomsbury as a place "where people are always laying one another out" and "drunks and wife-beatings are common". In late 1921 she moved to 24 Great James Street and lived there for twenty years. Although she placed her main character Lord Peter Wimsey in Piccadilly, his wife and co-sleuth Harriet Vane lived in Bloomsbury.

## Fitzrovia

Between the wars Fitzrovia, the area to the west of Tottenham Court Road, acquired a reputation as a literary and artistic Bohemia, in contrast to refined Bloomsbury a few hundred yards away. Low rents attracted the young, the impecunious, and the not-yet or

never-to-be famous who also frequented the many cheap eating places such as Bertorelli's or the Scala in Charlotte St. The Fitzroy Tavern down the road, known locally as Kleinfeld's after its Russian emigre landlord, and the Wheatsheaf in Rathbone Place were the two pubs most favored by this clique.

The Fitzrovians were made fashionable by writer Nina Hammet. Augustus John the portraitist was another local character. He was fifty but dressed like a gypsy with a gray flecked red beard, brass earring, cloak, and black broad-rimmed hat. He lived in Fitzroy Street with his sister and fellow student at the Slade School of Art. This would be a colorful place to set an encounter or meeting with a witness.

## Madame Tussaud's Waxworks

Madame Tussaud's Exhibition of Waxworks is in Marylebone Road. Madame Tussaud escaped to London from the French Revolution in 1802 and brought with her the waxwork death masks of guillotine victims. She opened her museum in 1835 in Baker Street, featuring life-sized models of the famous and infamous. After a fire in 1925 the museum moved to Marylebone Road in 1928. It has always been a popular place to visit,

especially the chamber of horrors with its life-like depictions of famous murderers. Waxworks are excellent places to set horror scenarios, and who knows what caused the 1925 fire?

## Baker Street.

Baker Street was, of course, the fictional home of Sherlock Holmes. His address in the stories, 221-B Baker Street, does not exist. A real-life building society is at 221 Baker Street, and it still receives countless letters each year from people hoping to hire a consulting detective. Perhaps an opportunistic investigator could offer to deal with this mail.

## West End, Soho

THE WEST END of London includes The Strand to the South, Oxford Street to the North, Bond Street to the West, and Kingsway to the East. The area has long been London's main shopping area and also contains most of its theaters, restaurants, nightclubs, and other forms of entertainment. See Recreation, page 66.

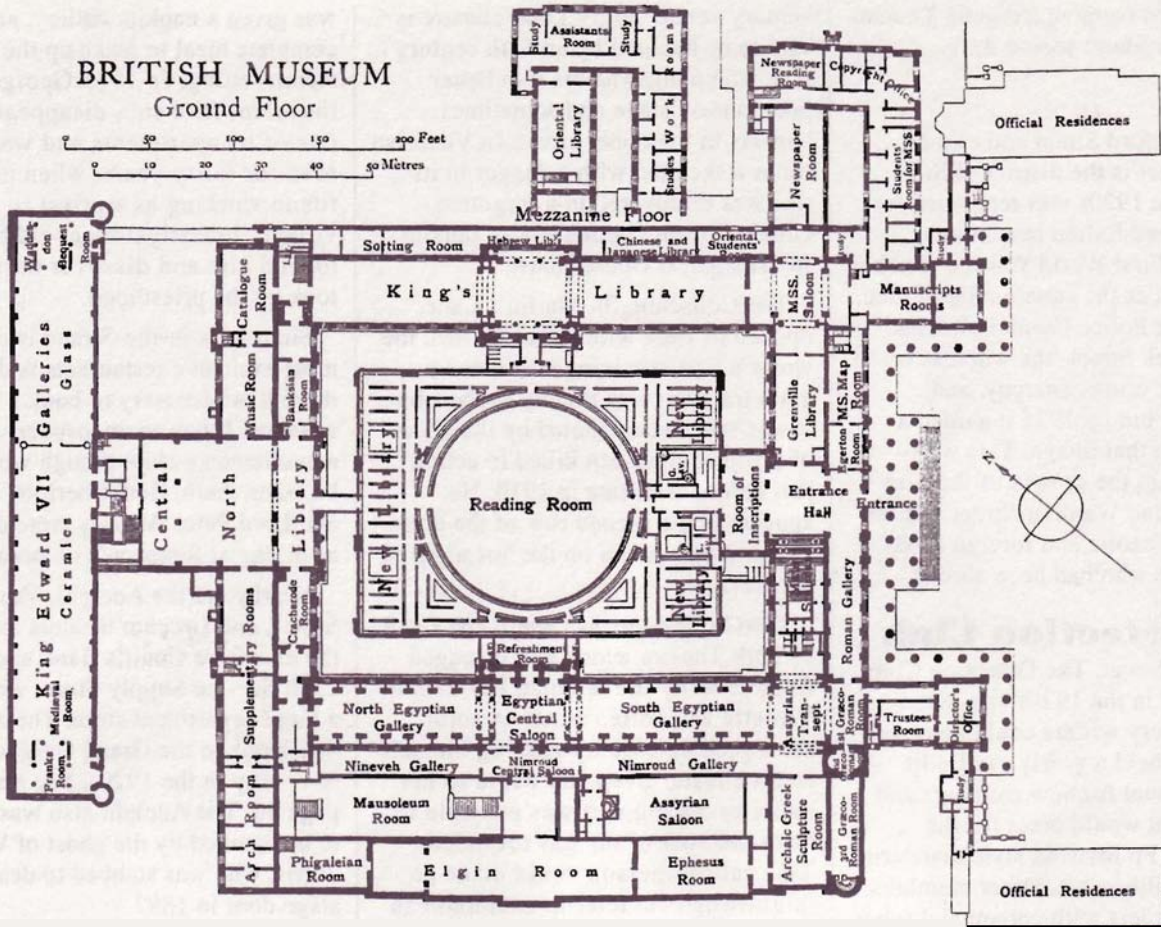
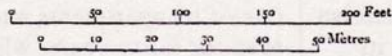
After the war the West End of London was greatly modernized. Piccadilly Circus, with its bronze statue of Eros at the center, is where Mayfair meets the West End. With its neon lights and Art Deco Underground station opened in 1928, it was the showpiece of nocturnal London. Large, ostentatious cinemas sprung up around Leicester Square and new nightclubs catered for the Bright Young Things. The number of restaurants in the West End greatly increased during and after the war as it became more practical and fashionable to eat out after work.

The Cafe Royal in Regent Street was a chic place to eat. Aleister Crowley once stalked to his table in a cloak that he believed made him invisible. When he took it off he was only wearing a golden butterfly which he had stolen from Epstein's nude statue of Oscar Wilde. He still owes the cafe £100. He also frequented the Coal Hole pub in the Strand. One evening Dylan Thomas saw Crowley watching him from the opposite side of the bar, where he

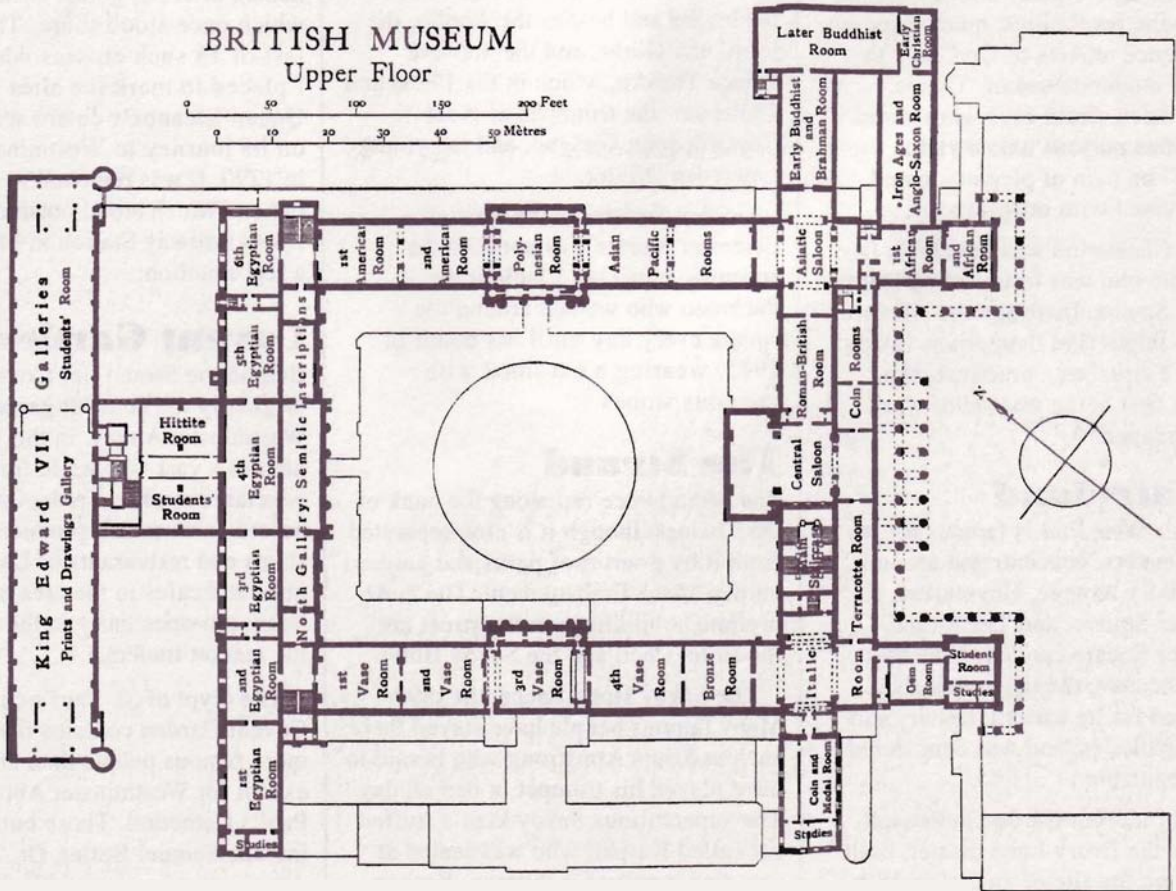
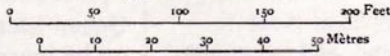


Madame Tussaud's Waxworks, ca. 1900.

# BRITISH MUSEUM Ground Floor



# BRITISH MUSEUM Upper Floor



seemed to be copying a doodle Thomas was doing without seeing it.

## Soho

South of Oxford Street and east of Regent Street is the district of Soho, which in the 1920s was renowned for its French and Italian restaurants. Before the First World War the area had been known as the square mile of vice. In 1913, the Police Commission had named Greek Street 'the worst street in London' for crime, anarchy, and immorality, but by 1925 it gained a respite from that image. This was largely due to the growth of the film industry round **Wardour** Street and the demand for exotic and foreign foods from people who had been abroad.

## The Detection Club

In Gerrard Street. The Detection Club was formed in the 1920s as a place where mystery writers could meet, eat and talk. It held a yearly candle-lit initiation ritual for new members and the president would dress for the occasion in Fu Manchu style mandarin robes and pillbox hat. Other members acted as warders with ceremonial robes and weapons. The new members would place their hands on a glowing skull and swear not to place undue reliance on "Divine revelations, mumbo jumbo, coincidence or Acts of God" and to observe moderate use of "Gangs, conspiracies, death-rays, ghosts and mysterious poisons unknown to science" on pain of plagiarism and being cursed with misprints.

G.K. Chesterton was the club's first president who was followed by Dorothy L. Sayers. Investigators who are authors might find themselves invited to such a ritual as a practical joke, without first being warned of what would happen.

## Theatreland

London's West End is famous for its many theaters, concentrated around Shaftesbury Avenue, Haymarket, Leicester Square, and The Strand. Leicester Square contained the best movie theaters, though it was also renowned for its variety theaters and picture galleries, and was considered a bit disreputable.

East of Covent Garden in Russell Street is the Drury Lane theater, built in 1812 on the site of an earlier 18th

century venue. Drury Lane Theatre is said to be haunted by an 18th century man who nudges actors into better positions on stage and sometimes appears in the upper circle. In Victorian times a skeleton with a dagger in its ribs was discovered in a forgotten closet. Covent Garden is also famous for The Royal Opera House.

The Coliseum, St. Martin's Lane, opened in 1904 with a roof garden, the world's first revolving stage, and a glass train to carry royalty to their box. It was said to be haunted by the ghost of a young subaltern killed in action just before armistice in 1918. He appears in the second row of the dress circle, where he sat on the last night of his leave.

Also in St. Martins Lane is the Duke of York Theatre which was managed from 1926 by the talented but callous Violetta Melnotte. When an actor attempted suicide by gassing himself in the theater oven she wrote to her solicitor asking if it was possible to have the cost of the gas refunded. This callous person could make an interesting character to encounter in an adventure.

Shaftesbury Avenue was built in the late 19th century as a show business boulevard and houses the Apollo, the Lyric, the Globe, and the massive Palace Theatre, which in the 1920s and 1930s saw the triumphs of Noel Coward, John Gielgud, and the young Lawrence Olivier.

Golden Square, to the west of Leicester Square was home to the eccentric musician Vladimir de Pachman who walked around the square every day until his death in 1933, wearing a hat lined with precious stones.

## The Strand

The Strand once ran along the bank of the Thames, though it is now separated from it by a series of parks and gardens known as the Embankment. The most prominent buildings in the street are the Hotel Cecil and the Savoy Hotel.

The Savoy Hotel opened in 1899. Many famous people have stayed there, such as Louis Armstrong who is said to have played his trumpet in bed all day. The superstitious Savoy kept a stuffed cat called Kaspar, who was seated at any dinner party for thirteen. Kaspar

was given a napkin, cutlery, and complete meal to make up the fourteenth setting. In 1925 George Galli, the silent film star, disappeared from one of its apartments and was not seen for thirty years, when he was found working as a priest in a French village. Investigators could be hired to find him and discover the reason he took up the priesthood.

Simpson's-in-the-Strand is one of the most exclusive restaurants and to dine there it is necessary to book a table in advance. It has an atmosphere a bit like a gentlemen's club, though women can be taken there. Both Sherlock Holmes and Lord Peter Wimsey were depicted as dining at Simpson's on occasion.

Nearby are the **Adelphi**, Vaudeville, Savoy, and Lyceum theaters as well as the exclusive Coutt's Bank and the Civil Service Supply Store, which was a large department store. The **Adelphi** was home to the Grand Guignol theater of cruelty in the 1920s. See Recreation, page 66. The **Adelphi** also was reputed to be haunted by the ghost of William **Terris**, who was stabbed to death at the stage door in 1897.

All distances in London were at one time calculated from Charing Cross, named after the gothic Eleanor Cross which once stood there. This was the last of 13 such crosses which Edward I placed to mark the sites where Queen Eleanor's coffin was set down on its journey to Westminster Abbey in 1290. It was removed in 1647 and the one which stood outside Charing Cross Railway Station in the 1920s was a reproduction.

## Covent Garden

Behind the Strand lies Covent Garden, originally the convent garden of Westminster Abbey. In the 1920s it housed a vast wholesale fruit and vegetable market. Traders would set up before dawn to sell produce to the shops and restaurants of London. The pubs and cafes in the area had a special license to open early in the morning for the market traders.

The crypt of St. Paul's church in Covent Garden contains the remains of more famous people than any church except for Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral. Those buried there include Samuel Butler, Dr. Thomas Arne—who composed "Rule Britan-

nia”—and Thomas Rowlandson the water-color artist. It was designed by Inigo Jones and rebuilt by Thomas Hardwick in 1798 after a large fire.

North of this is Seven Dials, where seven narrow alleys meet. A pillar topped by a clock stood there until it was demolished on hearsay of hidden treasure lying below it. In the 1920s the nearby streets held several naturalist shops and purveyors of occult books and paraphernalia. The area was considered unwholesome and disreputable and was made famous by Agatha Christie in *The Seven Dials Mystery*. She set the fictional Seven Dials Club nearby in Huntstanton Street and peopled it with Bright Young Things, prostitutes, wealthy thrill-seekers, and the mysterious Seven Dials organization.

Nearby is Bow Street where Bow Street police station was once home to the Bow Street Runners, London's first police force. Bow Street magistrates court tries minor offenses here. See *Law and Order*, page 62.

## Shops

oxford-street, Regent Street, and Bond Street are the pre-eminent shopping streets of London. By the 1920s, Regent Street had been transformed from a high class residential area, replacing old stucco buildings with towering department stores faced with marble and stone. The official reopening of Regent Street in 1927 was marked by a passing visit by King George V and Queen Mary. The *Daily News* said that it typified the spirit of the age, "It is more suited to the flashing bus and the rapid stream of polished motor-cars than to the old-fashioned coach-and-four."

The most conspicuous example of the new type of American-style department store was Selfridges in Oxford Street, created by the American Gordon H. Selfridge in 1909. It really came into its own in the 1920s with its exotic window displays and free-and-easy atmosphere encouraging people to browse. At the top of the store was the largest roof garden in the world, which at times had a golf course, a setting for ragtime orchestra, and an ice rink.

Savile Row off Regent Street is world-renowned for its exclusive men's tailors.



*Part of Convent Garden, the great fruit and vegetable wholesale market, once a real garden belonging to the monks of Westminster.*

Sotheby's, 34-35 New Bond Street, is the world's largest auction house, established in 1744 as a rare book dealers and moved to its present location in 1917. It is open for previews Monday to Friday 9 to 4:30pm, closed August and September. A statue of Sekhmet dating from 1600 BC stands over Sotheby's door. It is 150 years older than Cleopatra's Needle and is the oldest statue in London on public display outside. It was unsold at the Consul Salt sale of 1835 and has stayed at Sotheby's eye since.

Charing Cross Road and Cecil Court are famous for specialist book

shops selling everything from the classics to the occult, antiquarian tomes to the latest pulp fiction. Foyles at 119 Charing Cross Road was founded in 1904 and is the largest book store in the world. Its books fill more than forty miles of shelving in a pair of four-story buildings. Books are often difficult to locate as they are not in any seemingly logical order. The staff are often as lost as the customers and impecunious investigators could easily hide between the shelves and read books they are not going to buy.

# Kensington, Chelsea

**C**HELSEA lies to the west of Sloane Square and is a residential area with a cultured and artistic history. In the 1920s it was seedy but cosmopolitan with rows of small, picturesque terraced houses. Sloane Square underground station contains a conduit which channels the lost underground river Westbourne.

Along the bank of the Thames runs Cheyne Walk which has housed many famous artists, poets, and writers. At various times 22 Cheyne Walk had been home to Swinbourne, Meredith, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Henry James, author of *The Turning of the Screw*, died at 21 Carlyle Mansions,

Cheyne Walk, in 1916. Danvers Street was the home of the Scottish bacteriologist Sir Alexander Fleming, discoverer of penicillin. See Biographies, page 14.

The Royal Hospital for Chelsea Pensioners was a home for veteran soldiers, many of whom were injured in the Great War. Its five hundred patients wore a traditional red military uniform and the phrase 'Old Soldiers Never Die' was probably coined about the Chelsea Pensioners. Visiting hours were on weekdays from 10am-12:45pm and from 1:45-7pm. There was a Sunday service in the chapel.

Kensington is a grand residential area full of large houses and lies between the Thames and Hyde Park. Kensington Palace has been the home of several monarchs including George I and George II—who died there while sitting on the toilet though the press

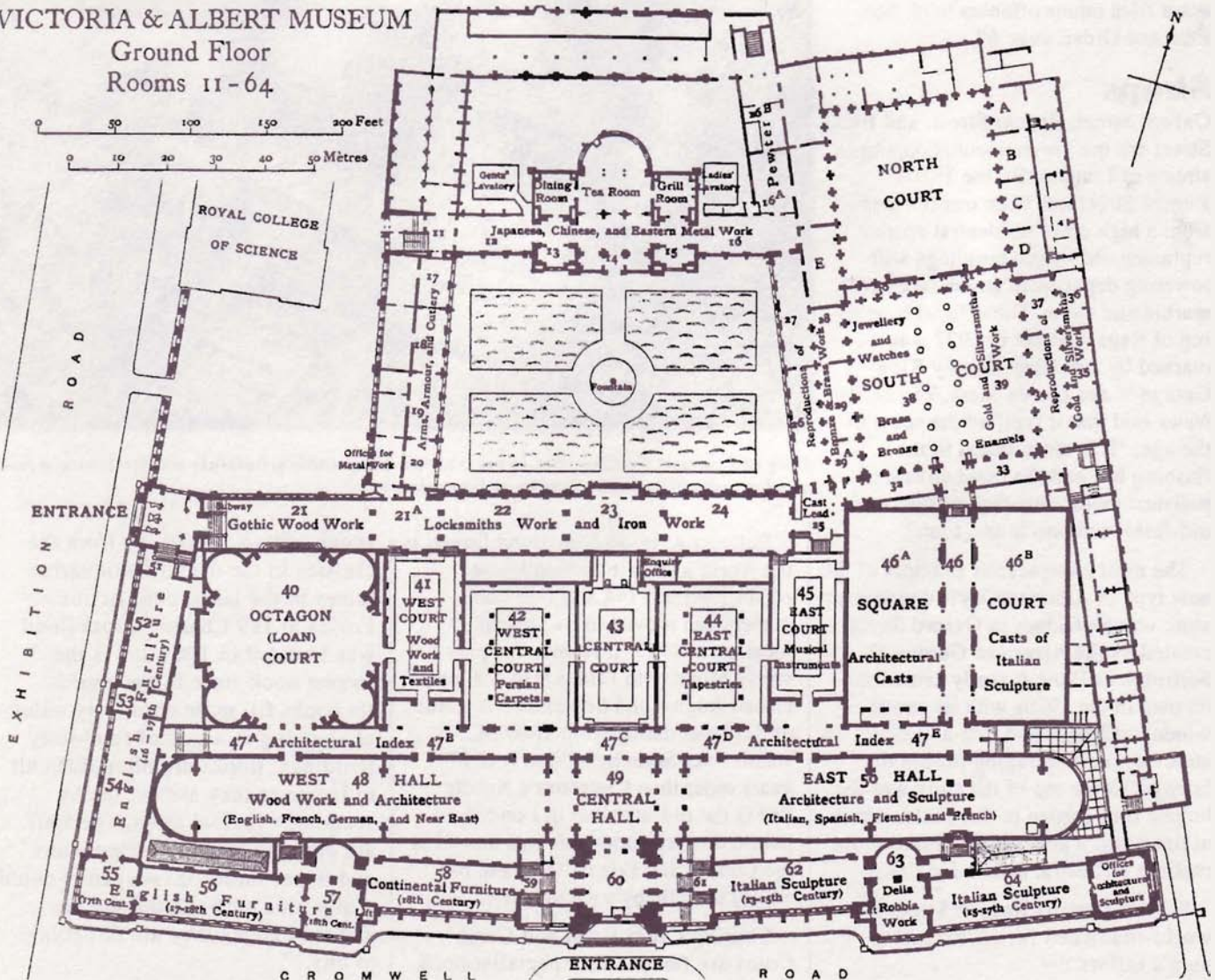
was told he died on the throne. Princess Victoria lived there in 1837 before becoming Queen.

The Royal Albert Hall is a huge brick Victorian concert hall that seats 10,000 people. It is most famous for its traditional eight-week summer Promenade Concerts or "Proms". The last night of the Proms is a high point in the London Season. The hall's organ is one of the finest in the world.

## Harrods of Knightsbridge

In Brompton Road. The most famous department store in the world caters primarily for the rich and famous. Even the royal family shop there, though the store opens an hour early exclusively for them. Harrods prides itself on being able to obtain anything that is available. Account holders could phone Sloane 1234 at any hour of the day.

VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM  
Ground Floor  
Rooms 11-64



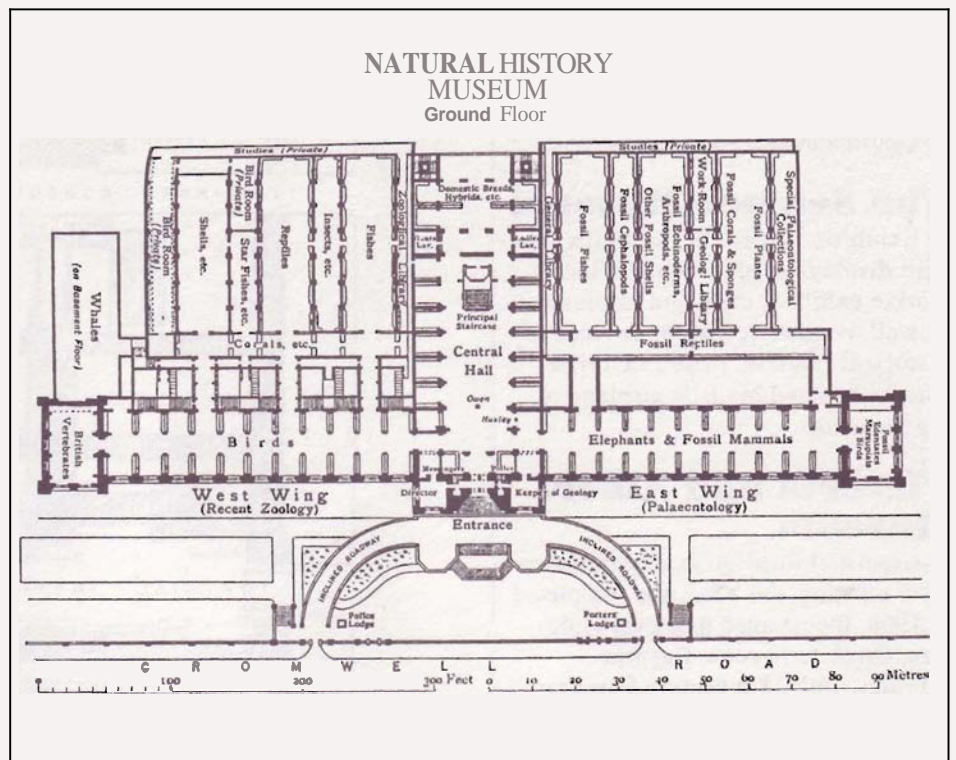
Delivery was free within London. Harrods has a network of underground tunnels leading to its warehouse, freezer room, wine cellar, and detention room where uniformed guards held shoplifters in the 1920s. Harrods also has its own artesian well.

## Museums

South Kensington is best known for its large museums which are owned by the British Museum. In the 1920s, admission to them was free but a British Library reader's pass was needed to study in their libraries.

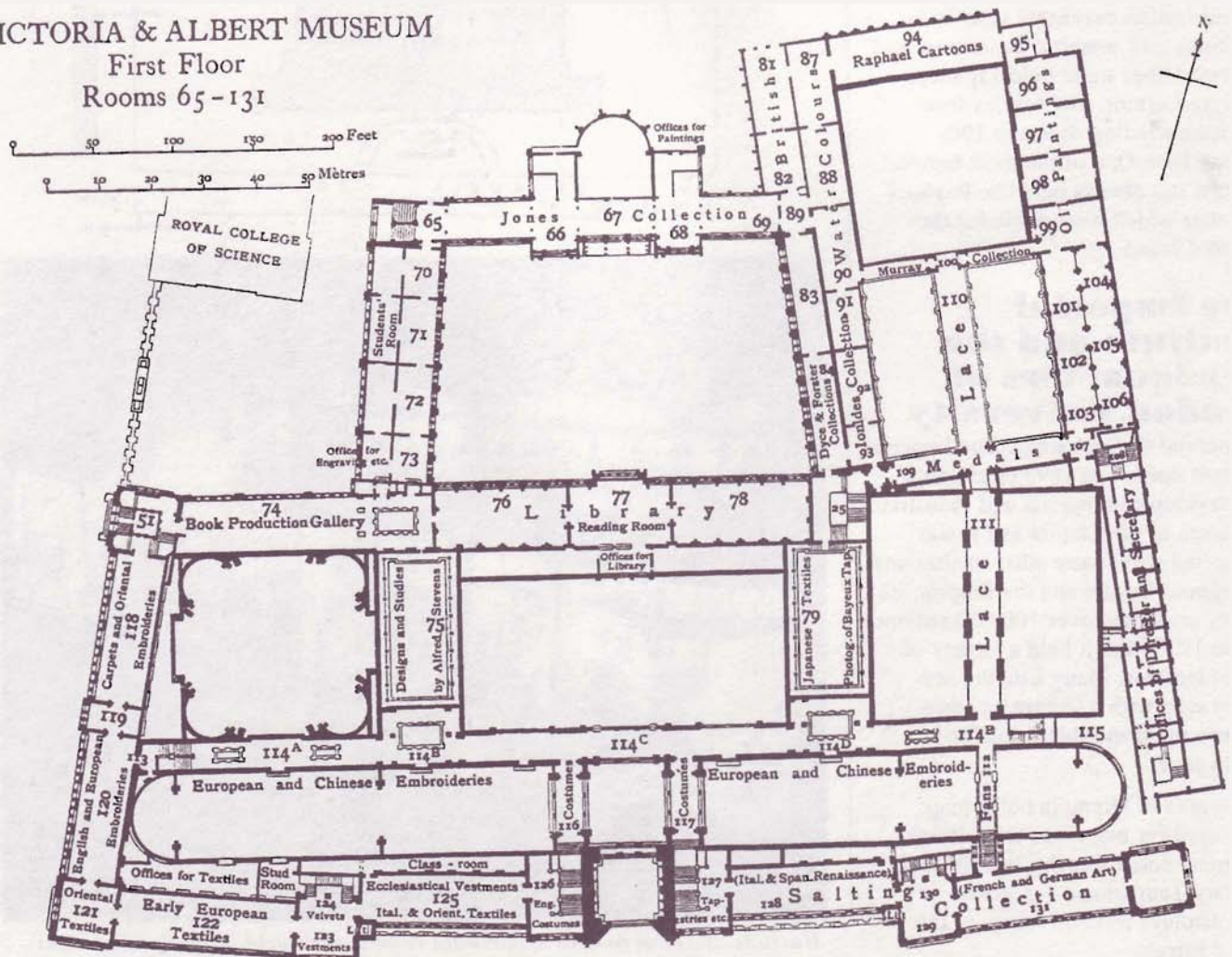
## The Natural History Museum

In Cromwell Road. In the 1920s this Renaissance style building contained possibly the finest natural history collection in the world. The central hall was devoted to exhibits illustrating evolution, adaptation, and variation,



## VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM

### First Floor Rooms 65-131



and also how insects and animals spread diseases. The east wing held fossils, palaeontological displays of extinct mammal and reptile skeletons, and stuffed animals and birds.

## The Science Museum

In Exhibition Road. In the 1920s this held displays of ship models, locomotive exhibits, cars, and airplanes, as well as other scientific devices of historical interest. In 1925 Orville Wright donated his first airplane to the museum.

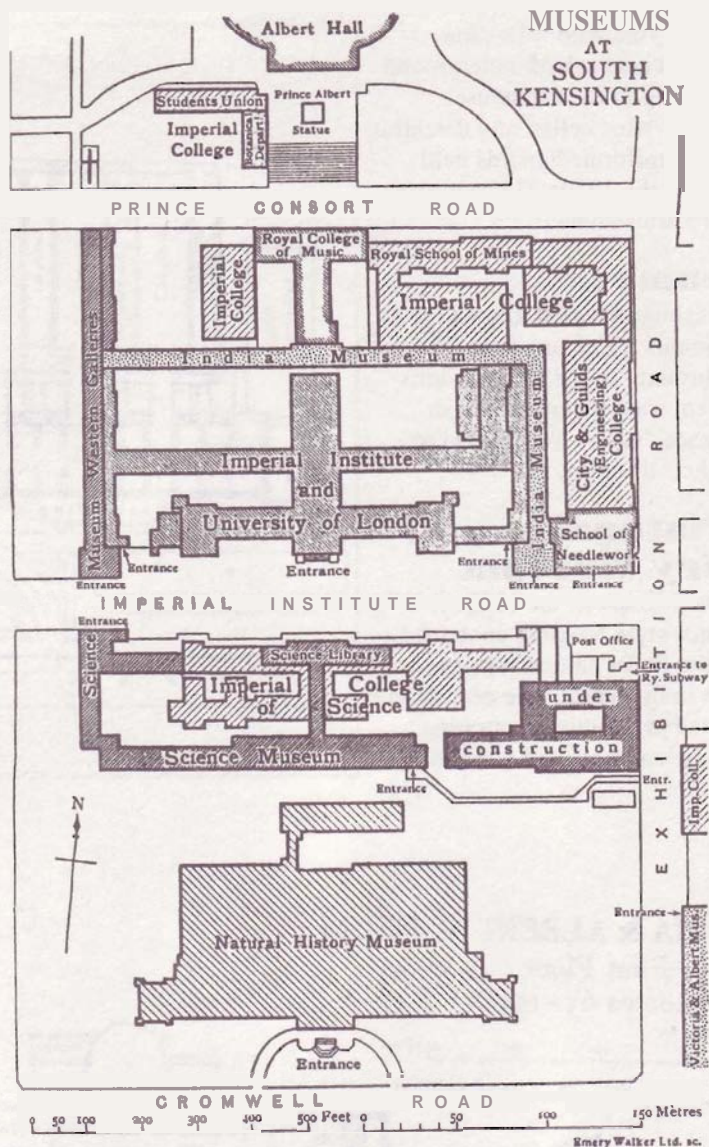
## Victoria and Albert Museum

In Cromwell Road. Also a Renaissance style building, the V&A was completed in 1909. It contained medieval sculpture, Greek terra cotta, Egyptian carvings, 16th-18th century European furniture, and architectural and artistic works. It also held an extensive Chinese collection including the lacquer throne of a Chinese Emperor, jade, crystal, and pottery. An Indian Museum attached to the V&A included Indian carvings, tapestries, paintings and jewelry, costumes, and pottery. Other halls held Japanese arms and armor, and fabrics from Egyptian winding sheets to 19th century lace. One of the most famous exhibits has always been the Raphael Cartoons which were made for the Sistine Chapel.

## The Imperial Institute and the Headquarters of London University

In Imperial College Road. The Imperial Institute opened in 1893 to promote and develop commercial and industrial resources of the Empire and it was connected with many other institutions throughout Britain and the Empire. Its library contained over 100,000 volumes by the 1920s and it held a variety of public lectures. Many Cthulhu scenarios start with a lecture on some esoteric topic and this would be an ideal venue.

The area of Olympia holds huge halls used for numerous exhibitions. The most noted was the annual Royal Military Tournament—a tattoo with displays from all wings of the armed forces.



*Harrods, the most famous department store in the world, brightly lit at night.*



## Two Dilettantes



# Central Parks, Zoo

**L**ONDON IS one of the greenest cities in the world and has an almost unbroken three mile stretch of parks around its center.

## St. James's Park

This stretches from Whitehall to Buckingham Palace. Ducks, swans, and pelicans swim on its lake and there is a gnarled old tree that is said to be avoided by birds. It exudes an air of brooding malevolence and at certain times of the year whispered voices and laughter are said to emanate from it.

Every day just before sunset the sky over St. James's Park is darkened by a flock of up to 50,000 starlings taking to the air. They wheel about in the sky for several minutes before dispersing to perch on the monuments and buildings around the park. Once so many of them landed on Big Ben's hands that they stopped it chiming. No one knows why the birds behave in this fashion.

## Green Park

Across The Mall, on the other side of Buckingham Palace, lies Green Park which is little more than an expanse of grass. Constitution Hill bisects the open space and has been the scene of several attempts to assassinate royalty. Edward Oxford shot at Queen Victoria in 1840 and in 1936 journalist George McMahon brandished a revolver at

Edward VIII. Historically it is believed that Green Park began as a burial ground for leper women from nearby St. James's Hospital.

## Hyde Park Corner

The western edge of Green Park reaches Hyde Park Corner at the junction between Piccadilly, Knightsbridge, and Park Lane. In 1928 it was declared the world's busiest junction. At the north east corner of Hyde Park lies Marble Arch—a triple-arched triumphal archway with wrought iron gates. Tyburn Public Gallows once stood here and were last used in 1783 to hang John Austin. The gallows could hang up to eight people at a time. A stone from one of the three public toll gates to the site now stands in Edgware Road and is known as the Tyburn Stone. At one time, earth taken from below the gallows was considered to have magical properties.

Just outside the park is an open space known as Speakers Corner which has been a forum for free speech since 1872. All who want to air their views can do so on any subject at any time, though Sunday is busiest. Many soap-box preachers expound odd religious or political views. Some are decidedly weird and this would be the ideal place for a Mythos cultist to pronounce doctrine or for a deranged ex-investigator who has seen too much to reveal what he knows.

Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens together form the largest open space in London. The Serpentine lake was formed by Queen Caroline by damming the river Westbourne. It is possible to hire rowing boats and deck chairs or take tea at the lakeside cafes. Horse riding on a track called Rotten Row running around the park is a popular morning pastime of the well-to-do. During the summer there are musical performances at the Bandstand near Hyde Park Corner. In the Dell to the east of the Serpentine is Hyde Park Standing Stone, reputedly taken from Stonehenge by Charles I but more probably just an old drinking fountain.

The sculptor Jacob Epstein was commissioned to produce nude statues for Hyde Park in 1925 and St. James's Park in 1929. The finished pieces were considered shocking in their blatant sexuality.

## Regents Park

This lies just north of Hyde Park and used to be the ancient hunting ground of Marylebone but was turned into a public park by George IV in 1838. It contains eight 19th century luxury villas designed to look like small palaces. They were bought on long leases by the extremely wealthy such as H.G. Wells and Edward VIII after his abdication in the 1930s.

London Zoo occupies thirty-five acres in the northeast of the park and is owned by the Zoological Society. It contains several thousand beasts, birds, and fish and is divided into three sections. In the first are housed birds and small animals, in the second are large animals and apes, in the third are lions, apes, reptiles, birds, and wolves. Many improvements were made to the zoo during the 1920s: the Mappin Terraces, a new ape house (Monkey Hill), and an aquarium beneath the Mappin Terraces are completed by 1925. The Zoological Gardens were open daily from 9am to sunset and admission cost 1s 6d.



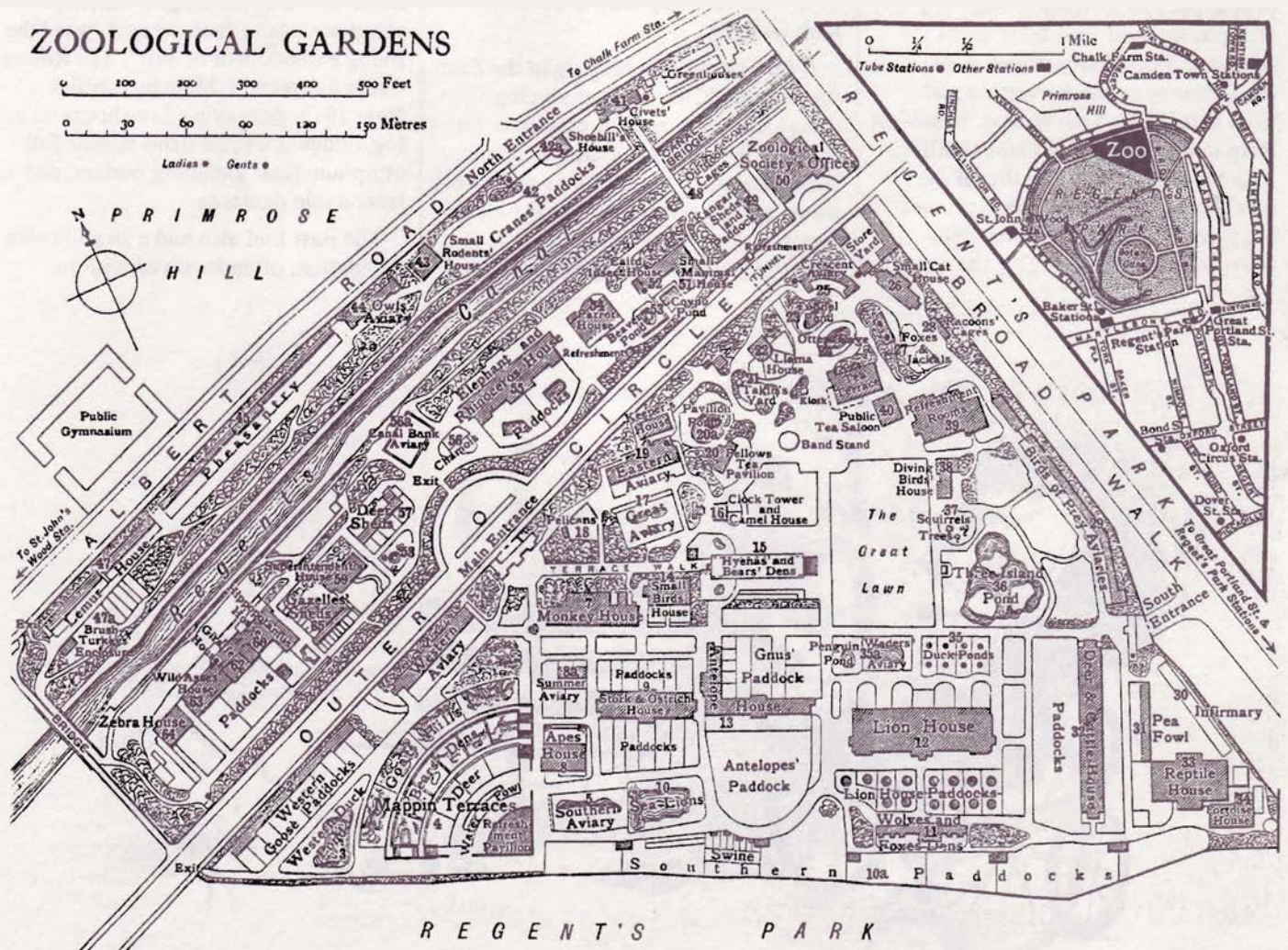
*A contemporary photograph of Hyde Park Corner.*

Gardens of the Royal Botanical Society lay in the center of the park in the 1920s. Close by was Bedford College, the most important female college in London. In the summer open-air theatrical performances take place nearby including a performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on midsummer's night. Audiences picnic on the grass and mulled wine is sold.

Primrose Hill, north of Regents Park, is thought to be the site of an ancient burial mound. From the top of the hill it is possible to get an excellent view of London. On Guy Fawkes Night, November 5th, a huge bonfire on which the ceremonial burning of a 'guy' stuffed with straw and a public fireworks display celebrate the foiling of the Gunpowder Plot. See Occasions, page 60.



Feeding the pigeons at St. Paul's Cathedral.



# East End

**A**T THE HEART of the eastern end of Cheapside is the Church of St. Mary-le-Bow. To be 'born within the sound of Bow Bells' is the definition of being a cockney.

London's East End has always been a working class area renowned for its poverty, wretchedness, and crime. In the 1920s there were areas where conditions had changed little since the 1890s. There were still rows of slums — terraces of back-to-back houses without electricity, hot water, bathrooms, or inside toilets.

The poorest areas were Poplar, Bethnal Green, Bermondsey, and Stepney. They had notorious ghettos inhabited by the physically and mentally handicapped, tramps, long-term unemployed, prostitutes, and small-time crooks. Two thousand people were jammed into one such small street with an average of five people per room. Many houses had chopped up their own front doors for firewood. People sometimes slept in the streets to avoid the vermin and fleas that infested the houses. Residents were in constant and violent conflict with the authorities over illegal gambling, prostitution, thieving, and begging. Police intervention could provoke mini riots bringing the entire

street out to support their neighbors. Presumably investigators could also cause similar confrontations.

In the East End, snobbery existed between different areas as some considered themselves better off than others. People in Stratford looked down on those in Bethnal Green, for instance. Close-knit, extended families dominated local communities and there could be suspicion, mistrust, or contempt of those from other areas. Each area had its own pubs and shops which varied from up-market pubs used by skilled workers to rough places where laborers went.

Because families were large and living space was limited, working class children would be turned out into the streets to play every day after school. Boys usually played football while girls played hopscotch or skipping. These kids were always keen to earn a little money. Men gambling illegally on street corners would pay them to watch for the police. Investigators would have little trouble hiring kids to act as look-outs, etc.

A few factories sprung up in the East End in the 1920s, mass-producing things like cloth caps or cigarettes for the new fashion of smoking in public. However, much industry was still sweat shops around Whitechapel and Bethnal Green, paying starvation wages. Whitechapel was, of course, the area

that Jack the Ripper terrorized in the previous century. The area's poverty had changed only a little, though the prostitutes had moved south to Limehouse by the 1920s.

Limehouse was the seediest part of the docklands (see Thames, page 52). It had an unsavory reputation, notorious for prostitutes, opium dens, and other illicit activities. In the 1920s many foreign sailors stayed there in cheap flop-houses and it also had a large Chinese population which gave it a distinctive character. There was a lot of prejudice against the Chinese at that time, with widespread apocryphal rumors of a white slave trade about which female investigators might be warned.

Gill Street in Stepney inspired Sax Romer to write about "the archangel of evil", Dr. Fu Manchu. Sax Romer visited the East End as a tabloid hack before WW1 to probe the drug-peddling of Mr. King, who ran an opium den called Singapore Charlie's. One night he observed a tall, elegant Oriental character whose face, he said, was "the living embodiment of evil". Sax Romer wrote fourteen Fu Manchu thrillers from 1912, portraying Limehouse as a fog-ridden dockside demi-monde full of opium dens, gambling parlors, and inscrutable denizens.

The East End also had a large Jewish population, often involved with the



*In the park.*

clothing trade. They too suffered from prejudice and some embraced anarchism and later communism as a means of fighting injustice.

Petticoat Lane market in the City was the center of the Jewish cloth trade. East End Londoners also frequented street markets like Brick Lane, Mile End Road or Portobello Road, Shadwell, Columbia, and Spitalfields to buy cheaply. The contrast between the age-old market scenes with their bustle, bartering, and repartee and the affluent West End stores could not have been greater.

In the midst of the depravation there were a number of charitable institutions. The orphans' home, Dr. Barnardo's Home for Destitute Children, is situated on Stepney Causeway, the Sailor's Palace is in Commercial Road, the London Hospital lies in Whitechapel Road, and the Trinity Almshouses can be found in Mile End Road.

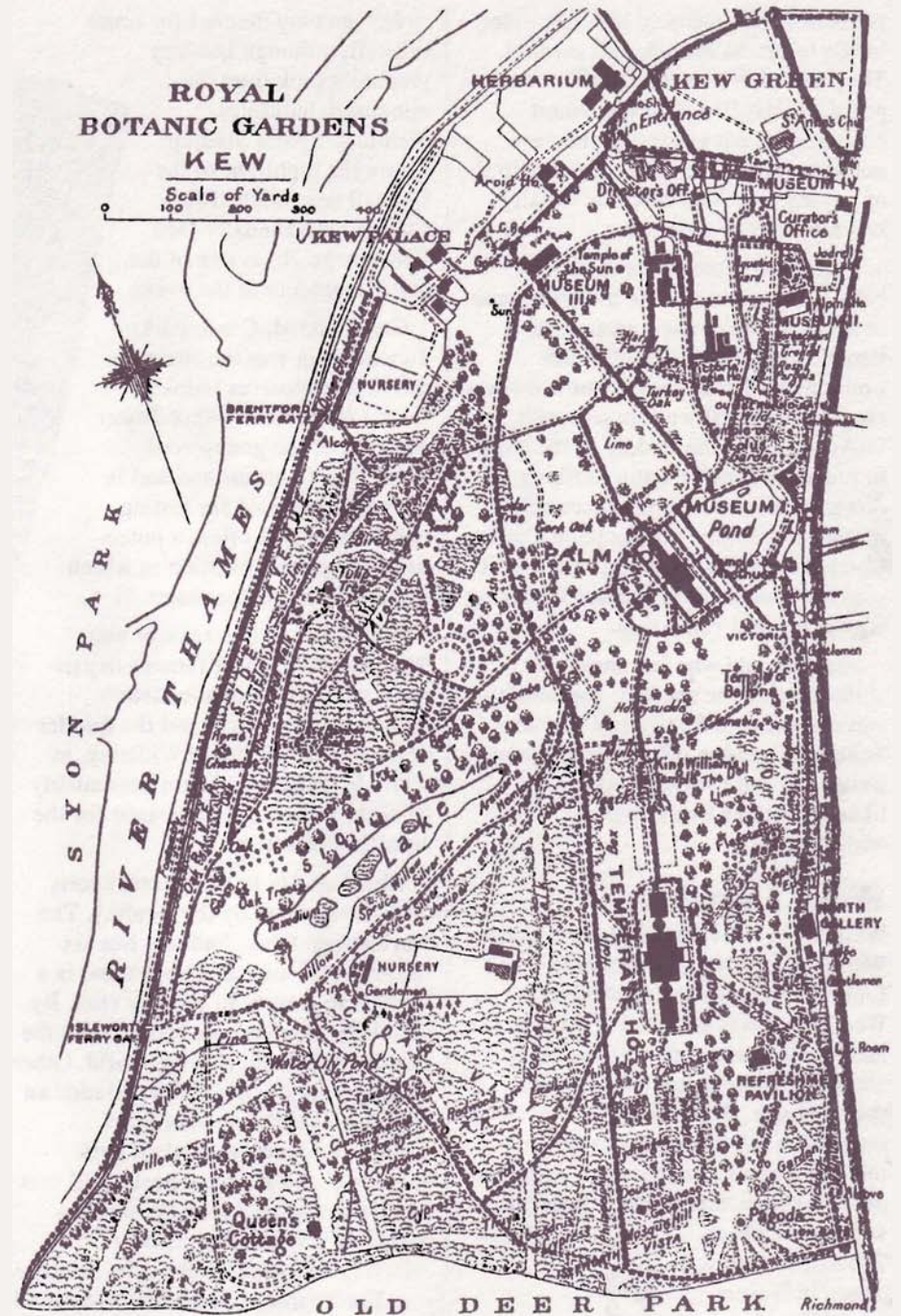
The Bethnal Green Museum is one of the East End's few cultural attractions and its collection of old toys is famous. Another unusual building is the Jami Masjid mosque on the corner of Brick Lane. It was built as a church in 1743 for Huguenot immigrants, became a synagogue, and then later a mosque.

## Suburbia

**B**ETWEEN the wars London's boundaries expanded greatly. Areas to the west, north, and south were subsumed in rows of semi-detached houses built wherever railways, the underground, or new arterial roads spread.

Private developers and building societies had no lack of funds. After the war, government building subsidies and building societies (for savings and property loans to the lower middle class) helped people get mortgages. Workmen's wages were low, raw materials were cheap, and land on the outskirts was inexpensive. Houses could be bought for £1000 or less. Glamorous advertising campaigns promoted the new suburban houses as a middle class haven, exploiting the ideal that "every Englishman's home is his castle".

Rows of almost identical houses would be built, often in styles fanci-



fully borrowed from historic periods with twee (quaint but mawkish) names like Dunroamin or The Gables. Mock Tudor was the most common, though they could be inspired by anything from Aztec altars to Devon cottages. Art Deco motifs were everywhere with the ubiquitous fretwork sunblaze. Front doors would have frosted stained-glass windows.

People wanted houses with modern conveniences. Kitchens with electric or gas ovens and bathrooms with plumbed-in baths first became common in the 1920s. Furniture to create the ideal homes came from fashionable

department stores. Gardening was a typical suburban pursuit and people wanted their own garden complete with crazy paving, bird bath, ornamental garden gnomes, and a neat privet hedge to form a barrier from the outside world.

Large council estates also sprang up around London. The government built council houses in the suburbs partly to create 'Homes fit for Heroes' and partly to appease British workers through fear of a 1917 Russian-style revolution. Becontree in Essex became the biggest council development in the world. The houses had three or four

bedrooms, hot and cold running water, inside toilet, bathroom, and gardens. They must have seemed idyllic compared to East End slums. Council houses were not offered to the very poorest, only those with a good record of paying rent. The destitute usually had a history of defaulting.

There was often fierce dislike between those in private dwellings and in neighboring council estates. In Bromley, on the border of South London and Kent, private home owners erected an illegal wall topped with broken glass in the middle of the road to prevent council tenants walking down their street. Bromley council refused to comply with London County Council demands to demolish it and it provoked much class warfare involving arguments and vandalism.

Some people who left inner city slums missed the sense of community and closeness to family and friends. Suburban London offered home-based living that not everyone wanted or liked but marked an important break with the past.

## West London

West London developed after the Great War largely because of the British Empire Exhibition which was built in Wembley. It was designed to 'display the natural resources of the various countries within the Empire, and the activities... of their peoples.' It covered 220 acres and included a full-scale replica of the tomb of Tutankhamen, a reconstruction of old London Bridge, and a huge funfair with a switchback. The exhibition closed in November 1924 and despite 17 million visitors it lost money.



The London Guidebook

The area lay derelict for some time after, though industry gradually took over the remaining buildings. Wembley Sports Stadium where the highlight of the football season, the FA Cup, is held annually (see Sport, page 70) is one of the few remainders of the event.

Crane Island, Crane Park, Twickenham was the site of a thriving explosives industry from 1767 to 1927. Shot Tower was part of the gunpowder mills. The fields around had in the past been used for testing explosives. This offers a potentially dangerous location in which to set a scenario encounter.

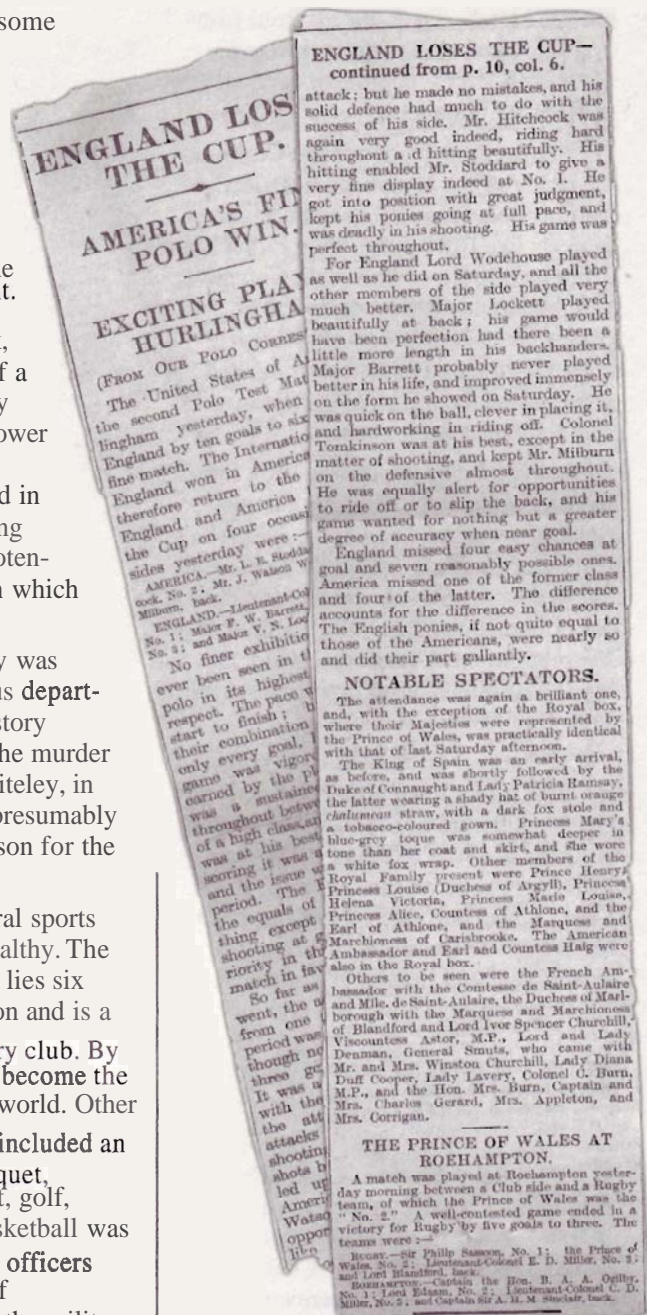
Whiteley's in Queensway was West London's most famous department store. Its dramatic history includes several fires and the murder of its founder, William Whiteley, in 1907. Investigators could presumably be hired to find out the reason for the recurring disasters.

West London holds several sports clubs frequented by the wealthy. The Hurlingham Club, Fulham, lies six miles from center of London and is a bit like an American country club. By the 1920s Hurlingham had become the mecca of the polo playing world. Other sports offered to members included an American skittle alley, croquet, archery, ballooning, cricket, golf, bicycling, and fencing. Basketball was made popular by American officers during WWI, when parts of

Hurlingham were used by the military. The Thames flood of 1928 covered the grounds with more than six feet of water. It is also believed that there was a pit on the site of the lake. (A plague pit is a mass burial site for victims of the Black Death: they are feared because the plague virus stays dormant in the remains of the bodies.)

The Roehampton Club was a similar club, founded in 1901 and used for the fashionable sport of polo as well as croquet, tennis, and golf. It was also used by the army during WWI who afterwards donated a swimming pool.

Between the wars it was



used for spectator sports.

Kew contains the Royal Botanic Gardens where all kinds of exotic and strange plants are nurtured in huge glass houses capable of providing the correct climates. Nearby is Richmond, which is best known for its huge 2500-acre royal park, the largest urban park in Britain where deer still roam.

Hampton Court Palace lies far to the west on the bank of the Thames and is probably most famous for its hedge maze where it is possible to get lost for hours. Henry VIII lived in the palace, which is supposedly haunted by illustrious ghosts. One of its galleries is even called 'the Haunted Gallery'.

# North London

**N**ORTH LONDON is largely suburbia interspersed with a few old villages. Hampstead Heath is one of the most unspoiled parts of London and its history dates back to Neolithic times when it was inhabited by stone age tribes. In the Middle Ages it was part of the great forest of Middlesex and some of the aged woodlands still survive around Highgate, Kenwood, and Queen's Wood.

Parliament Hill is the highest hill in North London, commanding a view over the city. In ancient times it was used as a sacred site and tribal meeting place. The tree-covered tumulus known as Boudicca's Mound is almost certainly not her grave but who or what is actually there is unknown. Something hellish might lie sleeping there, awaiting an archaeological expedition investigating the Celtic queen to unearth it.

In the 1920s, Hampstead's expanse of heath, dales, and hills were popular for summer bank holiday outings with picnics and fun-fairs. Two wild seals were inexplicably found swimming there in Whitestone Pond on separate occasions in August and November 1926.

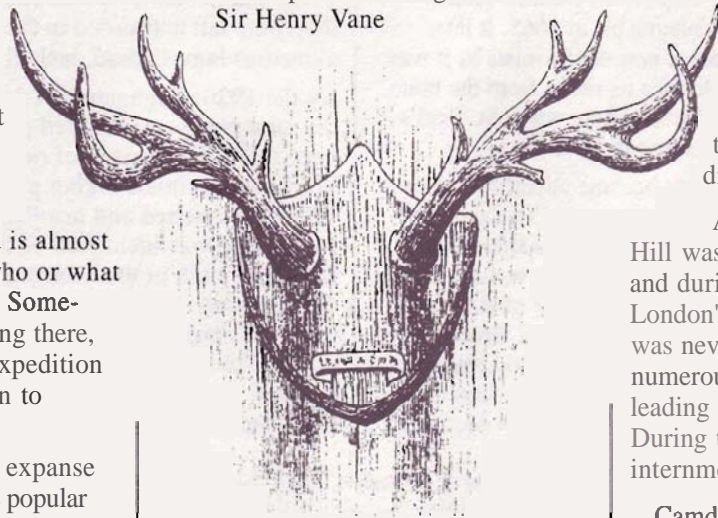
Between the wars Hampstead had an active community of modern artists which included Moore, Hepworth, Mondrian, and Gropius. They shared the Mall Studios and some lived in Isokon Flats in Lawn Road.

At the top of the steep Highgate Hill lies Highgate village, which has the atmosphere of an earlier age clinging to it. In some of the pubs the ancient Swearing of the Horns ceremony still takes place, which is supposedly an ancient fertility rite. Traditionally each pub had on display a set of stag horns on which each traveler new to the inn was supposed to swear and then kiss a maid, thereafter succumbing to riotous drunkenness. Certain students of the Mythos have drawn parallels between this tradition and some rites used to honor the deity Shub-Niggurath.

The Whittington Stone, Highgate Hill, commemorates Dick Whittington (1358-1423), a wealthy merchant and philanthropist who, according to

legend, became Lord Mayor of London for the third time with the help of his intelligent cat. This was the point he reached before turning back to London on hearing the sound of Bow Bells. Intelligent cats are known to reside in the Dreamlands; had Whittington visited these realms? Why was a statue of the cat was placed on the stone in 1927?

Vane House, Hampstead, has a secret passage from the brewing house to the stable yard, and possibly further as there is evidence that it was partly bricked up. This belonged to Sir Henry Vane



(1613-62), a friend of Milton, who professed odd religious views similar to the mystic Jakob Boehme. Vane was an English statesman who was Governor of Massachusetts, New England, 1635-37. After returning to London he became head of the House of Commons. Sir Henry incurred the wrath of both Cromwell and Charles II during a stormy political life, and at the end of his career was imprisoned and eventually executed. If there is a long-standing Mythos cult in the area, Sir Henry Vane would seem a likely founder.

Nearby in Cromwell House, Highgate, property of Cromwell's son-in-law, there is an underground tunnel running in the direction of Archway. It was so big that in the late 1920s a tram fell into it! What could have made a tunnel that big? The tunnel once ran to Old Arundel House.

Spaniards Inn, Hampstead Lane, was an 18th century highwaymen's haunt. The most famous of them all, Dick Turpin, used its cellars as a hiding place. Since his execution, his horse Black Bess' hoof beats have been heard

galloping over the heath to the pub.

Partingdale House in Mill Hill is also associated with Dick Turpin and is supposed to have a secret passage running to the stable. At the end of the last century a bricked-up wine cellar stocked with whisky and a concealed staircase to two attics were discovered.

Strange muffled bangs regularly resound throughout the house. Popular legend has attributed these numerous secret passages to Dick Turpin, but if a cult used them for clandestine meetings could they continue in the 1920s without the present occupants' knowledge? At the time heavy subsidence appeared in the lawn behind the house but excavations discovered little.

Alexandra Palace on Muswell Hill was built as an exhibition center and during the 1920s rivaled South London's Crystal Palace. However, it was never successful and suffered numerous disasters, such as fires, leading to rumors that it was cursed. During the Great War it was used as an internment camp for German prisoners.

Camden Town, known for its canal locks, was largely inhabited by Irish navvies (excavation or construction workers). In the 19th century, catacombs were built under Camden, Euston Station, Primrose Hill, and Regents Canal along which horses and pit ponies could shunt wagons. These excavations can be seen through cast-iron grills at regular intervals in the road.

Caledonian Market Tower was the centerpiece of the huge Caledonian Road Cattle Market in Market Road. The twice weekly slaughter of animals started in 1855 and there were numerous incidents of animals running amok. By the 1920s the market was a huge bazaar with stalls and shops selling exotic foreign goods and antiques. It was claimed that punters could buy anything from, "a pin head to a mummified Egyptian princess". Keepers could have occult or Mythos items turning up for sale here. Portobello Road, Notting Hill, eventually took over as the main street market for antiques and second hand items. During the 1920s, however, it was mainly used by gypsy traders selling everything from pots and pans to livestock.

# Cemeteries

**B**EFORE 1832, church yards were almost exclusively used to bury the dead in London. In plague years huge burial grounds were acquired for mass graves and sometimes extra ground was utilized when church yards filled. In the 1665 plague, one in five Londoners succumbed. Communal plague pits lie under Liverpool Street Station and Golden Square. The plague virus can lie dormant for centuries. Anyone coming into contact with contaminated bones stands a small chance of contracting the plague even today.

North of Artillery Ground, by City Road, **Bunhill Fields Cemetery** was designated as a plague pit in 1665. It later became the chief burial ground of non-conformists as it was unconsecrated. **Bunhill Row** derives its name from the bone hill, a macabre heap of bones dumped here when St. Paul's Cathedral charnel house was cleared in 1549.

The overcrowding of churchyards became appalling. After a series of cholera epidemics, laws were passed in the early 19th century allowing private companies to establish large, well-drained cemeteries outside London. By law, full records were to be kept of those buried there. The first of these new cemeteries was **Kensal Green**. It had an unusual Greek Revival chapel and some extraordinary tombs and mausolea set in a landscaped park. The cemetery became fashionable after Princess Sophia was buried there. The South **Metropoli-**

**tan Cemetery** in Norwood, South London, opened in 1837 and was also set out like a landscaped park.

**Highgate Cemetery** is London's most famous. It opened in 1839 with serpentine paths and a circle of catacombs in Egyptian style. Later architects added an Egyptian avenue with a menacing entrance. A subterranean set of passages and hoist mechanisms was originally designed so that bodies could be placed in tombs without disturbing the ground, but was never completed. They have fallen into disuse and it is likely that ghouls have taken residence. Perhaps that is why they were left unfinished in the first place. The cemetery has numerous famous dead, including **Karl Marx**.

By the 1920s **Highgate** had the reputation of being one of the most eerie and haunted places in London. There have been numerous reports of possible vampirism and also black magic rituals taking place within its grounds. In the 1970s the charred and headless body of a woman was found. She was identified as someone who was supposedly buried in 1926 in the catacombs of a family vault in the old cemetery. Although charred, the body was reported to be surprisingly well preserved. Several people who claimed to be trying to rid the cemetery of vampires were arrested and charged with damaging a memorial to the dead and interfering with a body.

## Remarkable Details

[By the mid-nineteenth century] "the vaults under the pavement of the churches, and the small spaces of open ground surrounding them, were crammed with coffins. In many of the buildings the air was so tainted with the products of corruption as to be a direct and palpable source of disease and death to those who frequented them. In the churchyards coffins were placed tier above tier in the graves until they were within a few feet (or sometimes even a few inches) of the surface, and the level of the ground was often raised to that of the lower windows of the church. To make room for fresh interments the sextons had recourse to the surreptitious removal of bones and partially-decayed remains, and in some cases the contents of the graves were systematically transferred to pits adjacent to the site, the grave-diggers appropriating the coffin-plates, handles and nails to be sold as waste metal.

"The neighborhood of the churchyards was always unhealthy, the air being vitiated by the gaseous emanations from the graves, and the water, wherever it was obtained from wells, containing organic matter, the source of which

could not be mistaken. In all the large towns the evil prevailed in a greater or less degree, but in London, on account of the immense population and the consequent mortality, it forced itself more readily upon public attention, and after more than one partial measure of relief had been passed the churchyards were, with a few exceptions, finally closed by the act of 1855, and the cemeteries which now occupy a large extent of ground to the north, south, east, and west became henceforth the burial-places of the metropolis. Several of them had been already established by private enterprise before the passing of the Burial Act of 1855 (**Kensal Green cemetery dates from 1832**), but that enactment forms the epoch from which the general development of cemeteries in Great Britain and Ireland began. Burial within the limits of cities and towns is now almost everywhere abolished, and where it is still in use it is surrounded by such safeguards as make it practically innocuous.... The tendency has therefore been, while improving the sanitary aspects of the disposal of the dead, to make the cemeteries themselves as fit as possible for this purpose, and beautiful in arrangement and decoration.

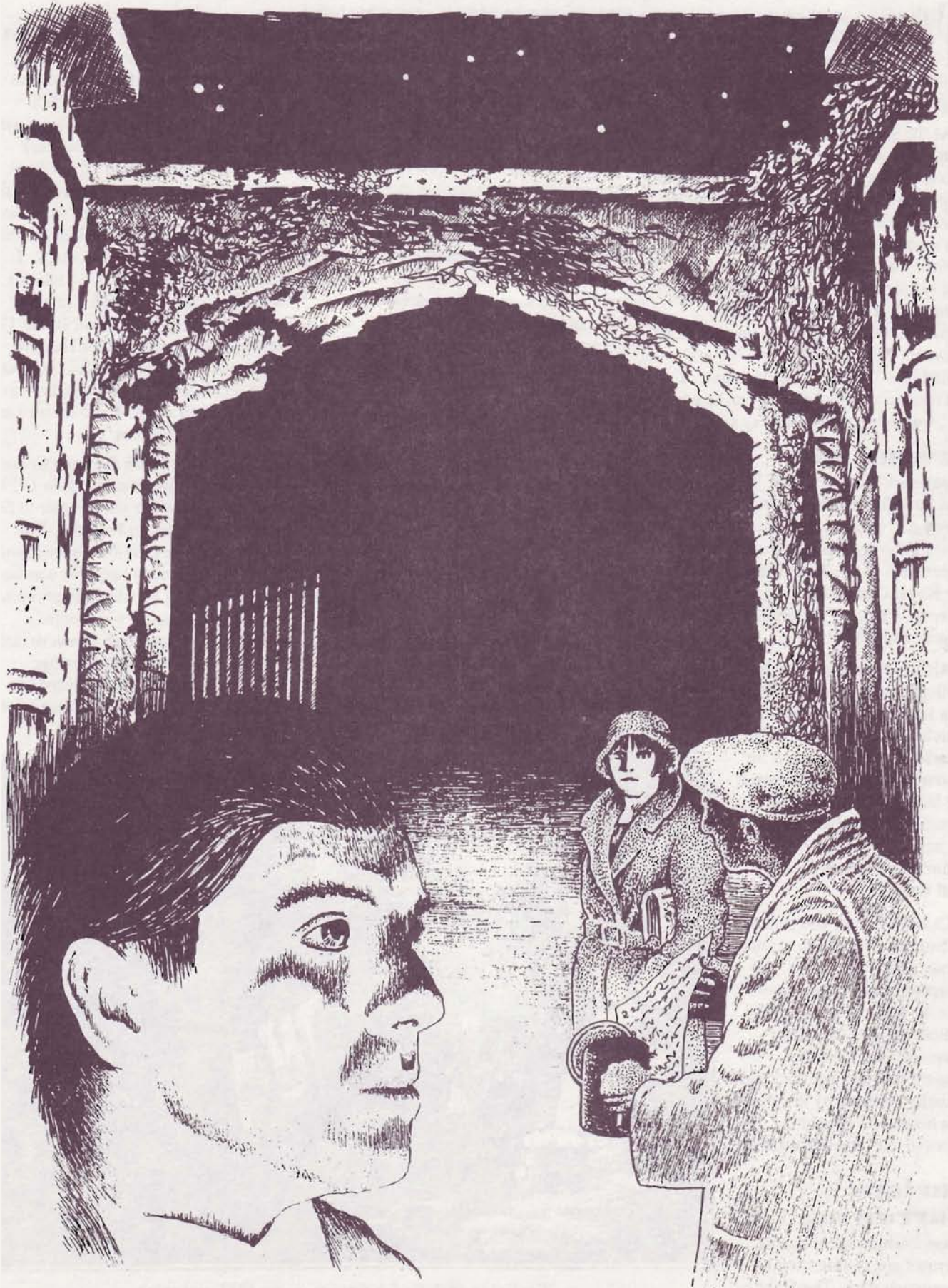
## Present London Cemeteries

"The chief cemeteries of London are **Kensal Green cemetery on the Harrow Road; Highgate cemetery on the slope of Highgate Hill; the cemetery at Abney Park; the Norwood and Nunhead cemeteries to the south of London; the West London cemetery at Brompton; the cemeteries at Ilford and Leytonstone in Essex; the Victoria cemetery and the Tower Hamlets cemetery in East London; and at a greater distance, accessible by railway, the great cemetery at Brookwood near Woking in Surrey, and the cemetery at New Southgate.** The general plan of all these cemeteries is the same, a park with broad paths either laid out in curved lines as at Kensal Green and Highgate, or crossing each other at right angles as in the case of the West London cemetery. The ground on each side of these paths is marked off into grave spaces, and trees and shrubs are planted in the intervals between them. The buildings consist of a curator's residence and one or more chapels, and usually there is also a range of family graves with imposing tombs, massive structures containing in their corridors recesses for the reception of coffins, generally closed only by an iron grating."

— Charles Denton, writing in 1908.



# Investigators at the Egyptian Entrance to Highgate Cemetery



# South London

**T**HE AREA south of the river is often considered less interesting than the north side. Although much of it is either residential or industrial it does have some important landmarks.

At the eastern extreme of South London lies Woolwich with its Royal Naval College and Arsenal. This was a large munitions store which during the Great War employed 90,000 people. It has an artillery museum called the Rotunda with a collection of cannon and smaller weapons. Beneath the Woolwich Arsenal is a system of tunnels extending from Thamesmead to Shooters Hill, dating from 1716 and called 'the Warren'. This was part of the arsenal and included barracks and its own underground railway system.

## Greenwich

Greenwich Park, south of Woolwich, was built for the first Astronomer Royal and became the center for the world's navigation and chronometry. Greenwich Mean Time is calculated at the Royal Observatory. In the 1920s the director's written permission was required to visit it.

Also in the park is the Naval War College and Hospital built on the site of a large manor house called Placentia which dated from the 1400s. Charles II commissioned Sir Christopher Wren to redesign the building in 1664. The former King's apartments include a secret stairwell connected to those used by Nell Gwyn.

Charlton House was said to be haunted by the 17th century ghost of Sir William Longhorne. During the Great War the house was used as a military hospital but many nurses refused to enter it because they claimed they were sexually harassed by the ghost. The house was bought by Greenwich Council in 1925.

## Curious Burrowing

Some ancient, inexplicable burrows are visible within Greenwich Park. These are a

series of bronze age burial mounds, with a maze of tunnels running underneath them, which might have been made by man or perhaps something less wholesome. The main tunnel is a third of a mile long and runs south to Blackheath. More tunnels were found near an old Roman villa at a dip called 'whipping place' where sailors were flogged. Throughout the centuries there have been odd accounts of subsidence in Woolwich, Greenwich, and Blackheath. On several occasions ground on the heath apparently opened up and swallowed things as large as a horse and rider. These occurrences were particularly common earlier this century and were rationalized as being caused by concealed subterranean tunnels, pits, or *deneholes*.

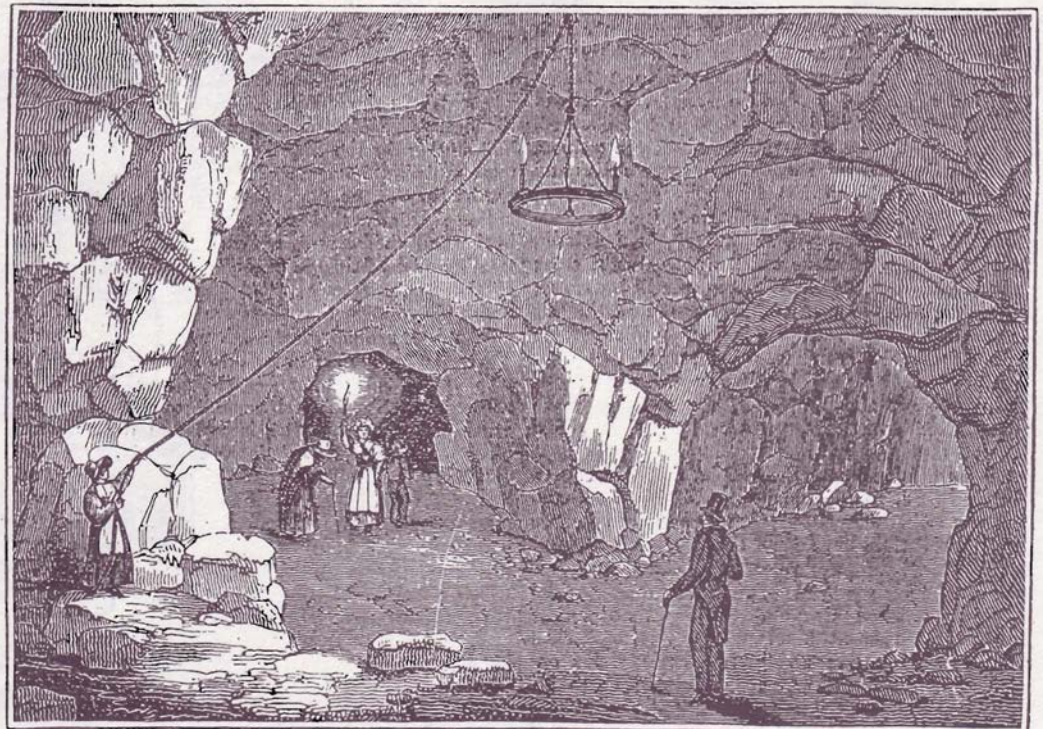
Deneholes are common in north Kent, south Essex, and south London. They are shafts as deep as eighty feet with a trefoil pattern of caves at their base but do not usually connect up with others. Traces of deneholes can be found in Chislehurst, Bexley, Crayford, **Darenth** Wood, Dartford, Aylesford, Northfleet, Lenham, Chadwell, Little Thurrock, and Hangman's wood, **Orset** as well as Woolwich. Popular belief says that deneholes were either places of refuge during Saxon and Danish invasions or were used by Druids to

observe the stars. The earliest are pre-Roman but the latest is only 150 years old.

## Jack Cade's Cavern

Another cave system with a strange history lies at Blackheath under the Point. It is known as Jack Cade's Cavern because it may have been used as a hiding place by the rebel Jack Cade (see History, page 78). It has three chambers: the main chamber, the inner chamber, and the well chamber. The caves lie sixty feet below ground and are reached by a set of steps. They first attracted notice in 1780 when a woman had a fit and died a few minutes after visiting them. In the 19th century they were used for Hellfire Club style revelries. Public outcry at the indecent goings-on led to the caves being filled-in in 1854 and their exact location was forgotten.

In 1906, Greenwich Borough Council tried to locate them but failed. In 1939 a shaft was sunk at the site in order to find them for use as air raid shelters. The inner and middle chambers were found but not the well chamber. This was later discovered using earlier descriptions of its position, though it was carefully sealed off and concealed. It was drilled open, revealing a winding passage leading to a chamber with a dried up well. The walls were covered in **blasphemy**.



*Exploring Jack Cade's Cavern, in an 1833 engraving.*



*The Crystal Palace (1850-1936).*

mous carvings and graffiti including a large, striking relief of the Devil. The local populace disliked it as a shelter, finding it disquieting, and the roof props soon rotted with fungus. In 1946 the caves were sealed up again. The last person to leave carved his name on the wall and left a candle behind. The area is now overgrown and there is no sign of an entrance. A scenario could involve an attempt to locate the caves and investigate the real reason for their concealment.

Eltham Palace, south of Blackheath, has a curious legend attached to it. A 16th century brick secret passage was found in 1834 under a stone slab reached by a narrow downward shaft. The passage runs parallel to the moat and has three tributary tunnels. One leads to a small chamber while the others run to old sewers. A ring was found in the chamber bearing the inscription:

*Who wears me shall perform exploits  
And with great joy return.*

The reference to 'joy' might imply that the wearer will be glad to return from these exploits, but doesn't necessarily mean he or she will like what happens while performing them.

## Industrialized South London

The area bordering the Thames from Greenwich to Lambeth includes the

industrialized, working class areas of Rotherhithe, Bermondsey, and Southwark. The banks of the Thames are lined with cattle markets, docks, warehouses, and gas works.

Southwark is the oldest part of South London, formed when London Bridge was first built. Clink Street was the site of the old debtors prison from which the term 'clink', meaning jail, originated. It is a narrow alleyway lined with Victorian warehouses. St. Saviour's Cathedral, built in 1206, predates Westminster Abbey and contains a monument to Shakespeare whose Globe Theatre once stood on Bankside. London Bridge and Waterloo railway station lie nearby.

The Old Kent Road is one of the longest and best known roads in South London. One of its pubs, the Thomas a Becket, had such extreme poltergeist activity that the landlord refused to sleep on the premises. One upstairs room was said to be so eerie that customers who wagered they could stay in it for half an hour lost their bets.

In Camberwell, to the south, the Asylum Tavern, Asylum Road, which lies in between the Licensed Victualler's Asylum and the South East Fever Hospital, is haunted by the phantom of an old lady dressed in gray. A brewery connected with both

the tavern and the asylum instigated an investigation which claimed that the haunting was real. Investigators could be approached by the brewery and asked to validate the haunting. Perhaps they will arrange for the team to witness a staged supernatural event, or even try to bribe them.

To the west in neighboring Lambeth, London County Hall can be found on the South Bank of the Thames, facing the Houses of Parliament across the water. In the 1920s, this was the home of London County Council and the imposing building holds the council chambers, ceremonial hall, and councillors' library. St. Thomas's Hospital adjacent to it is one of the best teaching hospitals in England. Next to that is Lambeth Palace, the London residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury. In the 1920s, admission was by appointment only but its library was open on weekdays. The Imperial War Museum on Lambeth Road held a collection of arms, mostly British and German. Some exhibits were described as being of the 'freak' type in Black's Guide to London of the era. In conjunction, keepers might find useful the section on new and old weapons from the *Fatal Experiments* supplement.

At Kennington, near Vauxhall Bridge, lies the Oval, the home of Surrey County Cricket Club and one of England's premiere cricket grounds. See Sport, page 70. Beyond Vauxhall Bridge the river was bordered by more dingy factories and warehouses. The enormous Battersea Power Station was being constructed during the late 1920s. Battersea Park next to it provided a stretch of green with a large boating lake, subtropical garden, and fun-fair. Just south was the famous Battersea Home for Lost Dogs and Cats, where strays rounded up from London's streets were taken in an attempt to find their owners before being destroyed. Human miscreants were incarcerated in Brixton prison a few miles south. The large, old building was overcrowded even in the 1920s.

## Southwest London

The southwest was far more pleasant than its eastern counterpart with many parks and commons including

Clapham Common, Wandsworth Common, Putney Heath, and, far to the west, Barnes Common and the vast Richmond Park (see West London, page 46). Fulham Palace in Bishop's Avenue was the residence of the Bishops of London. The palace's moat was filled-in during the 1920s.

## The Suburban South

The far south of London was quite well-to-do. Dulwich was a snobby upper-middle class area with its own picture gallery containing many British, Dutch, and Flemish masterpieces.

Forest Hill is noted for the Horniman Museum which contains anthropological, geological, and zoological collections, a library of books on travel, history, nature, and religion plus an extensive display of magical and religious items from around the world. The Egyptian Antiquities collection is particularly impressive. It is open to the public daily but permission to use the library must be obtained from the curator as it is not part of the general display. For more information see *The Keepers' Compendium* and *The Occult*, page 72.

By the 1920s, Bethlem Hospital, formerly the infamous asylum of Bedlam, had recently been transferred to an area a few miles south of Sydenham. See *Hospitals*, page 65.

## The Crystal Palace

On Sydenham Hill, the highest point in southeast London, stood the Crystal Palace—a gigantic, magnificent pavilion of iron and glass with a nave over a thousand feet long and transepts over 150 feet high. **Twin** towers on either side soared nearly 300 feet high. With its regular concerts and exhibitions it was the focus of social life for South London.

The Crystal Palace was designed by Joseph Paxton, a horticulturalist and greenhouse designer, in 1850 to house the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations in Hyde Park.

After the exhibition, Paxton moved the building to Sydenham. Gardens, ornamental lakes, and waterfalls were added and the Crystal Palace continued

to attract displays by scientists and eccentrics of all kinds. Thirty-five life-size model dinosaurs were built in the grounds and in 1853 twenty famous scientists celebrated New Year's Eve inside the Iguanodon. During the 1920s and 1930s John Logie Baird, the television pioneer, hired rooms there for his research. See *Biographies*, page 14. On November 30th, 1936, the Crystal Palace was destroyed by a fire so ferocious that the glare could be seen eighty miles away. It is still unknown how the fire started.

## Chislehurst Caves

Located in the countryside bordering South London, these were thought to be Roman mines but are probably more recent. Six miles are explorable but they are so extensive and labyrinthine it is easy to get lost. In WW1 they stored ammunition and during the 1920s some of the caves were used by mushroom growers. Rumor has it that a second set of workings exist below the first but the way into them has been lost. There is supposed to be a passage from a nearby house to the caves, possibly dating from the English civil war, called Cavalier's Passage.

## The Thames

*Twenty bridges from Tower to Kew, Wanted to know what the River knew, For they were young and the Thames was old, And this is the story the River told.*  
— Rudyard Kipling, *The River's Tale*, 1911.

**T**HE THAMES has been used for navigation for about 10,000 years. London grew naturally on the two hills that provided the first dry landing place for ships and was the first place upstream that the river could easily be crossed. Caesar's armies used the Thames as access to Britain's interior and it has always been central to London's political and commercial power as the gateway to Europe. In pre-Christian times the Thames, or that which lay within it, was worshiped as a deity. Weapons and jewelry were thrown into the Thames as votive offerings and many ancient treasures

have been found washed up on the foreshore. There is evidence that human sacrifices were also made.

In 1197 Richard I sold his inherited rights to the Thames to the City of London, which has controlled its use as a waterway ever since. Medieval roads were so poor that river transport was essential and this gave London power. Trinity House, founded in 1515, controls all lifeboats, buoys, and pilots' licenses, and manages navigation. For centuries London's docks were a vital part of the greatest commercial city in the world.

Large sea-going ships could enter London's docks and by the 19th century the Pool of London was full of ocean-going vessels and 'lighters'—small boats which unloaded them. The currents and bridges of the Thames can be treacherous to those unused to navigating them. Flat-bottomed Thames barges were a characteristic sight in the 1920s.

## Reaches of the Thames

The Thames is traditionally divided into various sections or *reaches*. From the estuary to Kew, they are:

Sea  
Gravesend  
Northfleet Hope  
St. Clement's or Fiddlers'  
Long  
Erith Rands  
Erith  
Halfway  
Barking  
Gallions (by Gallions Hotel; see below)  
Woolwich (the most easterly point of Greater London)  
Bugsby's  
Blackwall  
Greenwich (considered the gateway to London since the 19th century)  
Limehouse  
Pool (from Rotherhithe to Tower Br.)  
London Bridge  
Unnamed (London Bridge to Westminster Br.)  
Lambeth (Westminster Bridge to Vauxhall Br.)  
Nine Elms (Vauxhall Bridge to Chelsea Br.)  
Chelsea (Chelsea Bridge to Albert Br.)

Battersea (Albert Bridge to Wandsworth Br.)

Wandsworth (the most westerly point of Greater London)

Barn Elms

Chiswick

Corney

Mortlake (at Kew)

Large ocean-going passenger steamships would take on passengers, bound for the continent or far reaches of the Empire, at the purpose-built 1.5-mile-long Royal Albert Dock at North Woolwich. Investigators using the service could take a special train to the dock from Fenchurch Street Station. The luxurious dockside Gallions Hotel was a recommended stop-over point.

The Woolwich Foot Tunnel was the furthest east that it was possible to cross the river without a boat. The tunnel had a glass topped pagoda-like entrance and a long, spiral staircase descending into it. The stairs surround an Edwardian, mahogany veneered lift leading to a long, gloomy off-white tiled tunnel.

## The Docks District

From Greenwich to the Tower the river makes a large U-shaped bend. The peninsula formed by this loop is called the Isle of Dogs and has always been a working class area. The river can be crossed here via the Blackwall Road Tunnel, built in 1897. Around here lie 2,000 acres of docklands. By the 1920s many had suffered financially, leaving dockers unemployed. The docks were taken over by the Port of London Authority in 1909 from whom permission was needed to view them. The government opened King George V Dock at North Woolwich in 1921 to help unemployment.

The Port of London Authority only employed registered dockers. They were usually casual laborers taken on for the odd day's work and would check at Lloyds to see when and where a boat was coming in. They carried their own large S-shaped hooks to unload crates and bags and investigators would be unwise to get into a fight with a docker armed with one.

At the southernmost tip of the Isle of Dogs lies the Greenwich foot tunnel, built in 1902 in similar style to the one at Woolwich. It emerges near the Cutty

Sark, a famous 19th century tea clipper, moored at King William Walk in dry dock. Greenwich has long been used by the Royal Navy and the river banks are flanked by the Royal Naval Hospital. Greenwich is traditionally the gateway to London but Limehouse lies just before the inward sailor reaches the City itself. See East End, page 44.

At Execution Dock, Wapping, a wooden stake could be seen sticking out of the mud at low tide in the 1920s. Up until the 18th century river pirates and other criminals were executed here by being chained to a metal gibbet fixed to the stake. They would slowly drown as the tide came in and be left to rot. Their bones can still sometimes be found in the foreshore mud. If Deep Ones use the Thames, then the sailors' fate might have been worse than drowning.

Sailing up river the first bridge is Tower Bridge, built in 1894. It remains the archetypal landmark of the city, with twin towers containing machinery to raise the bridge for ships to pass. Beyond it is the Pool of London, the City's original harbor, and the Tower of London.

Brunel constructed the first tunnel to be built under the Thames from Wapping to Rotherhithe. It opened in 1843 after two disastrous earlier attempts in which many men died. The Thames burst in on it twice filling the tunnel within fifteen minutes. It was originally intended as a foot tunnel but was so gloomy that few people used it. Whores and tunnel thieves rapidly took it over, and lived down there. Although by the 1920s it had been acquired by London Underground as part of the Metropolitan line, keepers might decide that the tunnel thieves' degenerate descendants were still living in London's numerous subterranean passages. See below, and Subterranean London, page 54.

The second tunnel to be built runs from Tower Hill to Tooley Street. Tunnelers found a bag of 300 silver coins dating from Henry III during its construction. Tower Subway opened in 1870 with a twelve-passenger cable car service but rapidly proved financially nonviable and the tunnel became a walkway. When Tower Bridge was built in 1894, the tunnel was abandoned for many years. The London Hydraulic Power Company eventually

bought it to conduct steam pipes. As the only privately-owned tunnel under the Thames it is not open to the public, though it is still passable. Spiral staircases lead down into the tunnel lined with cast iron segments like the ribs of a huge whale along which runs thick water pipes and a narrow, unlit passageway allowing single file walking. See References, page 82

Rotherhithe lies on the borders of London's docklands and is full of Victorian warehouses. The Rotherhithe Road Tunnel crosses the river between Cable Street and the Limehouse Basin, which is a water access way between the Thames and West India Docks.

## London Bridge

*London Bridge is falling down,  
Falling down, falling down,  
London Bridge is falling down,  
My fair lady.*

— Anon.

There has been a bridge here since Roman times. The narrow medieval bridge with houses, shops, and churches on it was considered one of the wonders of the world. The decapitated heads of traitors were placed on spikes on its fortified gates. As the rhyme suggests, the bridge was threatened with destruction on numerous occasions from battles, tidal surges, fires, and decay. It is thought that in the Middle Ages a woman was sacrificed and placed in the foundation stone of the bridge to bless it, hence the reference to "my fair lady" in the rhyme.

There is a history of sacrifices being made to the Thames which, in some way, the drowning of sailors at Wapping dock was continuing. A scenario could use the idea of something living in the river which is upset that the sacrifices have not continued.

The crumbling London Bridge was replaced in 1831. One old arch was discovered in situ on the north bank in 1922. In spite of great effort the remnant was swept away by the Thames. Many stones from the original were re-used and can be found in London buildings, including Adelaide House, King William Street, and alcoves in Victoria Park, Hackney. The remains of a Roman bath house were also discovered beneath the Coal Exchange by the north end of bridge. See History, page 78.

The Victoria Embankment lies between Blackfriars Bridge and Westminster Bridge and runs alongside the Unnamed Reach of the Thames. The area was reclaimed from the muddy foreshores of the river and is lined with gardens and formal flower beds. The eight-foot-thick granite wall which holds back the Thames was completed in 1870. In 1925 one of the nine arches of Waterloo Bridge subsided. A temporary structure was erected for traffic and a new bridge was planned against local opposition.

The western, upstream, stretch of the river from Chelsea to Kew and beyond London to Hampton Court is the place for soft living away from the bustle of the city. In the late 1920s the Thames Valley suffered exceptionally severe frosts and floods. The popularity of pleasure boating and increasing affluence had induced speculators to build riverside bungalows and houses in the flood plain, especially around Teddington, Richmond and Kingston to the west. Many were flooded out.

January 1928 brought the greatest catastrophe to commercial shipping ever experienced on the Thames. After an unexpected storm the water raged, and boats, barges, and launches broke free from their moorings and were swept down the river. They collided with each other and with bridge arches, including a railway bridge where seconds before a train had passed over. Many shed cargo and several sank. Tugs chased and intercepted most of

them, though some were swept into weirs and wrecked. The disaster was made worse because there were more boats on the river than there were adequate mooring facilities.

## Canals

Regent's Canal runs from the awesome monuments of Kensal Green Cemetery, through Little Venice, **Camden**, Regent's Park past the zoo, through railway and factory backlands to Limehouse. It has two dark tunnels, 273 yards long at Little Venice and 957 yards long at Islington. The horses which normally towed the barges would be led through the streets while the canal barge crews would 'leg' their vessels through the tunnels. Two men would lie on boards projecting from either side, propelling the barge forward by the pressure of their feet on the damp brick walls.

London's other canals included the Grand Junction Canal which reached London at Paddington Basin. It had twelve locks and two tunnels. It was used to transport coal, building materials, and even explosives. In 1929 the Regent's and Grand Junction canals became part of the expanded Grand Union canal. This links London to Birmingham and joins the Thames at Brentford, just north of Kew, at the site of an ancient ford across the River. After WW1, canals declined in commercial use and were gradually taken over as pleasure amenities. For more information on Canals see the *Fearful Passages* supplement.

# Subterranean London

**F**EARS OF subterranean attack date from before the Gunpowder Plot. Most cities have myths about their underworld, from the Phantom of the Opera escaping through the Paris catacombs to tales of sub-human degenerates lurking in the sewers. Many scenarios include forays into them. Since Roman times an underground labyrinth has built up below London, including lost rivers, sewers, and service pipes.

Central London lies on the Thames' alluvial flood plain, hemmed in by hills to the north and south forming hundreds of miles of rivers. Few now remain above ground and some, such as the Shoreditch and the Langbourne, have been lost completely. Their courses are now a mystery.

## The Fleet

This best documented of London's underground rivers flows from **Highgate** via **Camden** Town and the City to the Thames near Blackfriar's. It once ran through the seediest parts of 18th century London. Dead animals, industrial, and human waste turned it into a foul sewer. In Ben Jonson's *Famous Voyage*, two lunatics traveled down it and described it as eclipsing the four rivers of Hades in foulness.

It was covered in 1765 and apocryphal stories of wild pigs living in it persisted into the 1920s. In 1864 its fetid gasses exploded, sweeping away many buildings in a tidal wave of sewage.

## Tyburn

This also started in Hampstead and was bricked over as a sewer. It runs below Regent's Park, Oxford Street, the headquarters of the Secret Service, Buckingham Palace, across Whitehall, and into the Thames near Old Scotland Yard. A padlocked grill prevents access under the Houses of Parliament.

The Victorian writer John Hollingshead wrote about his voyage along it underground. Infrequent gratings dimly illuminated stained yellow brick walls. Its underground



*Contemporary photograph of the Tower Bridge in operation.*

# In London's Sewers



course included the remains of a Roman bath house and a 13th century reservoir.

## The Westbourne

Once again this emerges from Hampstead Heath, running under Hyde Park where it forms the Serpentine, crosses the District and Circle Underground Lines at Sloane Square and joins the Thames at Chelsea.

## The Walbrook

This runs below the City through culverts and aqueducts beneath the burial ground of the old Bethlem Hospital (the original Bedlam).

## Stamford Brook

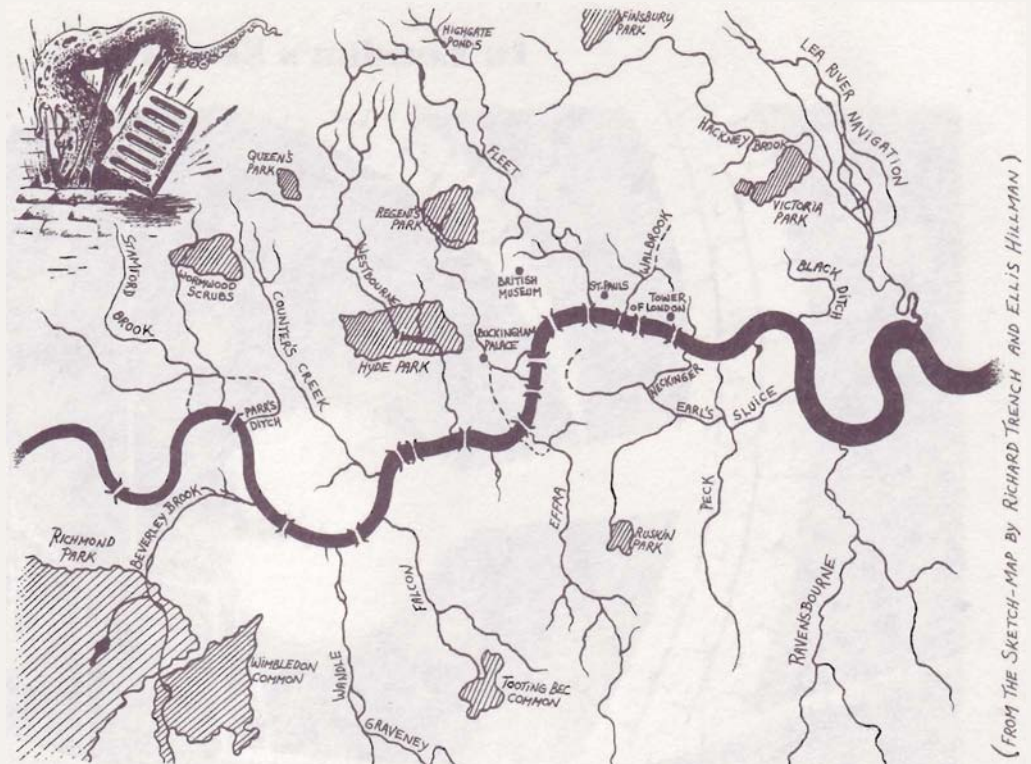
This was the last of North London's rivers to be turned into a sewer and its upper reaches were still open in the 1920s. In 1929 the Parish Magazine of St. Mary's Stamford Brook recommended getting permission to walk along the river as far as Acton, since it lay in a narrow but walkable tunnel.

## The Neckinger

This is the best known South London river. Its name comes from Neckinger Wharf, or 'Devil's Neckinger' where Thames pirates were executed with a rope called the Devil's Neckcloth until the mid-18th century. It runs through Elephant and Castle, and along New Kent road. In the 19th century it was a filthy above-ground sewer containing Jacob's Island, known as the 'capital of cholera'. Wooden shanties were built over the festering ooze. The exact point at which the Neckinger joins the Thames has been lost.

## Sewers

Getting into sewers through manhole covers is easy, but so is getting lost once in them. No complete maps exist and only those who work there really know their way around. London has 500 miles of sewers. Some like the Fleet, Tyburn, and Westbourne are fifteen feet high and easily walkable with huge pillared and buttressed chambers like underground cathedrals, but most sewers are only four



London's natural drainage.

feet high. Nevertheless, 'Gangers' are employed to clean and repair the crumbling brickwork. Working in pairs, one above watches for rain and knocks on manhole covers to warn the one below. Rain raises the water level quickly from a few inches to several feet with only a rush of air as warning. A sudden storm can send tidal waves down the sewers.

Some of the City's sewers are medieval but most were built in the 19th century when "the Great Stink" of the Thames forced wealthy people to leave London in high summer. Interceptor sewers using gravity to channel the sewerage away from the Thames were designed by Joseph Bazalgette in 1859. Three main interceptor sewers—high level, middle level, and low level and underground rivers—were used. Abbey Mills Sewerage Pumping Station moves the sewage to a treatment plant using enormous Victorian beam engines.

Modern sewers are egg-shaped in cross-section and the larger ones have water gates so that men can work in the dry. There are pockets of lethal gases which kill even sewer rats. These are carburetted gas which explodes, sulphurated hydrogen which is the foul product of putrefaction, and suffocating carbonic acid which miners call choke damp. In Victorian times 'toshers' scoured the sewers for lost valuables

but many died there, so the entrances along the Thames were barred up.

The most populous animal under London is the brown rat which came over from Russia in the 18th century and is more fertile and fierce than the native black rat. Most lie under Westminster, attracted from the Thames by the refuse from West End restaurants. Sewer workers have been known to kill 200 a day. Eels and frogs are also plentiful in the sewers.

## Service Ducts

Bazalgette also designed and built an early service pipe to carry gas, water, and hydraulic power. It runs along the Thames embankment from the Houses of Parliament to the Bank of England with an entrance door at the base of Boudicca's statue by Westminster Bridge. It is dark and forbidding, its brickwork is damp, and the smell and sound of the river creeps in. Every few hundred yards the darkness is broken by light from pavement gratings.

Piccadilly Circus lies at the heart of a service duct system which spans out across the West End as far as the City. Most are just below street level but at Piccadilly they drop forty feet into a circular iron tunnel built in the 1920s when the underground station was built.





# Transport

**M**ORE LONDONERS used buses, tubes, and trams during the 1920s than ever before or since. Few Londoners owned private motor cars but more people commuted to work from suburbia. It was quite common to see people going to the theater dressed in evening suits and traveling on a bus or tube. ("Underground" or "tube" is British for "subway", tube perhaps deriving from the pneumatic dispatch tubes for documents which were already widely used in London. A "subway" in the U.K. is an underpass, usually a pedestrian walkway.)

## The Underground

London's underground system is a hotch-potch of tunnels developed haphazardly under numerous small companies. They were unified before the war by an American, Charles Tyson Yerkes, who had built the Chicago "El", but were never designed as an integrated system. As a result the tunnels twist and turn and there are numerous dead ends, disused passages, and abandoned stations. It is rumored that some tunnel bends circumvent old plague pits. There are numerous stories of workmen refusing to continue work on certain sections due to things they had seen down there.

During the 1920s the Underground Group expanded under Frank Pick. He designed the well-known underground logo, created famous advertising posters, opened new stations with ultra-modern Art Deco ticket halls, and even built houses in London's suburbia to generate enough traffic to pay for building new lines. In 1921, the Government offered money to schemes to alleviate unemployment and the Underground Group used this financing to construct new stations.

In September 1926 the Northern Line extension from Clapham Common to Morden opened. Its seventeen mile tunnel from Morden to East Finchley via Bank was the world's longest.

Piccadilly Circus station was built from 1923-28. The buildings around it had deep and massive basements and the station had to be dug extremely deep. It was a show piece of Art Deco design and the most spectacular creation of the Underground Group,

attracting attention from all over the world, even a delegation from Moscow.

However, there was opposition to an extension under Hampstead Heath. The Bull and Bush Station on the Heath was abandoned due to local pressure, fearing that it would damage the ancient heath land. However, keepers might decide that there was something more sinister than gorse bushes at stake.

## Trams

London County Council owned nine electrified tramways

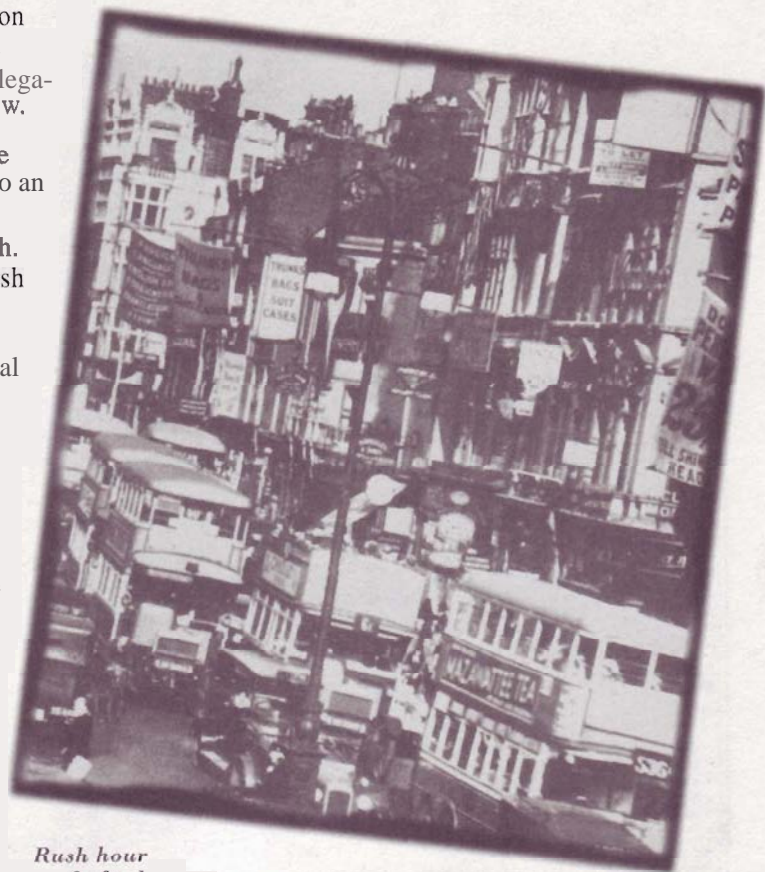
which were cheaper than buses. From Monday to Friday, 10am-4pm, the fare was 1d for a short journey and 2½d for all distances beyond that. Trams started earlier than buses and were often more popular. Like buses, they were often double decked.

However, tram lines became dangerous in the wet and motor accidents increased. There were problems with passengers getting off in the path of other vehicles and of overhead tram wire arms falling off.

## Omnibuses

Double decker open-top buses run by the London General Omnibus Company covered most routes. During the 1920s there were 4000 on London's roads. They charged a flat rate 2d fare. The first night buses were introduced in 1920.

Until 1924 there were no authorized bus routes. Independent or pirate companies could compete with larger companies wherever they liked. This led to races between pirate and General buses to see who could get ahead—some even did U-turns and changed their route if they saw a lot of passengers at another stop. They would accept bribes and even



Rush hour on Oxford street.

ignore accidents. A bus driver once jumped the gap in Tower Bridge as it was opening! It is conceivable that investigators could bribe a pirate to do something similar if they were involved in a vehicle chase. In 1924 the bus routes were regulated but pirates continued illegally for some time, the peak year being 1926 when over 500 were on the road.

## Cabs

There were still a dozen or so horse-drawn hansom cabs operating in London in 1927, though motor taxi cabs were much more numerous. They carried four people and charged 9d per person plus 1s per mile or ten minutes.

Cabmen's shelters were green wooden sheds where cabmen could get cheap food and shelter. There were about sixty of these dotted around London and they would be one of the best places for investigators to talk to cab drivers.

## Railways

Railways from London to other parts of the country were divided into four privately owned groups; the London, Midland and Scotland Railway (LMS), the London and North Eastern Railway

(LNER), the Great Western Railway (GWR), and Southern Railway (SR). Within London, Metropolitan Railways built local lines and also acted as housing developers.

In the 1920s there were two classes of rail travel, First and Third, Second Class having been dropped. First differed from Third Class in that it had private compartments with arm rests, curtains, and reading lights.

This was an age of **glamour** trains with names like the Blue Train to the **Riviera** and the Flying Scotsman (running between London and Scotland). The *creme de la creme* was the **Venice-Simplon Orient Express**. This train actually started at Paris, but connections could be made from Victoria Station via the Boat-Train, the Channel ferries, and Calais coaches on the French side. For more details see the campaign pack *Horror on the Orient Express*.

## Motor Cars

For the aristocracy, motor cars began to replace horse drawn vehicles at the **turn** of the century. In 1901 the number of road deaths in London was eighty-six. From 1920 to 1930 the number of registered motor cars in Britain rose from 200,000 to well over a million. By 1929 most wealthy people had cars and the roads were full of buses and lorries; in that year there were 1,362 fatalities and 55,000 accidents.

There were few facilities for car drivers. Petrol stations and garages were rare in Britain during the 1920s. Pumps were manually operated and petrol cost 2s a gallon. In 1926 white road lines first appeared in St. James's Street, Britain's first traffic lights were installed in Piccadilly, and gyratory systems (sets of connected roundabouts) and one-way streets were implemented at Hyde Park Corner.

There were no driving tests at the time, and although the speed limit during the 1920s was officially **20mph** it was widely disregarded. The Bright Young Things tended to use the roads around London as a racing track and for thrills did things like driving on the wrong side of the road.

There was a craze among the Bright Young Things for organizing treasure hunts by car. The driver of each car filled with passengers was handed a clue which, when solved, indicated

where the next clue was. Cars raced off and speed was essential to pick up the next clue concealed in a hollow tree, milestone, ancient monument etc. The last clue usually lead to a party in some remote place where the winner collected his treasure, usually bottles of booze. The races between competitors could be hair raising and dangerous. A treasure hunt could form the basis of an off-beat Call of Cthulhu scenario. See also Recreation, page 66.

Henry Ford's Tin Lizzie was a popular car as was the bull-nosed Morris Cowley. In 1922 the Austin Seven was launched priced at £165. As ever, Rolls Royce were the best and fastest. The first British car priced as low as **£125** was the 1928 Morris Minor, safety glass windows £2 extra!

Car drivers in the 1920s usually joined the Royal Automobile Club (RAC), who had premises on 89 Pall Mall. It did a lot to establish motoring in Britain. During WW1 it provided cheap accommodation for officers from overseas and many became members afterwards. During the 1926 general strike, the Committee made space available for Ministry of Transport staff. In 1913 it acquired the RAC country club near Epsom for golf, tennis, squash, croquet, & swimming.

## Airplanes

In 1919 a Department of Civil Aviation was set up within the British Air Ministry and it was soon sending air mail letters to Paris. Chartered flights to Paris also began that year for twenty-three guineas and in April 1924 Imperial Airways began a daily London to Paris passenger service for £20 return from Croydon Airport, south of London. By the end of the decade there were daily services to many important European cities. Most parts of the Empire could be reached in a series of short hops. However, flying was a dangerous means of transport in the 1920s and there were numerous accidents and fatalities.

## Bicycles

These were popular in the 1920s as they were the only form of private transport that the working classes could afford. A number of cycling clubs sprang up and even the wealthy took to it as a hobby. The British Bobby on his bicycle was also a common sight.

# Politics

**T**HE UNITED Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy. The people elect the House of Commons at least every five years to represent them. Politicians had low wages in the 1920s and were expected to have private means. Most **MPs** (Members of Parliament) had homes both in their constituency and in Westminster, in London.

## The Houses of Parliament

Physically, the Houses of Parliament consist of over a thousand rooms set around courtyards in an enormous Gothic style building. Halfway between the Upper and Lower Houses is the Central Lobby, an octagonal apartment with a mosaics and vaulted roof. The Lords and the Commons meet here to discuss parliamentary business informally among themselves or, by appointment, with members of the public. Investigators could arrange to sit in the public galleries of either House by writing to an MP or by making the request through their embassy.

Traditional Parliamentary rituals date from the time when power emanated from the Monarch, but by the 1920s the Crown's main duty is as the British Empire's figurehead. No recent monarch has refused to grant assent to an Act of Parliament and it is practically unthinkable that one should do so. Nevertheless, George V often invited **MPs** to the Palace to discuss political issues.

True power lies with the Cabinet, a body of ministers from the House of Commons majority party who, under the Prime Minister, manage the nation's affairs, aided by civil servants. All bills, however, must be approved by the House of Lords before they gain the Monarch's assent and become Acts of Parliament.

## House of Lords

Members of the Upper House are not elected. They comprise the Lords Spiritual (senior bishops of the Church of England), the Lords Temporal (English peers, *i.e.* titled nobility), sixteen Scottish peers, and the Lords of Appeal (the Law Lords who form the highest court in the land). Their main

# Special Occasions

THE following annual events could provide background color to scenarios or offer settings for plots.

**Druid Solstices:** in spring and autumn. Both equinoxes are celebrated by the Order of Druids, a society set up in the 18th century and only vaguely connected to the ancient Celtic religion. At the spring solstice in March white-robed druids gather at Tower Hill for the symbolic sowing of seeds. The autumn ritual is held on Primrose Hill, Regents Park.

**The Boat Race:** in late March or early April. A traditional Thames rowing race between Oxford and Cambridge Universities. See Sport, page 70.

**Chelsea Antique Fair:** in March and September. A wide range of pre-1830 antiques are sold at Chelsea Town Hall in this twice yearly fair.

**Beating the Bounds:** on Ascension Day (the fortieth day after Easter). This ancient custom dates from the Middle Ages when there were no boundary maps. The City borders were walked from All-Hallows-by-the-Tower and the boundary marks beaten so that they could be memorized. This includes one in the middle of the Thames to which a boat is taken and a choirboy is held up by the ankles to beat the mid-river mark.

**The FA Cup Final:** on a Saturday in early May. The highlight of the football season at Wembley. One of the Royal Family always presents the cup.

**Chelsea Flower Show:** in late May. The world's largest annual flower show started in 1913 in the grounds of Wren's Royal Hospital, Chelsea.

**Royal Academy Summer Exhibition:** from May to August. Thousands of paintings by the famous and obscure are on show at Burlington House, Piccadilly. Even rank amateurs could have their pictures selected for exhibition.

**Derby Day:** first Wednesday in June. The premiere event of the flat racing season takes place at Epsom, south of London. The Royal family attend, often to watch their own horses.

**Trooping the Colour:** second Saturday in June. The Monarch's official birthday is celebrated by a military parade of the Household Division in Horse Guards, Whitehall.

**Royal Ascot:** third week in June. Horse racing at Ascot near Windsor is a social meeting attended by the royal family. Hats and high fashion are as important as horses.

**Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Championships:** Late June. This two week tournament takes place at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in Wimbledon.

**Cricket at Lord's:** in June or July. On varying dates the second Test Match is played at Lord's, the home of cricket.

**Henley Royal Regatta:** early July. This international rowing event and top social scene takes place at Henley-upon-Thames, west of London. A must for all London socialites.

**Swan Upping:** in July. All swans on the Thames are owned by either the Sovereign, the Company of Vintners, or the Company of Dyers. In this

ancient ceremony the ownership of all cygnets is recorded by nicking their beaks, once for Dyers and twice for Vintners, while the Queen's are left unmarked. New swan uppers are traditionally thrown in the water.

**The Proms:** July to September. A series of classical music concerts which take place at the Royal Albert Hall, Kensington.

**The Royal Tournament:** 11th to 28th July. Earls Court, Olympia, hosts this military display and pageant.

**Election of the Lord Mayor:** 29 September. This ceremony takes place at the Guildhall surrounded by age-old customs. The Lord Mayor is elected by Liverymen of the City from among the Aldermen who have served as Sheriff. Being elected mayor is the highest honor a citizen of London can be granted.

**Costermongers' Harvest Festival:** first Sunday in October. The cockney Pearly Kings, Queens, Princes, and Princesses from the East End dress in traditional pearly-button-covered costumes and gather for a thanksgiving at St. Martin-in-the-Field, Trafalgar Square.

**Trafalgar Day Parade:** Sunday nearest to 21 October. A commemoration service and wreath laying ceremony takes place at Nelson's Column, Trafalgar Square.

**State Opening of Parliament:** late October. The Monarch officially opens parliament after its summer recess. The public are not allowed into the Houses of Parliament but crowds watch the monarch leave Buckingham Palace, travel along the Mall, and through Horse Guards Parade to the Houses of Parliament.

**Fireworks Night or Guy Fawkes Night:** 5th November. This national festival when fireworks are let off and effigies are burnt on bonfires commemorates Guy Fawkes' failed Gunpowder Plot of 1605, though the custom derives from a pagan festival in which similar sacrifices were burnt.

**London to Brighton Car Run:** first Sunday in November. London's oldest car race started in 1896 to commemorate the day when it was no longer necessary for a man to walk in front of a car with a red flag. The race starts at Hyde Park Corner.

**Lord Mayor's Show:** Second Saturday in November. The New Lord Mayor travels in procession from Guild Hall to Royal Courts of Justice. The event is celebrated by street parties and a pageant.

**Remembrance Day:** 11 November. This was taken very seriously during the 1920s. A service was held and wreath laid at the Cenotaph, Whitehall, to commemorate dead of the Great War. A gun was fired from Horse Guards to signal the start and end of two minutes silence which was observed countrywide.

**New Year's Eve Celebrations:** there are big public celebrations in Trafalgar Square. Big Ben's chimes herald in the new year and were first broadcast on the radio on New Year's Eve, 1923.

power is to discuss bills that have been passed on from the House of Commons, perhaps suggesting revisions or delaying approval to them.

## House of Commons

Members of the Lower House are elected to represent geographical constituencies. In the 1920s men over twenty-one and women over thirty were eligible to vote. Women over twenty-one gained the vote in 1928.

There were three main parties in the House of Commons; the Conservatives, derived from the old Tory party of landowners, the Liberals, the old party of reform, and the Labour party. The latter came into being in 1906 to represent trade unions and working-class voters and in the 1920s began to eclipse the Liberals.

The Chamber of Commons is smaller and plainer than the gilded Chamber of the House of Lords. In it, the ruling party and opposition **MPs** face each other in tiered rows of seats separated by two red lines wider than two sword blades apart to prevent fighting. This precaution was not always successful, and in previous centuries duels were fought here over policy. A symbolic mace rests on the dispatch table in the center of the room where cabinet ministers stand to speak.

Civil servants are not elected. They work under departmental ministers. Nevertheless they advise **MPs** and so have a lot of behind-the-scenes power.

Lobbyists are members of the public who meet **MPs** in the Central Lobby and try to influence their decisions. Professional lobbyists, often called 'parliamentary consultants' make a living out of wining, dining, and entertaining politicians. They can be engaged to approach **MPs** about specific issues.

## Local London Government

Inner London was governed by a two-tier system of Metropolitan Boroughs Councils and the London County Council (LCC). The LCC was directly elected and had offices at County Hall across the river from Parliament. It ran London's essential services such as education, the fire brigade, and housing. Its administration was largely respected and free from corruption.

The boroughs were small areas with their own Town Halls. Local Borough Councils had little power but some tried to improve health care and welfare and sometimes found themselves at loggerheads with the LCC.

The City of London has always had its own separate form of government, under the Corporation of London. By the 1920s the Lord Mayor of London was mainly a figurehead who presided over ceremonies.

## Political Background

In the 1920s, British politics were volatile, in part because of a series of weak governments. There were fears that Bolshevism would sweep through Europe in the wake of the Russian revolution, yet the new British Communist party had little support. Most socialists talked about class war but really meant strikes and voting for socialist parliamentary candidates. The Labour party was not affiliated to the Communists, despite fears to the contrary, and believed in social evolution through democracy.

In 1921, Poplar Borough Council protested against inequality of rates in rich and poor London boroughs by refusing to pay its share of LCC expenses. Councillors went to prison over the issue but after mass public protests the rate burden was made fairer. 'Poplarism' became the term for Labour borough council defiance of the central Government.

Britain's first ever Labour government was formed under **Ramsay MacDonald** in January, 1924, but only lasted ten months. There was growing suspicion of the Labour party's sympathy with communism and fears that they would confiscate property, nationalize industry, and inspire revolution. MacDonald lost a vote of confidence and had to call a general election. Just before election day the press uncovered an alleged Soviet plot in the form of a secret letter supposedly from Zinoviev of the Presidium of the Communist International to the British Communist Party urging them to foment trouble and infiltrate the Labour Party. Despite claims that the letter was a fake, Stanley Baldwin's Conservatives defeated Labour overwhelmingly.

The 1926 General Strike was the climax of social and industrial unrest. There were feelings that the Conservatives had gained power underhandedly with the Zinoviev letter. Unemployment and prices were high, and there were housing shortages and poor working conditions. After ten days the strike failed. The Conservative Government had won an important psychological victory and remained in power until 1929. See Timeline, page 80.

## Law & Order

**I**NVESTIGATORS inevitably come into contact with the police, usually when they least want to. American investigators will find marked differences between English and American police, most notably in that the former do not normally carry firearms.

In **WW1**, duties such as arresting enemy foreigners, enforcing lighting restrictions, and dealing with the consequences of air raids had become important police functions. These roles ended when peace came but the rank and file retained a heightened sense of unity and direction, and the public too tended to take police more seriously than they had in Victorian times.

London has two police forces; The Metropolitan Police Force—the 'Met'—and the City police, who patrol the actual City of London. All police officers became members of the new Police Federation which was set up to promote their welfare. The Central Conference of Chief Constables established a permanent link between the Home Office and the police forces in 1920 and set up new regulations to unify internal procedures.

Police operations during the 1926 General Strike (see Timeline, page 80) was an impressive demonstration of the way they could meet a major emergency. The police could now send reinforcements from one force to another to help out. Public sympathy for the police was strong during the strike. They emerged with improved status as protectors of the people and national trust in their impartiality in times of crisis. No one complained about how they handled demonstrations.

However, this cozy relationship did not last. Within two years the press and public had decided that the police were **corrupt** and oppressive. A Royal Commission was appointed in 1929 following an incident in which a girl named Irene Savidge and MP Sir Leo Chiozza Money were arrested after dark in Hyde Park. See True Crime, page 64.

The Home Office decided to establish a national police college to train police. It was open to those under thirty-five who had served as police for five years.

## The Police and Motorists

The official speed limit of 20mph was largely ignored, and was abolished in 1930. Previously only a few police chief constables had used motor cars but the early 1920s saw some ordinary police becoming motorized, patrolling on motorcycles for the first time in 1921. Most still used bicycles.

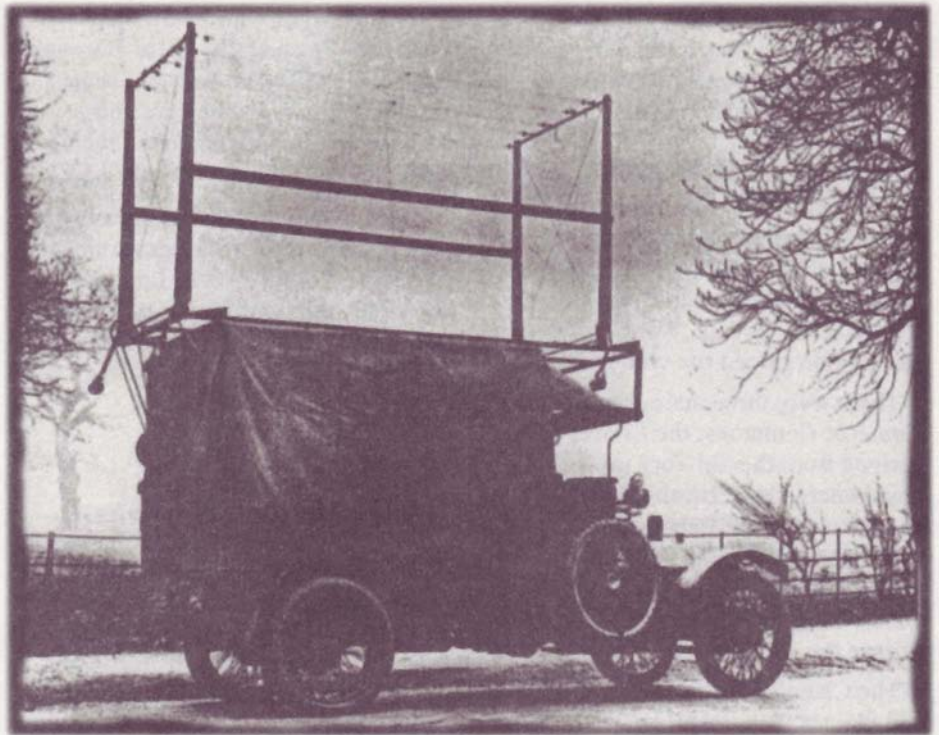
Relations between motorists and the police were on the whole cordial. In an effort to deal with dangerous driving the "courtesy cops" scheme was introduced whereby correct road sense and behavior was encouraged by giving verbal warnings rather than taking to offenders to court.

## The Flying Squad

The 1920s saw the advent of criminal gangs who drove to racecourses, forced bookmakers to pay protection money, and started fights. To combat these gangs, the Met bought two **ex-RAF** vans to patrol north and south London. The small group in charge of this became known as the Flying Squad, who eventually became part of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). Their number of cars gradually increased and by the mid-1920s had radios fitted in their vans, a real improvement in communications. Cockney rhyming slang soon dubbed them The Sweeney (Sweeney Todd = Flying Squad).

## The Special Branch

After the Irish problem subsided in the early 1920s, the Special Irish Branch of Scotland Yard was renamed the Special Branch. It was used to enforce the Defense of the Realm Act to save Britain from spies, anarchists, and communists. It tapped telephones, intercepted letters, raided night clubs, and acted as a strong arm against



*Hi-tech crimefighting in 1927: the first vehicle used by the Flying Squad, a Crossley Tender. Some vehicles were refitted, like this one, with a cumbersome radio antenna.*

immorality for the Home Secretary, Sir Joynson-Hicks.

## Detection, Scientific Aids, Common Services

Little attention was paid to the development of police detection techniques until the late 1920s, so methods varied widely. Scotland Yard had set up a criminal record office as early as 1871 with the particulars of convicted criminals from all over the country. They also circulated The Police Gazette, containing lists of missing or wanted persons, stolen property, etc.

Interpol was set up in 1914 and had its second congress in 1923 in Vienna when the International Police Commission was instituted with its headquarters in Vienna. This allowed greater cooperation and international exchange of information between European police forces.

The first operational police radio scheme in England was set up by the Metropolitan Police in 1923 using telegraphy and Morse code. It offered two-way communications with a CID van. It was not very effective as it only allowed local communication. Wide coverage was not yet possible with two-way radio although the BBC were looking into it.

Scientific experts had for a long time been called in on cases of homicide, poisoning, and sex offenses but the idea that forensics could be used in burglary cases, etc., was **slow to** develop. Police concentrated on intimate knowledge of their districts and the cultivation of informers.

## Policewomen

During the War the National Council of Women introduced Voluntary Women's Patrols in munitions factories and military bases where women worked. In London many exchanged their voluntary status for full paid employment when 100 official policewomen were recruited by the Metropolitan Police in 1918.

In 1920 the Baird Committee reviewed the employment of policewomen and recommended that they should be made an integral part of the police, but financial cutbacks in 1922 meant that their number actually dropped. It was not until 1929 that the Royal Commission **firmly recom-** mended employing policewomen for questioning young girls and women in welfare and sex cases. The new **WPCs** came from all walks of life—shop girls, laundresses, typists, and a few with university degrees. They faced 'downright malice and vindictive spirit'

from some policemen (who were instructed never to let female colleagues out of their sight and to help them if they ever needed it).

## The Effect of the War

The war had introduced new powers for MI5 to intercept mail and the Official Secrets Act (aimed at foiling foreign (mostly German) spies had been passed. The fact that few spies were found was taken by the authorities as proof of how good the spies and saboteurs were at covering themselves. Spy fever continued after the war, provoked by concern about the Bolsheviks: anyone with different views was likely to be suspected, and in the 1920s these tools were directed against pro-communists.

On a more mundane level, the war cheapened the fighting man's attitude to life and meant that ex-service guns were easily available.

## Private Investigators

The British Detectives' Association was formed by Harry Smale, an ex-Scotland Yard Detective Inspector, in 1913. Its principles were Character, Competence, and Integrity but it had a poor public image initially since the nature of this developing profession gave its members more opportunity to commit crimes than most people.

In 1920s Britain, the image of PIs was mainly conveyed to the public by novelists. With few authentic documented sources to correct perceptions, the PIs of popular fiction were generally thought to represent the real thing. This differed from America where private investigators often published their own memoirs. The noted English exception was Herbert Marshall, "the doyen of private detectives", who retired in his seventies and published his *Memoirs of a Private Detective* in 1924. His stories were thick with dialogue, action, and puzzles but left out many factual details.

British PIs rarely investigated homicides, since murder was much rarer than in America. There rising crime made it logistically difficult for police to cover every suspicious death. In the United States, bereaved relatives would often turn to PIs to improve the chances of solving murders.

The work of English private investigators was dominated by divorce cases. They were often hired to verify insurance claims concerning fake burglaries and bogus accidents. They would often have to shadow claimants, uncover duplicate bank books, and find out if they had been in contact with known fences ("receivers"). Other PI work included investigating theft, dealing with blackmail, checking business reputations, tracing missing persons, security work, and escorting celebrities. The British star system was comparatively new in the 1920s but theaters, record companies, and celebrities themselves made discreet but increasing use of private investigators.

Ronald Leach of Leach's Detective Bureau pioneered the use of special equipment, even before the police. While the hardware was crude by modern standards it was reasonably effective. He used microphones to trap blackmailers, for instance, and movie cameras to prove theft.

## Women Private Investigators

The story of women detectives starts in 1856 when Kate Warne joined Pinkerton's in America. Female agents worked as hard and efficiently as men, but usually did little surveillance work since a woman leaning up against a wall for hours drew unwanted attention. They tended to dress well and take a sociable, low key approach and were rarely suspected of being PIs.

It was not uncommon to find women working for British private investigation agencies after WW1. A typical example was Mrs. May Grenhalgh who from 1919 worked as a PI from her home in Walthamstow. She was tall, good looking, alert and confident, and had joined a detective agency after a friend asked her to make some confidential inquiries on his behalf. She eventually opened her own business, usually doing divorce work. When this led her into unsavory or dangerous areas late at night she would inform the local police of what she was up to and carry a police whistle.

She had experience in amateur dramatics and had a collection of wigs, old ladies shawls, reversible coats, and spectacles for use on surveillance. She would disguise herself as a welfare worker, canvasser, tramp, housekeeper,

political agitator, or old woman.

## The Judicial System

When someone is arrested the seriousness of their crime determines in what court their case is heard. Minor crimes, called *summary offenses*, are dealt with in a Magistrates Court before a local Justice of the Peace known as a magistrate. Major crimes, called *indictable offenses*, such as rape or treason, can only be tried in a Crown Court before a judge and jury. Hybrid crimes, such as theft, can be either minor or major offenses, and therefore go to Magistrates or Crown Court depending on the seriousness.

Magistrates are limited by the size of fines they can dispense but can submit a case to the Crown Court if the defendant, prosecution, or magistrate wishes. Bow Street is England's premiere Magistrates Court and the Old Bailey is the foremost Crown Court. Both have four courtrooms and hear sessions in the morning and afternoon.

## Imprisonment

Social class has long had an impact on the prison system, which had three divisions of imprisonment.

The **first** division was a soft form of imprisonment intended for the gentry, who were used to having servants and whose crimes involved no real moral turpitude. It meant a prisoner could send out for meals, hire a servant for 6d a day (often from the lower class prisoners), receive visits from friends, and be away from the **riff-raff** in the Third Division.

The main difference between second and third division was that they were segregated, wore different color clothes, and were allowed varying amounts of visits and letters. Examples of people in second division were **erring** motorists from good backgrounds, a war hero fighting drugs, and an eighteen-year-old of doubtful sanity who had lain down in the path of an express train.

Notable prisons included Wormwood Scrubs in West London, Brixton Prison in South London, and Holloway women's prison in North London. Those found in a court of law to be dangerously insane were sent to Broadmoor Prison in the remote Berkshire countryside between the villages of Camberley and Crowthome. This grim Victorian institution was not founded to cure inmates, merely to lock them up.

# True Crimes!

## The Russell Baby Case

The case hit headlines when the Hon. John Russell sued his wife Christabel for divorce over the legitimacy of Geoffrey Russell as heir to the Barony of Amphil. The most costly and prolonged matrimonial action in an English court began in July 1922 and continued until June 1924, running up a bill of £10,000. Eventually, after appeal to the House of Lords, Geoffrey was declared legitimate.

The case revealed the extent to which lawyers were using private investigators in the early 1920s. At least eight PIs were officially employed by one side or the other during the case, and a further thirty unofficial private investigators were used by solicitors. There were round-the-clock vigils of witnesses and sometimes two or three sets of investigators would be trailing each other!

## Different Treatment for Different Classes

At the Spencer Hotel, Portman Street a fifteen-year-old pantry boy, Henry Jacoby, smashed the head of an elderly widow, Lady White, with a hammer in 1922. He told police tales inspired by pulp stories called 'Tuppenny Bloods' about creeping around the hotel after intruders. CID made him confess and he was convicted and hanged.

This coincided with the trial of Ronald True. True was convicted of murdering prostitute Gertrude Yates, having battered her with a rolling pin and then strangled her in her basement flat in Fulham, London. His extraordinary defense was that he had a double named "Ronald Trew" who went around committing petty thefts and frauds. True claimed Trew killed Miss Yates. The universal conclusion was "Not true. Not Trew. True." Due to a history of instability he was declared insane and sent to Broadmoor.

These two cases were thought to betray a class bias in legal treatment. True was upper middle class and had murdered a prostitute while working class Jacoby had murdered a lady.

## Crime of Passion

Frederick Bywaters ambushed and killed Percy Thompson as Thompson and his wife Edith returned home. It emerged that Frederick and Edith were lovers. Frederick said Edith was innocent, even though the pair had written letters discussing ways of murdering Percy. Although she was not technically guilty of the murder, both Edith and Frederick were charged, convicted, and executed for the offense. Was Edith hanged for her immorality rather than her guilt? —in 1926 a prison governor who expressed this view was charged under the Official Secrets Act.

## The Crumbles Murder

While private investigators were not normally involved in murder cases, the 1924 Crumbles Murder was an exception. Patrick Mahon's wife hired a PI to investigate him for a divorce. The investigator found a Waterloo station Left

Luggage ticket for a suitcase that contained bloodstained clothes and a butcher's knife. He instantly handed everything over to Scotland Yard and dropped his inquiries. Mahon was later found to have killed Emily Kaye, a typist whom he had made pregnant

and defrauded of her savings. He butchered and burnt her body in a seaside cottage at the Crumbles, Sussex, later confessing that his most horrifying moment was when the burning head opened its eyes in the heat of the fire! Mahon was convicted of murder and hanged.

## An Indecent Proposal

Hyde Park was the place to go if you wanted to be arrested for gross indecency. In 1925, Police Commissioner Sir Basil Thompson was arrested for violating public decency when he was seen exchanging money with a young woman, a Miss Thelma de Lava, in Hyde Park.

Then came the more serious case of the junior minister Sir Leo Chiozza Money and Miss Savidge. Miss Savidge was

seen merely conversing with the minister in Hyde Park and they were arrested for indecent behavior. They were acquitted but she complained about her treatment. Allegations were made in the House of Commons that police had bullied her for five hours and then tried to cover it up. Public outcry led to a female officer always having to be present when statements were taken from women.

## Body Bag

In the summer of 1927 a woman's butchered body was found in a trunk in Left Luggage at Charing Cross station. The pieces were wrapped in cloth which was embroidered with a small greyhound. This led to the Greyhound Hotel where a maid, Minnie Bonati, had disappeared. A taxi driver reported taking a man with a trunk to Charing Cross from an office in Rochester Row. The tenant, Mr. John Robinson, had left a waste paper basket containing a bloodstained match.

Robinson claimed that Bonati had tried to extort money from him and fell, striking her head when she attacked him. Renowned pathologist Bernard Spilsbury established that Minnie was suffocated as well as struck from behind. Robinson was convicted and hanged in August.

## Dead Man's Eyes

On 27 September 1927, Police Constable Gutteridge was found shot dead with 2 bullet holes in his left cheek and his eyes shot out. Evidently the killer believed the legend that a dead man's eyes bore the reflection of his killer. The marks were found nearby and a pair of vicious criminals, Guy Browne and William Kennedy, were traced to Brixton, South London. They were known to carry firearms and were readily prepared to kill, typifying a new kind of lawlessness which marked post-WWI years.

## Drug Abuse

In 1924, West End nightclubs saw an increase in drug taking. Two girls, Billie Carlton, an actress, and Freda Kempton a dance instructor, who were regular visitors to the 43 Club (see Recreation, page 66) died of overdoses. They had been introduced to cocaine by Brilliant Chang, whose Chinese name was Chan Nan. He owned an opium den in Limehouse, and imported cocaine in bulk and sold it to young women at nightclubs. The police raided Chang's Limehouse premises but he got a mere 18 month prison sentence.



# The Poor

**F**ACILITIES FOR the destitute, sick, and insane were antiquated. Welfare handouts were administered by the Poor Law Board of Guardians, of which there were twenty-seven in London. Poor relief offered a **spartan** and subsistence form of welfare and was administered in a punitive way. Families were broken up. Often mothers were only offered poor law relief if they sent their children to the orphanage. The poorest widows, unmarried mothers, chronically sick, orphans, and the insane and disabled were incarcerated in workhouses where they were subject to a harsh regime that had changed little since Dickens' time. Able-bodied men were given welfare money and could live with their families if they completed a labor test, eight hours grueling manual work such as stone breaking, to prove they were fit for work.

Everything was means tested. Benefits could vary from area to area depending on the political views of the council and the money they had available. Pensions were about 10s a week, which only allowed a bread and margarine diet.

The poor, homeless, sick, and insane who could not afford to take care of themselves were forced into workhouses. The workhouse was intended as a deterrent to put off the work-shy. It was a symbol of failure, its grim architecture reinforcing the feeling of shame. Local rates (taxes) paid for it, and unemployment in the 1920s totally swamped the system. Thousands found themselves at the mercy of the Poor Law for the first time. This system survived until the 1930s.

The homeless had an even tougher time and Victorian conditions remained in many institutions. By the late 19th century people like Lord **Rowton** and the Salvation Army had opened hostels, which provided a bed in exchange for listening to a religious sermon, which continued into the 1920s. Many tramps preferred sleeping rough under the railway arches by **Charing Cross Station**. **George Orwell** tried living as a vagrant in the late 1920s and wrote *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933) about his experiences. **W H Davies** also wrote numerous books about life as a tramp. To generate income, tramps would become organ-grinders, buskers, or match-box sellers. They also had a secret code,

chalk symbols to mark which houses were charitable. The more literate often wrote well-researched begging letters to institutions or wealthy individuals. An investigator might receive such a letter or be hired by another recipient to investigate why someone knows so much about them.

**WW1** went some way to changing people's attitudes and many wanted to help the working class who had fought for their country. The Labour party won control of places like Poplar, Bethnal Green, and Bermondsey and tried to create a municipal utopia through initiatives like the 1920s mission to 'Beautify Bermondsey'. But all this cost money and their early 1920s zeal often forced local authorities, such as Poplar, to contravene Government directives, thereby breaking the law. See Politics, page 59.

Eventually, in 1929, the central government began to take away the Poor Law Board's powers and created a new system of public assistance committees. The Local Government Act disbanded Poor Law Unions and Boards of Guardians but this was intended more to close the loopholes that allowed the Little Moscows like Poplar to flourish than to help the poor.

New investigations of poverty were prompted. Middle class people donned working garb and entered an almost alien culture to have a look. They saw loathsome courts, rat infested rooms, pawn shops, and malnutrition. **Joan Conquest** condemned the London slums as "hotbeds of immorality producing the social wreckage of crime, child battering, illegitimacy, and brutalization." The rediscovery of poverty was taken up in the late 1920s and 1930s by the BBC and newspapers making special investigations exposing conditions in London slums.

**Mass Observation** (see Occupations, page 12) was set up by **Charles Madge** and **Tom Harrison**. Both had studied anthropology and used an anthropological approach to capture minute details of peoples' lives. They organized a body of observers, mostly volunteers, to go into pubs, markets, workplaces, and labor exchanges. They recorded what they saw, who they met, and what they said in a diary on the 12th day of each month. Some went to absurd lengths, verging on voyeurism, in pursuit of facts. They watched through peoples' windows and

even infiltrated weird cults and religious groups to record what went on there—obvious lead-ins for adventures.

# Hospitals, Care

**I**N THE 1920s, London was not a good place in which to fall ill. Tuberculosis (known as **consumption**) was rife and largely went untreated unless the patient could afford to go to a private clinic, preferably Swiss. Fashionable medical opinion blamed adenoids, tonsils, or bad teeth for almost any ailment above the chest and constipation for anything wrong below it. **Beecham's Pills** or **Syrup of Figs** were the generally prescribed panaceas. **Chloroform** and ether were the only anesthetics, blood transfusions were still primitive, and in some hospitals leeches were still used!

If you were mentally ill, things were even worse. Although psychoanalysis was slowly becoming available in America, British doctors were far too old-fashioned for that Freudian emphasis on sex. Asylums were places where lunatics were locked away to protect society. They could be sent there by relatives under the diagnosis of a doctor, though two doctors were required for longer confinements. Criminals could also be certified insane during trials.

There was no National Health Service in Britain until the 1940s, though after 1922 a National Insurance Scheme required those in work to pay contributions entitling them to free use of a general practitioner. Otherwise, the poor had to rely on Voluntary Hospitals. These originally paid no salary to doctors but gave them status and let them earn fees from pupils and practice their skills on the poor before treating paying patients. Doctors trying to develop new cures or to prove a thesis would use charity patients as guinea pigs. An interesting or unusual case was more likely to be awarded a charity bed than a common ailment, as doctors wanted to learn from the interesting case.

As a last resort medical care was available via the Poor Law, by doctors appointed by the Poor Law Guardians. Many who should have been in hospital ended up in a workhouse where their conditions probably went untreated.

Things were better if you had money and could see a consultant doctor in

private practice in Harley Street. If you were too ill to be treated at home you could become a paying patient in a hospital's private wing where treatment was almost certainly better than in charity wards.

There were some improvements in health care in the 1920s. Children began to receive free school milk, health checkups and, in Bermondsey, solarium sessions because it was believed that pea soup fog and densely packed housing prevented them from getting enough sunlight. In 1926 the Labour council opened a Sun Cure Institute, the first municipal solarium in Britain.

A year later, public baths opened, including two swimming pools, 126 private baths, and a Turkish and Russian vapor bath. Very few homes in the area had baths. Peckham Health Centre was set up by two radical doctors, George Scott Williamson and Innes Pearse, in 1926 with the then novel idea of preventing illness rather than just curing it.

The big discovery of the decade was penicillin, which was first noticed accidentally growing in a petri dish sitting on a window sill at St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington, by Alexander Fleming in 1927.

One of the major effects that the Great War had on illness was the increase in VD. One in five soldiers returning from France had contracted syphilis, which in its final stages caused madness, paralysis, and death. Free treatment for VD was the sole innovation for welfare caused

directly by the war. After 1917, troops were offered condoms to halt its spread. Contraceptives had previously been illegal but were rapidly legalized. Perhaps because of this the birth rate fell during the 1920s.

Shell shock was the other special legacy of WWI. This was psychological collapse due to despair and the futility of trench warfare rather than by the battering of artillery, as 'shell shock' suggests.

St. Bartholomew's Hospital (Barts) in Smithfield is the oldest London hospital. It was originally attached to a medieval monastery and is still on the same site. A curious legend surrounds its formation, see City, page 17. Bart's is renowned for its excellent research facilities and pathology labs.

St. Mary Bethlehem (Bethlem) insane asylum was founded in 1247 at Moorfield. It became known as the infamous 'Bedlam'. In 1812 it moved to St. George's in Southwark and just prior to 1920 it moved again to rural West Wickham, south of London, and relatively successfully shook off its old reputation. The old building was left abandoned for some time.

St. Thomas's Hospital by the Houses of Parliament, Guy's Hospital near London Bridge, and the London Hospital in the East End were founded in the 18th century as charity hospitals and were still around in the 1920s. The Foundling Hospital, built to take in abandoned children, was in Bloomsbury. In the 1920s it was demolished despite local residents' protests, after London Univer-

sity found the Georgian building "insufficiently important" for its use!

Charing Cross, University College, Kings College, Royal Free, and St. Mary's all date from the 19th century. University College Hospital claims to have the finest chemical labs in the world. Specialist hospitals for ears, eyes, chest, and skin conditions were also founded during Victorian times. During the 1920s, specialist consultants at such institutions continued to have a high status and almost certainly ran separate private practices too.

## Recreation

AFTER THE WAR years everyone wanted to enjoy themselves. For the Bright Young Things life could be one long party and even the working classes had more leisure time.

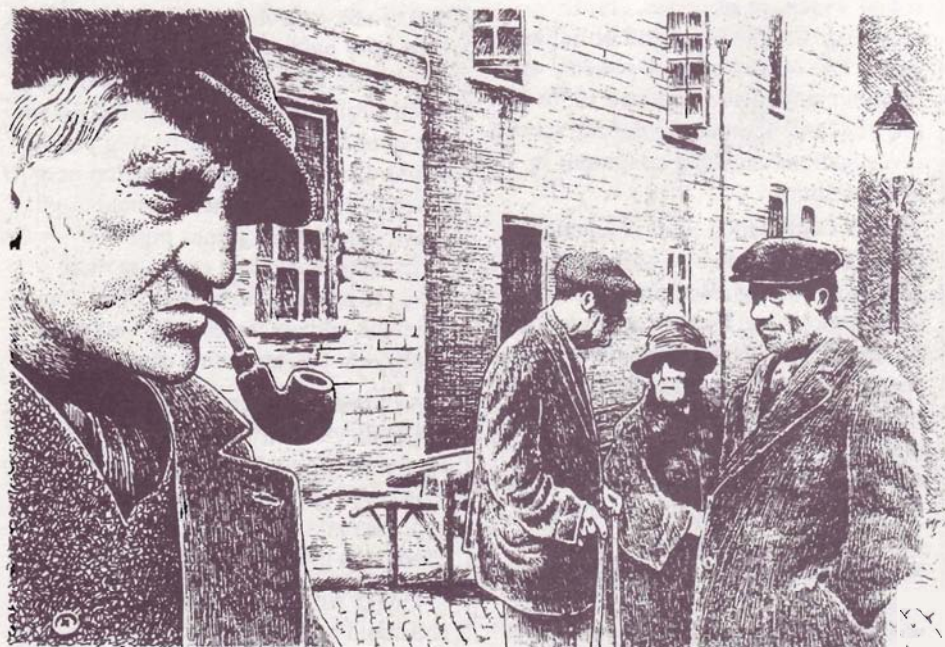
## Parties

The first cocktail party in England was supposedly held by Alec Waugh, brother of novelist Evelyn, at the Haverstock Hill studio of painter C.W. Nevins on 26 April 1924. The idea of drinks at 5:30 was so novel that only one person turned up. The next time Waugh invited thirty people to tea but gave them cocktails instead and they all got very drunk. Cocktail parties caught on.

Theme parties were the rage. There was a Russian vogue after a visit of the Russian Ballet and an Egyptian craze after the discovery of Tutankhamen. As **Vile Bodies** was to say, there were "masked parties, savage parties, Victorian parties, Greek parties, parties where one had to dress up as someone else, almost naked parties in St. John's Wood, parties in flats and studios and houses and hotels, in windmills and swimming pools". Someone held an "End of the World" party, which those with a little Mythos knowledge might have worried about attending.

## Dining Out

Cafe de Paris, Leicester Square, was one of many nightspots offering dinner, dancing, and cabaret. The dance floor was reached by descending a curving staircase in view of the other diners. It was important to make an impressive entrance and exit. Suit and black tie were required. Tables and chairs were placed around the edge of the dance floor and



between courses couples got up to dance to the music of Jack Hams and his band. An evening's dinner and entertainment cost £5. Cabaret artists were sophisticated and fashionable dancers, singers, and comedians.

The Savoy, The Grosvenor, and The Berkeley were also popular places for dining out and dancing.

## Nightclubs

The real nightclubs were the places where one could dance until dawn, long after the Cafe de Paris had closed. They were the haunt of the Bright Young Things, socialites, and stars—the Prince of Wales was often seen at the Kit-Cat. Only the wealthy could afford their prices—champagne which normally cost 12s 6d would be £2 in a nightclub.

The Home Secretary, Sir William Joynson-Hicks (known as Jix) had a personal crusade to stamp out the vices he was sure went on at such places. He used the Defense of the Realm Act (DORA), passed during the war to arrest suspicious persons, to raid night clubs. Under the 1921 Licensing Act drinking in public was illegal after 11pm except in members-only clubs. Although this was hardly as bad as Prohibition, the Bright Young Things were determined to ignore it.

Nightclubs dutifully introduced members-only rules, but membership requirements were lax. The police were unimpressed and regularly raided them though the list of arrested patrons often read like *Who's Who*. For such people magistrate court fines were little more than annoying.

Mrs. Kate Meyrick ran 'The 43' at 43 Gerrard Street and The Silver Slipper in Regent Street with its glass dance floor. In 1924 she was imprisoned for six months when Brilliant Chang, who operated his dope gang through The 43, was arrested. Her distinguished clientele—the Crown Prince of Sweden, Prince Nicolas of Romania, Michael Arlen, Tallulah Bankhead, and Jack Buchanan—supported her and she continued to open nightclubs after her release.

London had many other popular nightclubs, though the fashionable ones changed frequently. The dimly-lit, romantic Florida was popular with debutantes and had telephones for discreet table-to-table chats. The Four Hundred was very dark and thus popular

for clandestine meetings. Others included The Monsignor, The Embassy, and The Nest.

## The Gargoyle Club

The Gargoyle Club was a unique blend of club and nightclub which catered for the artistic, the intellectual, and the decadent. Bizarrely even for the 1920s, it had virtually no rules and encouraged people to express themselves freely.

It was founded in Soho in 1925 by David Tennant, a handsome Cambridge graduate, from a wealthy, artistic, and slightly incestuous family. The club took its name from the carved wooden gargoyles which decorated its rooms. It had a roof garden, Tudor style kitchen, and a bar serving traditional real ales. Mirrored mosaics around the dance floor were inspired by club member Henri Matisse. Beneath this floor were private apartments and extensive wine cellars. Reinforced by previous owners to withstand heavy machinery, the building survived a nearby bomb explosion in WW2.

Membership was exclusive but highly eclectic, tolerant of age, class, and sex. The attitudes its patrons respected were cynicism, daring, and ruthlessness. By day it was a luncheon club patronized by politicians, distinguished servants of state, literati, nobility, and the occasional spy. At night it became a cosmopolitan arena for social, sexual, and intellectual challenge.

The Gargoyle became the place where London's bohemia met, and it encouraged the DAPs—Deserving Artistic

Poor—some of whom were given free membership. Lunch time food at cost price, about 3s, was introduced to help them. By the late 1920s more intellectuals than Bright Young People met at Gargoyle, people like H.G. Wells and Bertrand Russell. To demonstrate that sexuality was linked to creativity, Malinowski, having just written a book called *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*, performed a primitive sex dance there. Aleister Crowley, Tallulah Bankhead, and controversial 1920s sculptor Epstein all frequented the Gargoyle, as did Matthew Pritchard.

Pritchard was English, a Byzantine scholar, philosopher, and former custodian of a small museum in America. After being dismissed for selling all the exhibits except one Byzantine head, he returned to England and formed a fashionable cult that used the Gargoyle as a recruiting ground.

Having studied metaphysical philosophy with Gurdjieff at Fontainebleau (see Occult, page 72), Pritchard realized there was money to be made from people he could straighten out their lives. He taught his followers Byzantinism and to concentrate on the possible, banishing sentimentality. He had a bag of reproduction Byzantine coins and handed one to any prospective convert. David Tennant himself accepted the Byzantine coin and became a disciple.

## Dances

For the idle rich who wanted to dance all day as well as all night there were "thé dansant". The Savoy charged 5s a head to



fritter away the afternoon. Tea, sandwiches, and cakes were served and clothes were formal. The term *gigolo* came into being at that time for young men who would partner unattached ladies, often elderly spinsters, at tea dances for pay. Dances included anything from fox-hots and waltzes to the exotic tango and the charleston.

The downmarket alternative to expensive nightclubs was the **Palais de Dance**. The first one in London was the **Hammersmith Palais** which opened in 1919 with an American Dixieland band. It had a sprung dance floor and promenades for non-dancers. Bouncers broke up smoochers, turned out under-age girls, and confiscated smuggled-in alcohol.

## Theater-Going

Revue, comedies, and light-hearted satires by people like Noel Coward and Cole Porter were the theatrical fashion. People wanted spectacle and laughter but did not want to think much beyond poking fun at *Mad Dogs and Englishmen*. Performances started at around 8:30 and Piccadilly Circus would become congested with theater-goers' cars.

"London Calling", named after the BBC's call-sign, was a popular revue by Andre Charlot at the Duke of York, with music and lyrics by Noel Coward. In the heat wave of 1921 *The Co-optimists*, a sophisticated seaside-style concert ran at the Royalty Theatre for 500 performances and was revived in 1927. In 1925 *No, No Nanette* opened at the Palace with Cole Porter's song 'Tea for Two'.

There were some serious plays. Sheniff's *Journey's End* in 1929 dealt with the Great War. Noel Coward's *The Vortex* about how drug taking affected a family, shocked audiences at the Everyman in Hampstead in 1924.

Music hall productions declined during the 1920s but was not dead yet. The Palladium, the Holborn Empire, the Metropolitan in Edgware Road, the Coliseum, and the Windmill all remained popular.

## Grand Guignol

Grand Guignol was an experimental form of theater intended to shock. It started in France, but in the 1920s was brought to London. Impresario **José Levy** took over the Little Theatre in the **Adelphi**, and hired nurses to tend the expected casualties. Advertising posters showed people collapsing from fright. A.B. Walkley, Times drama critic, described it as "theatrical experiment, of seeing how far you can go, what shocks the public can stand and what it cannot... adventurously exploring the unknown".

Sybil Thorndike headed the cast. Plays involved cannibalism, sadism, a horrific waxwork museum in which a prostitute terrifies a client to death, and an army regiment being sent mad and having to be shot down like dogs after a switched inoculation serum.

The play *The Old Woman* caused the biggest stir. It featured a madhouse in which three old women gouge a girl's eyes out with knitting needles. Theatergoers rushed out to be sick in the foyer. Theater critics said it was going too far and Londoners rejected the Theatre of Cruelty after only one season. Keepers could, of course, decide that the horrors of the Grand Guignol were not just over-acting and stage blood.

## Cinema

Cinema was the most popular form of entertainment. Tickets were cheap, costing about 6d, and new cinemas opened up all over London. Flea-pits were out and luxurious super-cinemas like the Tivoli in the Strand, the Capitol in Haymarket, **Astoria** in **Charing Cross**, and the Regal at Marble Arch were built. They were **gaudy** buildings of chrome and gilt with huge foyers, plush carpets, chandeliers, and padded seats.

Most films came **from** Hollywood. Harold Lloyd, Pearl White of *The Perils of Pauline* and heart-throb Rudolf Valentino were equally popular on both sides of the Atlantic. London Cockney Charlie Chaplin went to America to achieve fame.

Snobs considered cinema to be vulgar and rife places for infections to spread.

Letters to the *Times* complained that American films kindled unbridled sexual desire and the cinemas' darkness offered moral temptations. London County Council agreed and brought in the "U" certificate to indicate which films were suitable to be seen by the young and impressionable.

## Pubs

British pubs are an institution and the 'local' (the pub nearest to a person's home) is a good place for investigators to buy a man a drink and perhaps hear some relevant gossip. The traditional working class Londoner's drink is a bitter, which is served at room temperature. East End pubs were rough-and-ready male domains. A woman drinking in one would have been looked down upon.

Pubs on the outskirts of London, however, were more family-orientated. Orders might be taken by waiters at the table instead of at the bar. Pubs were open at lunch time and in the evening until 11pm.

## Tea Rooms

Tea rooms, such as J Lyons tea shops and Corner Houses, were the acceptable places for women to socialize or meet friends after work. By 1920 Lyons had 250 tea shops nationally. The three London Corner Houses could seat up to 3000 people and those on modest incomes could enjoy an evening out with live music, good food, and a degree of luxury. Lyons' waitresses, nicknamed Nippies, were considered the perfect public servants.

## Music

Musical scores were sold to be played on the home piano. Records were made for the wind-up gramophone. Certain songs conjured nostalgic memories of good-times had. Here are some selected hits during the 1920s:

1920	Avalon
1921	Three O'clock in the Morning
1922	Chicago
1923	Who's Sorry Now
1924	Fascinating Rhythm It Had to Be You
1925	Show Me the Way to Go Home
1926	Bye Bye Blackbird Black Bottom
1927	Ain't She Sweet
1928	I Can't Give You Anything But Love Baby
1929	Tip-Toe Through the Tulips



## Radio

There were no commercial stations in Britain during the 1920s. The British Broadcasting Company was formed in 1922 with an exclusive license and soon became a national institution. John Reith, a Scottish puritan, became its first Director General and broadcast only what he thought people ought to hear. He used the BBC's monopoly to promote Christian morality and expected his employees to do the same. Announcers wore evening dress and were sacked at the slightest hint of improper behavior.

They broadcast from London studios at Savoy Hill under the name 2LO with the call-sign "London Calling". Programs were aimed at middle-of-the-road British tastes. Regular news bulletins took the form of short, impartial summaries as supplied by press agencies. Higher culture was encouraged with classical church music, concerts, and orchestras. In 1924 a cellist was broadcast playing in a wood to the accompaniment of a nightingale. The British loved it.

During the 1926 General Strike the BBC news was virtually the only source of information in the capital and its factual, unbiased reports were a calming influence. In 1926 the BBC became the British Broadcasting Corporation by Royal Charter.

## Newspapers

The *Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, and the *Morning Post* were the main heavy-weight newspapers of the 1920s.

The *Times* was the accepted voice of Britain, with an international reputation. Its front pages contained classified ads in which investigators could find useful sources of intrigue. Political news dominated but there were also book and theater reviews. In 1922 circulation was over 200,000 and it cost 1½d.

The conservative *Morning Post* gradually lost circulation to the *Daily Telegraph*, which was popular for publishing knowledgeable articles by experts. Both reduced their price to 1d. The *Daily Mail* appealed to social climbers. It carried articles on the behavior of the wealthy, women's fashions, and the home. It was very successful, largely due to popular promotion gimmicks. The only pro-Labor mass-circulation paper was the *Daily Herald* which started in 1929. London's main local papers were the

*Evening Standard*, which came out in various editions from early afternoon, and the *London Illustrated News*.

## Literature

Just after the war most people wanted to read books which were light-hearted or exciting. By the late 1920s, disillusionment with post-war high hopes prompted reading to become more serious. Society dinner party talk often discussed the latest books, though people who found the great works of literature beyond them relied on newspaper book reviews.

The established view of culture was challenged in *The Outline of History* by H.G. Wells. Many writers conveyed a doleful message that civilization was falling and sought answers in travel or religion. T.S. Eliot traveled to London from Missouri, Joyce lived in Trieste and Paris, D.H. Lawrence ran around the world after strange gods, T.E. Lawrence tried to escape his fame by becoming an airman. Aldous Huxley ended up going to California.

Even experimental books such as *Finnegan's Wake* by James Joyce with its gibberish words sold well. New books cost about 7s 6d and the upper classes preferred to buy them, fearing that those in public libraries could pass on infection. Popular books in the 1920s include:

*My Man Jeeves*, P.G. Wodehouse.

*The Green Hat*, Michael Arlen.

*A Passage to India*, E.M. Forster.

*Chrome Yellow*, Aldous Huxley.

*Bulldog Drummond*, 'Sapper'.

*Lady Into Fox*, David Garnett.

*The Wasteland*, T.S. Eliot.

*Ulysses*, James Joyce (banned in Britain, published in Paris).

*Grand Hotel*, Vicki Baum.

*Revolt in the Desert*, T.E. Lawrence (an abridgment of *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* privately published the previous year).

The modern woman in *Vogue* magazine.



*All Quiet on the Western Front*, Erich Maria Remarque.

*A Farewell to Arms*, Ernest Hemingway.

*Goodbye to All That*, Robert Graves.

*Lady Chatterley's Lover*, D.H. Lawrence (published privately in Italy).

*Mrs Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf.

*Vile Bodies*, Evelyn Waugh.

## Fun and games

Games and toys became fashionable during the 1920s, especially charades, Mah Jong from China, and Monopoly from America.

Paper chases became a craze, especially at schools like Rugby where younger boys—'fags'—were used as 'hares' and given ten minutes to start laying a paper trail. The Thames Rowing Club and other middle aged men who thought it was good exercise also took to the sport.

Bright Young Things would race off in cars following Treasure Hunt clues to some predetermined place, usually for a wild party. This would often be somewhere daring or out of the way. See Transport, page 58.

In Scavenger Hunts, competitors would be given a list of items and the person or group of people who obtained the most in a certain time won. The list usually contained items which were rare, or dangerous or illegal to retrieve, and the risk involved was the game's main attraction. A scenario idea could involve a Scavenger Hunt with a list containing a Mythos item.

# Sport

**P**LAYING AND watching sport has always been an essential part of British social life, especially football and cricket. The National Playing Fields Association, founded in 1927, encouraged the national obsession by urging local authorities to create games pitches in local parks.

## Cricket

There is no tradition quite so utterly English as Sunday afternoon cricket on the village green with its slow pace and gentlemanly rules. Americans, however, often find the game mystifying.

Cricket teams contained both amateurs and professionals but there was a division of status between the two. The Gentlemen, as the amateurs were called, had their initials printed before their surnames on the score cards while the Players, or professionals, had them after. A Player was not considered suitable as captain of a side unless there was no amateur. Gentlemen versus Players matches played each season perpetuated such differences.

London's main cricket grounds are Lord's, east of Regent's Park, and The Oval in South London. Lord's is the home of the Marylebone Cricket Club (the MCC). It allowed no women members and had a strict jacket and tie dress code in the 1920s. In 1903 the

MCC assumed responsibility for organizing and financing official English cricket tours abroad. In 1909 England, Australia, and South Africa also founded the Imperial Cricket Conference at Lords.

The greatest English cricketers were Frank Woolley, Wilfred Rhodes, and Jack Hobbs. Hobbs scored 100 centuries by 1923 and was the most prolific run scorer ever. Don Bradman, Australia's greatest cricketer, began his international career in 1928. In all first class games he averaged 95.14 runs in nearly 400 innings.

The annual national cricket competition is the County Championship. In the 1920s and 1930s it was dominated by Yorkshire, winning twelve times, and Lancashire, winning five.

From the English point of view, the most important international competition was the Ashes between England and Australia. The Ashes are said to be the remains of the stumps symbolically burnt in 1882 when Australia first defeated England in an international match. Whenever the two countries play each other, the Ashes are the prize. England recaptured them in 1926 for the first time in 14 years, in the final Test Match at the Oval after all previous matches had been drawn.

## Football

While cricket is played in the summer, football is a winter sport and playing or spectating on a Saturday afternoon was *the* working class English past-time. Association Football was professional, making no pretensions otherwise, and players were bought and sold for up to thousands of pounds. English Football is broken into Divisions, with the best teams from across the country playing in the First division and so on down to the Fourth. The highlight of the football year is the Football Association Cup, a knockout event open to all teams, irrespective of division.



Jack Hobbs, Cricketer.

London has several soccer clubs including Arsenal (who were the Football League First Division Champions more times than any other team between the wars), Tottenham Hotspur (known as Spurs), West Ham United, Chelsea, Fulham, and Queen's Park Rangers. Fans fervently support their local club.

The F.A. Cup Final moved to Wembley Stadium in 1923, a year before the Empire Exhibition. It nearly ended in disaster when 200,000 people flocked to the 100,000 capacity stadium. The match was almost abandoned until PC George Stanley mounted a white horse and patiently coaxed the fans back off the field so play could begin. Bolton Wanderers won 2-1.

## Tennis

Tennis really began to take off in the 1920s. The world's most famous tennis tournament is the Lawn tennis championships at Wimbledon. It is a middle to upper class sport and the two-week competition in June formed an important part of the social season.

William Tilden was the first American to win the premier men's singles title in 1920 and regained it in 1921. Suzanne Lenglen won the women's singles 1919-23 and caused a stir by discarding conventional clothes and wearing a short pleated skirt and short sleeved vest.

## Other Sports

The Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race down the Thames from Putney to Mortlake is a high point of the spring social calendar. Thousands line the route to watch the two coxed crews of eight row.

Billiards and snooker were popular indoor pastimes but had a bad reputation and proficiency in them was seen to signal a misspent youth. The incomparable Joe Davis won his snooker championship in 1927 and continued to win it for many years to come. Leicester Square held the most prestigious billiards site.

While London had no horse racing courses there were many just outside. The two most important races were the Derby, a flat race, and the Grand National, a steeplechase. In 1928 the Tote was introduced in England and legalized by the Racecourse Betting Act of the same year.

Greyhound and dirt track racing both became popular in the late 1920s at the White City and Wembley Stadium courses. Both were nighttime sports illuminated by arc lamps.

Just as in America, the working classes saw boxing as a way to achieve success. Star-studded bouts took place at Covent Garden in the early 1920s and later at the Stadium Club at Holborn.

Rugby was played by both amateur and professional clubs. It gained popularity after the war with games between the three armed services. In 1920 the New Zealand All Blacks began a series of meetings to establish who was the supreme nation in the rugby-playing world. In 1924 they toured England undefeated. Twickenham was the center for rugby in London and after matches players could be seen celebrating at London's pubs and nightclubs into the small hours.

# Clubs

**M**OST WEALTHY men in 1920s London belonged to a club and the clubs they joined said something about what they were like. There were over a hundred different clubs situated around Pall Mall and St. James's.

Clubs were considered a home from home, somewhere to eat, snooze, play bridge, or take someone for private discussions. They were the network for establishment intrigues, where men of the world met to discuss the world's secrets, and many useful contacts could be made. Subscriptions were expensive, often about £100 per year. For game purposes, membership of a club should normally only be open to investigators with a high credit rating, at least 50%.

Few had women members, though women could sometimes be entertained as guests. There were also some women's clubs for female graduates or wealthy debutantes. These included the University Women's Club, the Lyceum, the Ladies' Army and Navy, the Women's Press Club, and the Ladies' Carlton. All the clubs mentioned below are gentlemen's clubs.

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## The American Club

95 Piccadilly. Founded in 1918 for Americans in London. Americans on official government business were automatically given membership. It was strictly men only, though there was a monthly ladies' night.

## The Army and Navy Club

36 Pall Mall. This general military club was nicknamed 'the Rag'. There is supposed to be a secret passage running from the Army and Navy Club under Green Park to Buckingham Palace.

## The Athenaeum

107 Pall Mall, but always given as Waterloo Place. The Athenaeum's members are renowned intellectuals "known for their scientific and literary attainments, artists of eminence, and noblemen and gentlemen distinguished as liberal patrons of science, literature or the arts". The President of the Royal Society and other learned institutions are customarily invited to join. Its excellent library contains numerous rare books including an unabridged edition of *The Golden Bough*.

## The Bath Club

34 Dover Street. This was formed for upper class athletes who did not want to swim in public baths. P.G. Wodehouse based his fictitious Drones Club on it.

## Brooks's

60 St. James's Street. Brooks's is an elegant Regency style club with a country house atmosphere. By the 1920s it was a famous Liberal political club.

## Buck's

18 Clifford Street. The only London club founded after WW1, its members were upper class, wealthy young men who wanted to enjoy themselves. It held annual weekends at Le Touquet, a club tent at Ascot, and other sporting events.

## The Club

94 Pall Mall until 1940. At this famous

Conservative political club the Tories reached their decision to stop supporting Lloyd George's coalition government in 1922.

## The Eccentric Club

9 Ryder Street. Most of its members were connected with theater and music hall and some were decidedly eccentric. Lord Lonsdale, known as the 'Yellow Earl', was president in the 1920s. The club has a clock in the bar which moves backwards.

## The Garrick Club

15 Garrick Street. The Garrick is even more of an actors' club. Women are allowed in as guests and it has a romantic atmosphere.

## The Oriental Club

18 Hanover Square. Founded in 1824 for gentlemen returning from the East. Naturally it is full of people with connections to India and the Far East.

## The Press Club

St. Bride's House, Salisbury Square. This moved to Fleet Street after a fire destroyed its old premises in 1914. Journalists and newspaper staff drink there after putting their papers to bed. It has a unique collection of newspapers. Regular social functions here during the 1920s had guests from Chaplin to Churchill.

## The Reform Club

104 Pall Mall. The starting point for Jules Verne's Phileas Fogg in *Around the World in 80 Days*. The infamous spy Guy Burgess was once a member.

## The St. Stephen's Club

1 Bridge Street. A Conservative politicians' club in the shadow of Big Ben, next to Scotland Yard. It has a tunnel to the Houses of Parliament.

## The Savage Club

6 Adelphi Terrace. This was formed by Victorian war correspondent George Augustus Sala and named after a disreputable 17th century actor, Richard Savage, who killed a man in a brawl and was imprisoned for debt. Members are writers, artists, and theatrical performers and do not have to be so refined as members of some clubs. The Ghost Club sometimes met at the Savage; see Occult, page 72.

## The Savile Club

69 Brook Street. The Savile's membership lies somewhere between the

Athenaeum and the Savage and includes business men, publishers, and literary men. It was once said that no one can get in unless he is an atheist or has written a book. It moved from Piccadilly to its current location in 1927. Popular raconteurs gain large audiences in front of the fire. This could be used as the start of a scenario or as a denouement.

### **Travellers<sup>s</sup> Club**

106 Pall Mall. Members have to have traveled five hundred miles from London. It has newspapers in every language. There have been two suicides there, both shot themselves in the billiards room. One had lived in Japan and supposedly acquired "a characteristic indifference to life".

### **The United Service Club**

116 Pall Mall. Ian Fleming called it 'that greatest of all services clubs in the world'. In 1921, provision was made for entertainment of ladies.

### **The United University Club**

71-77 Pall Mall. This was founded for graduates, mainly from Oxford or Cambridge. Women graduates could become associate members, as could wives and daughters of male members, but many preferred to join the University Women's Club. Its library contains a large number of valuable books.

### **White's**

37 St. James's Street. White's is the oldest and most famous London club. White's Chocolate House was founded in 1693 and within it an 'inner club' formed that later became White's. Evelyn Waugh was a member.

## **Fictional Clubs**

### **The Egotists Club**

Lord Peter Wimsey's club. It was very sociable and not particularly exclusive, though members were expected to pass tests of good taste. One distinguished explorer was barred because he smoked pungent cigars with fine port.

### **The Diogenes Club**

Mycroft Holmes was a member of this club for 'unclubbable men'. No speaking was allowed inside except in the strangers room for visitors.

### **The London Guidebook**

# **Occult London**

## **Organizations for Occult Study**

### **College of Psychic Studies**

Queensberry Place, Kensington. Founded in 1884 as the London Spiritualist Alliance by Rev. Stainton Moses and Alfred Russel Wallace, it later became the College of Psychic Studies. It encourages members to conduct psychic research while holding their own views and reaching their own conclusions. It holds lectures and study courses, has library of over 11,000 books and issues a quarterly journal called *Light*. For a time the Ghost Club met at its premises.

### **The Ghost Club**

The oldest organization associated with psychic matters. It was founded 1862 by several London gentlemen to unmask fake mediums and investigate psychic phenomenon. It virtually closed due to limited membership in 1916 but was revived in the 1930s by Harry Price. The *New York Times* described it as 'the place where skeptics and spiritualists, mediums and materialists meet on neutral ground'. It met at the Savage Club and the College of Psychic Studies.

### **The Society for Psychical Research**

Deans Yard, Westminster. Founded in 1882 by three Cambridge dons 'to examine without prejudice or prepossession and in a scientific spirit those faculties of man, real or supposed, which appear to be inexplicable on any generally recognized hypotheses'. It encourages scientific research into paranormal phenomena.

It has an extensive library. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was a member as have been several men from the Royal Society, Britain's premiere scientific institution. Around the 1920s it was wracked by internal strife as members tried to debunk each other. Membership costs twenty guineas and is open to anyone interested in this field.

### **The Spiritual Evidence Society of Great Britain**

Belgrave Square, Westminster. This is the largest spiritualist association in the world. It has a library, seance rooms and chapel, and runs seances and meetings.

## **Cults, Believers**

### **The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn**

This magical secret society was possibly one of the few 'repositories of magical knowledge' in the West in modern times. It was founded in England in 1887 by three Rosicrucians and had eleven degrees of members divided into three groups. The original members were Dr. William Woodman, a supreme magus of the Rosicrucian Society, Dr. Wynn Westcott a London coroner, and Samuel Liddell Mathers—an occultist who translated the *Key of Solomon*. Aleister Crowley took over from Mathers in 1900 as its head but broke away in 1905 to form his own society. The Golden Dawn was largely defunct by the 1920s, having splintered into several groups. The most important of these fragments was the Stella Matutina, which kept its activities even more secret than had the Golden Dawn. Many of its former members were still active in occult circles. For more information see *Cthulhu* by *Gaslight* and *The Keeper's Compendium*.

### **The Theosophical Society**

The Theosophical Society was most active during the late 19th century (see *Cthulhu* by *Gaslight*) but its influence was still felt in the 1920s.

### **CouC**

Emile Coué, French apothecary turned psychotherapist, came to Britain shortly after WW1 to popularize his cult of healing by autosuggestion. People had to close their eyes and say twenty times 'Every day and in every way I am getting better and better'. Another recommended mantra was 'It will soon be over', to be repeated over and over in times of stress or trouble. Coué did numerous London demonstrations, including one at Eton College, where he hypnotized school boys, and another among blind soldiers at St. Dunstan's (but he did not offer to restore their sight).

### **Eurhythmics**

The Dalcroze eurhythmical cult came to Britain from Saxony in the early 1920s and was especially popular with young women. The system was originally designed to correct faults in rhythm in music pupils. It taught people to rhythmically contract and relax their muscles in order to use the body more musically. Explanations tended to mysticism. Eurhythmics offered 'increased powers



of concentration, a muscular system quickly **responsive** to the brain and a strengthening of the automatic functions'

## George Gurdjieff

Gurdjieff founded an Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man at Fontainebleau, France, but the cult became popular in London. He claimed to have walked all the way to Tibet where he studied in a monastery and learnt the Oriental wisdom that formed the basis of his teaching. See also *The Gargoyle Club, Recreation*, page 66.

## Museums and Libraries of the Paranormal

### The Psychic Museum

2 Victoria Street. This was founded by Sir Arthur **Conan Doyle** in 1925. Its collection included apports, automatic scripts, musical instruments, pictures, photographs, relics from haunted houses, and other objects connected with psychic happenings.

### The Horniman Museum

Forest Hill. This museum of anthropology has an extensive collection relating to religion and magic from around the world. See also *South London*, page 50, and *The Keeper's Compendium*.

### The Cuming Museum

155-157 Walworth Road. This contains the Lovett Collection of items relating to London superstitions as well being a museum of the history of Southwark, South London's oldest borough.

Edward Lovett (1852-1933) was a city banker and also the founder of the **Folklore Society**. He was particularly interested in customs and folklore of the London's East End. Many older East End residents had been raised in the country and passed on old ways and superstitions. Although such beliefs were passing and their original forms or meanings were forgotten, Lovett found them to be surprisingly widespread, though he himself claimed not to believe in magic or the supernatural. He loved collecting stories from people and avidly browsed second hand shops and rag-and-bone yards for interesting items. By the end of his life his collection had virtually filled his large house in Croydon and his wife had left him because of it. He donated some items to the Cuming Museum from 1916. These included:

- Horse Brasses representing the symbols of the Roman sun and moon gods and worn on London cart-horses since Roman times as a warding from the 'evil eye'.
- The head of a 14th century magician's staff, discovered in the Tharnes, engraved with a symbol believed to be a powerful charm against demons.
- A rare reversed (left-handed) whelk shell carried to ward off danger during WW1.
- A pin cushion carried by sailors as a charm against drowning, acquired in the London Docks in 1917
- A mandrake root (actually black briony, as mandrake is very rare in England) which reputedly screams when uprooted and is a cure-all.
- A root called Tormentil which was burnt as a charm to recover lost lovers and was even sold by East End chemists for that purpose.
- A cow's heart stuffed with nails which was used as part of a magical ritual by a dairyman of Bethnal Green who believed another man had cursed his cows. After being shown this

talisman, the suspect immediately confessed to poisoning the animals.

## Ocultists

**Annie Besant** (1847-1933) — Former pupil of Madam Blavatsky, founder of the Theosophical Society, and its President. Her early life is chronicled in *Cthulhu* by *Gaslight*. She later formed the Order of the Star, which conducted occult experiments, and wrote books on black magic in Atlantis and reincarnation. She became involved in Indian politics, being elected president of the Indian National Congress from 1917-1923. In 1925 she proclaimed her student Jiddu Krishnamurti to be the new Messiah.

**Aleister Crowley** (1875-1947) — The most famous or infamous student of magic in recent times, though many considered him a self-deluded madman. Reviling the Christian god he took as his creed 'do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law'. After leaving Cambridge he became absorbed in the study of magic, sex, and drugs. One-time member of the Golden Dawn, he also propagated a new religion, founded his own magical association, and saw his first and second wives die in lunatic asylums. At least five of his mistresses committed suicide.

He believed that he was a channel of communication for occult intelligences. In 1920 he founded the Abbey of Thelema on Sicily as a center for study of his kind of occultism, to which many Britons were attracted. Within two years he was expelled by the other members and gained notoriety over the death of his disciple **Paul Loveday**. **Crowley** was finally thrown out of Italy by Mussolini. After several years traveling around Europe in search of new patrons and mistresses he returned to England. In 1929 he tried, unsuccessfully, to sue British newspapers over articles about him by **Nina Hamnet**. With his popularity and respect gone, he spent the rest of his life making **grandiose** plans that came to nothing. As an old man he was reduced to peddling love potions. He died poor and friendless.

Crowley said that much of his magical knowledge came from his own supernatural **patron** called **Aiwass** who had contacted him while he was praying to ancient Egyptian deities. He described the patron as being a "tall, dark man in his thirties" which matches the descrip-



*Chung Ling Soo, master prestidigitator. This famous conjurer died onstage in London in 1918, shot accidentally during a trick. An "interpreter" spoke for him. After his death, he was revealed to be W.E. Robinson, an American.*

tions of a form commonly taken by Nyarlathotep.

For more information see *Cthulhu by Gaslight* and *The Keeper's Compendium*.

**Cheiro** — Pseudonym of Count Loius Hamon (1860-1936), famous seer, palmist, and writer of books on prediction. He interviewed Edward VII, Queen Alexandra, and predicted Edward VIII's love affair and abdication. He resided in London for much of the 1920s.

**Commander Rupert Thomas Gould** (1890-1948) — After being invalidated out of the Royal Navy in 1915 he took to writing books about strange creatures and unexplained phenomena from around the world. He wrote *Oddities* in 1928 which described, among other things, the moving coffins of Barbados and the vampiric Berbelangs. He lectured at the Ghost Club about sea serpents and the Loch Ness Monster, and stayed in London when not traveling around the world researching his books.

**Sir Arthur Conan Doyle** (1859-1930) — Novelist, creator of Sherlock Holmes, spiritualist, student of paranormal phenomena, and member of the Ghost Club. He practiced as a doctor until 1890 then took to writing. In the 1920s he traveled extensively, preaching spiritualism to the bereaved of the Great War. He became president of the London Spiritual Alliance and College of Psychic Studies, investigated haunted houses, and solved some real life mysteries. His old home was in Crowborough and was reputedly haunted. During the 1920s he wrote a book about the Cottingly Fairies (see below). See also *Cthulhu by Gaslight*.

**Dion Fortune** — Pseudonym of Violet Mary Worth (??-1946). A former member of the Golden Dawn and disciple of Crowley, she founded her own magical society, The Fraternity of Inner Light, based at 3 Queensborough Terrace, Bayswater. As a self-styled priestess and practicing magician she wrote extensively on theoretical magic as well as novels. She believed that her enlightenment came from contact with elemental forces and that she received direct teaching from other planes of consciousness.

**Margaret Alice Murray** (1862-1963) — English Egyptologist, archaeologist, anthropologist, and writer on witchcraft. After much research among medieval documents relating to witch hunts, she propounded the theory that the witch-cult was the survival of a pagan religion that

worshiped the great mother goddess and the homed god. *The Witch Cult in Western Europe* was published in 1921.

**Harry Price** (1881-1948) — The best known psychical researcher and ghost hunter of the era was Harry Price. He sought to gain official recognition for scientific psychical research and did more than anyone else in the 1920s to popularize interest in psychical phenomenon. His investigations covered the Indian Rope Trick, fire-walking, ritual magic, stigmata, psychic photography, and he used his knowledge of sleight of hand to expose fraudulent mediums. He revived the Ghost Club, founded his own organization (The National Laboratory for Psychical Research) and collected a unique library of occult books.

He has been variously called a fraud, a saint, and a much wronged scientific researcher. From 1929 onwards he devoted much time to investigating Borley Rectory (see below) and advertised in *The Times* for people to help him. His ghost hunting equipment included tape measures for finding secret rooms, mercury to detect tremors, a camera with flash and infrared film, a portable telephone, a thermometer, and forensic equipment, as well as warm clothes and a flask of brandy. Those who helped him had to sign a declaration that they were unconnected with the press and would not make any unauthorized sketch or written account of their investigations.

**Austin Osman Spare** (1886-1956) — Occultist, artist, painter of strange art depicting denizens of unseen worlds. Spare claimed to have been taught as a child by a descendant of the witches of Salem to visualize and reproduce dream imagery and summon spirits. He evolved a technique for harnessing superhuman powers latent in the subconscious mind and called this the Formula of Atavistic Resurgence. Atavism is the recurrence of an ancestral trait, the idea that something frightening and primitive in someone's character can re-emerge after many generations. One person went mad and another committed suicide after Spare, at their request, conjured something from the deep layers of their consciousnesses.

Up to his death Spare lived as a recluse in a poor part of London with only his cats for company. As an artist he produced disturbing pictures that, he claimed, were the result of a combination of sexual ecstasy and magical visualization which reached remote depths of the

mind and featured elementals. His book *Earth Inferno* was published privately in 1906 and his pictures are only in private collections.

**Rudolf Steiner** (1861-1925) — Austrian social philosopher who traveled to England in 1902 to attend a Theosophical Society conference. He remained afterwards to later found the Anthroposophical Society in 1912. This tried to bring together science, spiritualism, and magic into 'spiritual science'. He aimed to restore by training the innate human capacity for spiritual perception, which had become dulled by the materialism of the modern world. He founded schools, clinics, and mental hospitals based on his principles, using art, myth, drama, and eurhythmy, in Europe, Britain, and America. When his wife died in 1911 there were rumors he had strangled her astrally. He published the story of his life in 1924.

## Strange Science

The theories and developments of scientists such as Einstein increased people's interest in science and encouraged a belief that it could solve all our problems. Scientists, philosophers, and ordinary people also questioned traditional beliefs about the universe and religion. The era saw numerous strange scientific theories, attempts to develop improbable devices, and fads for techniques that promised to cure all ills of the mind or body.

## Death Rays

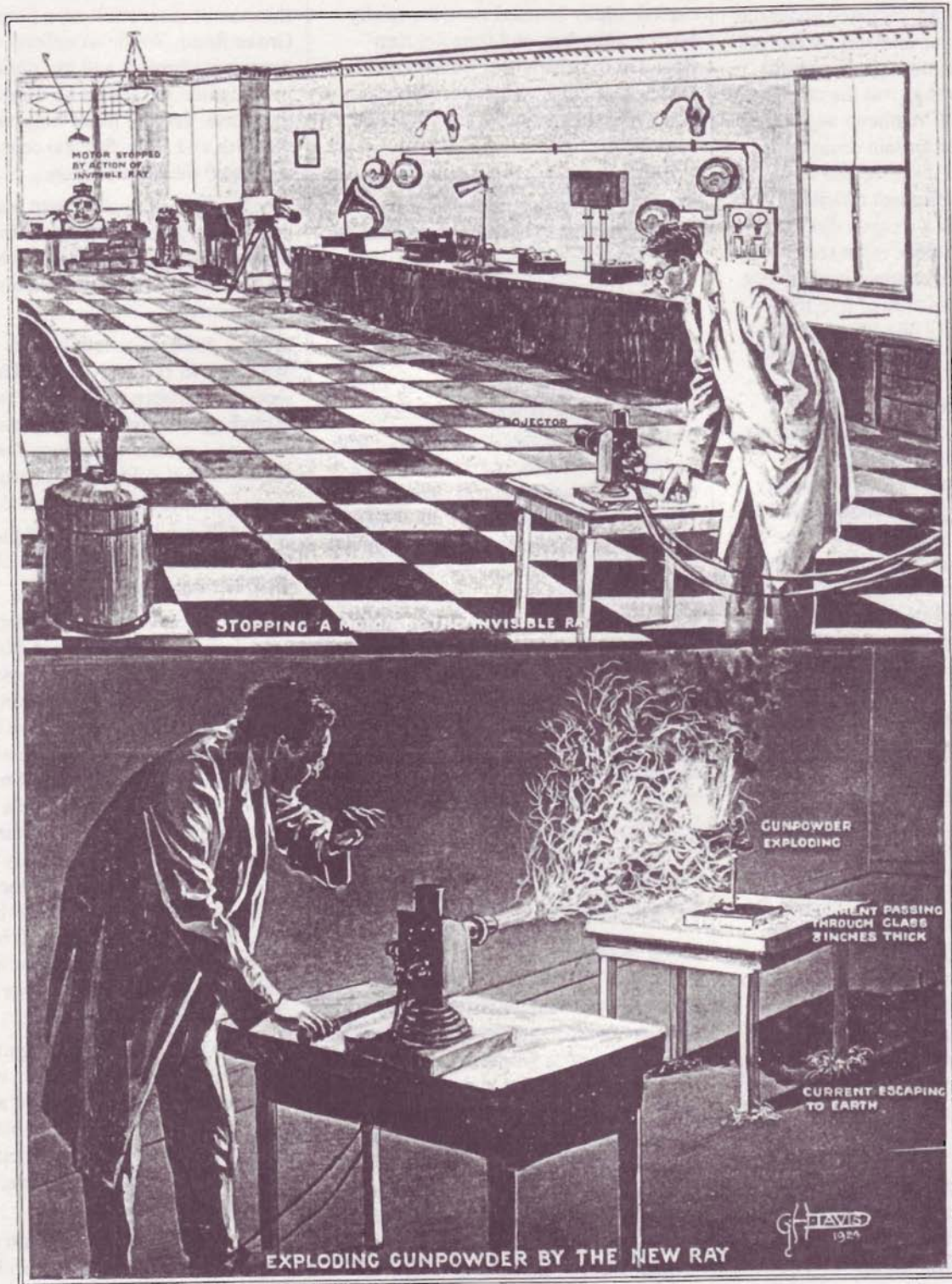
Scientist H. Grindell-Matthews was paid £250,000 during the war for a system to control a warship by a light beam. He had also been promised £250,000 if he could bring down a Zeppelin by a ray of any kind.

In 1924 Air Ministry experts attended a well-guarded demonstration in his lab where they saw him light an electric bulb from a short distance and stop a motor-cycle engine from fifteen yards. They seemed unimpressed but offered him £1000 pounds if he could stop one provided by government scientists under their own test conditions.

As the government was non-committal, Grindell-Matthews decided to publicize his idea. The press received an invitation to view something that could stop a car or aircraft at up to fifty-eight miles, set fire to objects, extinguish life, cure cancer, and locate submarines. A press

# THE LIGHT-RAY THAT MAY STOP WAR: ACTUAL EXPERIMENTS.

DRAWN BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST, G. H. DAVIS, UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF MR. H. GRINDELL-MATTHEWS, THE INVENTOR.



THE RAY IN OPERATION: (ABOVE) PUTTING A MOTOR-ENGINE OUT OF ACTION; (BELOW) EXPLODING GUNPOWDER.

Mr. H. Grindell-Matthews, whose actual experiments with his new electric light-ray are here illustrated, while their great possible developments are shown in our double-page drawing, was the principal guest on April 15 at the annual luncheon of the Foreign Press Association. He said that he would shortly continue his work on a large scale in open country, and that he was confident of soon being able to transmit power over considerable distances. "It has been said," he remarked, "that armies would be wiped out in a few seconds. I am tempted to hope that it (the invention) will make war impossible." Mr. Grindell-Matthews has demonstrated before our artist, Mr. G. H. Davis, that he can at will stop the functions of the magneto of a small motor erected at the other end of his large laboratory. The little projector was directed upon the pulsating motor, which instantly commenced to falter and quickly stopped, owing to the short-circuiting of the magneto caused by the action of the invisible ray directed

upon it from the other end of the room. Even more destructive in its power is the lightning effect produced in the second illustration. Here the little projector is sending out what may be called bottled-lightning. For demonstration purposes the inventor had placed a little gunpowder in a small receptacle attached to an ordinary laboratory stand. Then with care (for he was dealing with dangerous forces), Mr. Grindell-Matthews turned his ray upon the "target." Instantly there leaped out from the little invisible ray a blue flame, an exact replica in miniature of the terrible lightning of a tropical storm. In an instant there was a flash as the powder was ignited, and, though the laboratory stand had been placed on glass three inches thick, the current passed through it in a shower of blue flames, and issued from the legs of the table on which it stood. The double-page drawing illustrates the possibilities of the machine as applied to anti-aircraft defences.

release said that the invention would make war impossible.

The 'death ray' made headline news in 1924. The *Illustrated London News* published a drawing, prepared under the inventor's direction, showing an aircraft being exploded in mid-air. Apparently getting enough power was the only problem. Grindell-Matthews suggested that for £3 million Britain could be equipped with an invisible anti-aircraft defense. The government officially declared that such a weapon did not exist but many citizens believed it secretly had one. Faced by Government indifference, Grindell-Matthews offered it to the French. There were immediate calls to put a stop to this 'diabolical invention'.

### Under Pressure

Just after WW1, crackpot H.J. Leaning proposed zooming people through London in pneumatic tubes in the way letters were transported underground by the post office (see References, page 82). His idea would have killed most of his passengers due to the high speeds and jostling around bends. Leaning was fanatical in his attempts to get the idea accepted it but, luckily, it never was.

### Aura Photography

Dr. Walter J. Kilner (1847-1920), did experiments at St. Thomas's Hospital, London, which convinced him it was possible to make auras visible to normal eyes. This used a solution of coal-tar dye hermetically sealed between two pieces of glass and was developed as Kilner screens were available from suppliers of psychic apparatus in the 1920s. They showed three types of aura which were affected by magnetism, electric currents, and various colors. Auras dimmed when the subject was hypnotized or affected by illness or impairment of mental powers.

### Black Box

George de la Warr (1904-69) created a Black Box which was supposed to produce an etheric image. It was a camera-like device, though scientists taking one apart said its circuits had no meaning.

### Time

John William Dunne (1875-1949) propounded a new theory of time in 1927 following a series of precognitive dreams. He wrote a best-selling book called *An Experiment with Time* in 1927.

## Fortean Episodes

England probably has more reported ghosts than anywhere else in the world and London is the world's most haunted capital. Many haunted sites, especially houses, churches, and pubs are mentioned in the districts of London earlier in this book. One of the most interesting is at 50 Berkeley Square (see *Mayfair*, page 39).

Some supernatural occurrences, though outside London, are important because they caused considerable interest during the 1920s.

### Borley Rectory

This house in Essex is the best known haunting in modern times. During the 1920s it was occupied by Rev. G. Eric Smith and his wife who experienced whisperings, bell ringings, strange lights and shadowy forms, movement of objects, and various ghosts including a nun and a coach and horses. In 1929 they appealed to a national newspaper for help. Harry Price responded, spent many years investigating it and wrote two books on the subject. The house burnt down in 1939.

### The Cottingley Fairies

Two girls aged sixteen and nine years old claimed they had seen fairies near their home in Cottingley, near Bradford, and they produced a series of photos to prove the fairies existed. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle investigated and was convinced it was true. He wrote a book about it called *The Coming of the Fairies*, published in 1922.

### Sea Serpents

In August 1923 one sea serpent was sighted in the Thames Estuary and another was seen on *Herm* in the Channel Islands. Fourteen witnesses saw drag marks, five or six feet wide, on the beach. These were the first of many similar sightings off the British coast during the 1920s and 1930s. In 1929 there was a sighting of the Loch Ness Monster in Scotland. These incidents sparked a craze of public interest in "Nessie" and in sea monsters generally. Cutty Sark whiskey offered a well-publicized reward to anyone who could prove Nessie's existence.

### A Strangeness Sampler

**1920** — In May and June deadly snakes were found in London after freak thunderstorms. On the first occasion a deadly Egyptian *haja haja* snake was

found in a Bloomsbury doctor's garden. In June a viper was found outside Westminster cathedral.

Between the 9th and 14th of August showers of stones fell on a house in Grove Road, South Woodford. Windows were broken and the police investigated but found no clues as to the cause, despite night-long vigils on the 13th and 14th. Several constables witnessed the phenomenon.

In September a young man was mysteriously transported over forty miles from a South London street to Dunstable, Bedfordshire. He had no idea how this had occurred.

**1921** — Poltergeist activity was reported in a house in Hornsey, Essex. The reported paranormal incidents included exploding coal, metal implements dancing about, and a clock vanishing. The activity ceased after a child had a nervous breakdown and subsequently died.

On 17th August showers of tiny frogs fell from the sky and swarmed over the roads in Southgate.

**1922** — Spontaneous human combustion in Sydenham, South London. Mrs. Euphemia Johnson, a 68-year-old widow, returned from a shopping trip on a hot summer day. She made a cup of tea and sat down to drink it but left it unfinished. Her remains, a pile of calcined bones, were found on the floor beside a table and overturned chair. Despite the obvious heat needed to cremate the body there was only a slight bubbling of the varnish on the chair, the table cloth and linoleum were only slightly charred, and her dress was completely unburnt. There was no fire in the fire place or any other part of the house.

**1923** — On the 9th of July, lightning during a freak night-time storm made a photograph or 'keranograph' of a waste paper basket on the bare floor boards of an unoccupied office at in Mincing Lane. The boards were cut out and taken to the Science Museum.

**1927** — On July 11, one of 18th century religious fanatic Joanna Southcott's boxes, supposed to contain something of "profound significance" was opened. She had claimed to be the woman of Revelations XII who would give birth to the Messiah and rise from the dead. She left instruction for her box to be opened in the presence of twenty-four bishops but her remaining followers could only get one to attend. The box contained an

ancient pistol (unloaded), pamphlets, trinkets, a night cap, a purse, and a book called *The Surprises of Love*.

1928 — On a cold January day, copper coins and chunks of coal showered inexplicably into closed rooms in a house in Battersea.

## Archaeological Finds

SOME OF the following discoveries had not been made until after the 1920s, but keepers might allow them to be found earlier if that suits their campaigns.

There is evidence that paleolithic (Stone Age) man lived in the Thames valley, though few human remains from this time have been unearthed. In 1935, 1936, and 1955, fragments of human skulls were found in Barnfield. They were termed as being from the Swanscombe man.

Evidence of Neolithic man's cannibalism was found in the 1960s after aerial photos showed concentric interrupted ditches near Staines, southwest of London. Excavations found animal bones and human skulls, thought to be evidence of Neolithic man's way camps—earlier versions of the henges, and probably religious in intent.

There are Bronze Age burial mounds on Wimbledon Common and possibly

Richmond Park. A Bronze Age mound that may be a **barrow** lies north of Parliament Hill, Hampstead Heath. There is also a barrow dated as from this period at Primrose Hill.

Many Bronze Age weapons have been found in the Tharnes. There was a tradition of offering them to the river gods, especially after a warrior's death. This is obviously in line with the legend of King Arthur's Excalibur. A first century Celtic shield made of bronze was found washed up on the foreshore in Battersea as well as a 10th century Saxon brooch of gold filigree and pearls.

Roman Baths in Strand Lane were, in 1926, considered to be the only relic of Roman London above ground. They were investigated in 1913 and excavated further in 1922-25 by G.C. Hume and Edward Fould. In the 1920s they were open to the public daily from 11am-5pm for 6d. By 1926 they were partially excavated and the owners were hoping to buy the surrounding land and excavate further. However, doubt was cast on their authenticity after the 1920s.

Parts of the Roman London wall may still be seen in St. Giles, Cripplegate, and under the GPO building. Many other bits can be seen in cellars and basements. The wall started at the Tower, ran north along Houndsditch to St. Giles Cripplegate where it turned south, then west to Newgate and to the Thames by Blackfriars.

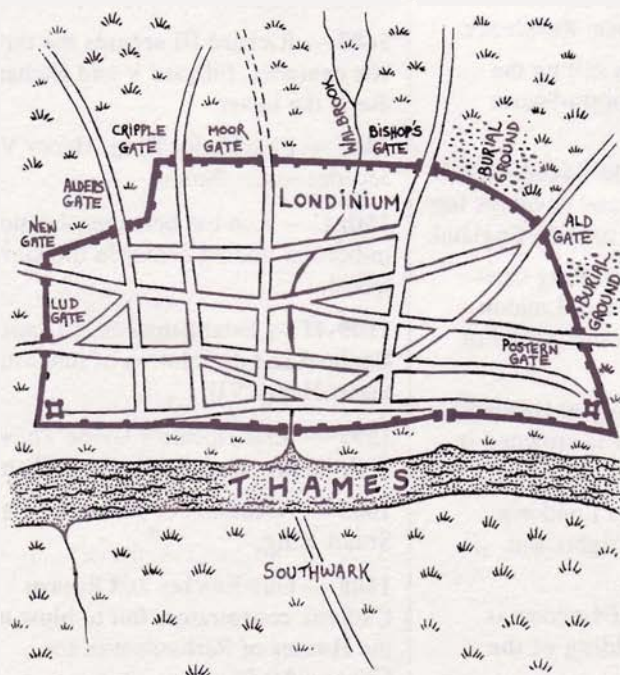
The London Stone is one of the most enigmatic relics of ancient London. It is

thought to be the milestone from which the Romans measured all distances in the province but legend has invested it with the power to make someone who swears on it the ruler of London. Jack Cade, the 15th century rebel leader, was depicted by Shakespeare in *Henry VI* as striking the stone and declaring London his. Jack Cade's rebel forces took London, beheaded the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and opened up the prisons before royal forces routed his troops. He and most of his followers were eventually arrested, beheaded, and quartered. The withered stump of the London Stone was removed from Canon Street, in the City, and placed in nearby St. Swithin's church in 1798. It remained there during the 1920s.

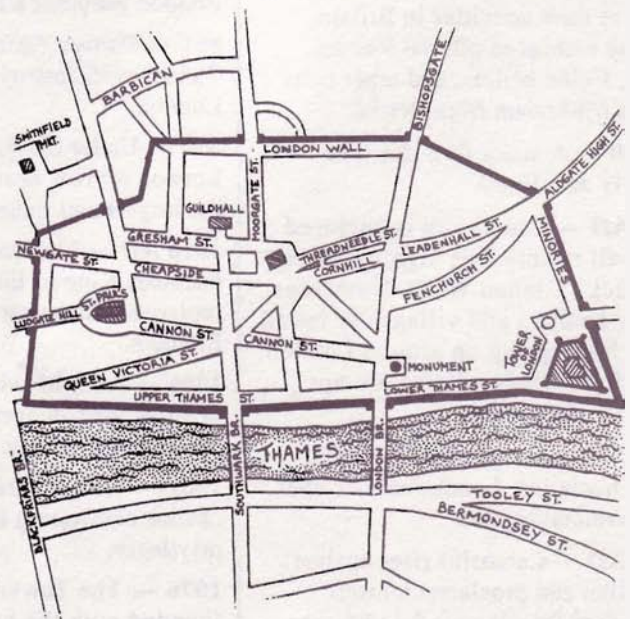
The tombstone of Clasicianus, procurator of Britain at the time of Boudicca's revolt, was found in two pieces. One piece was found in 1852, another in 1935 on Tower Hill.

An 11th century Viking tombstone was found in 1852 on the south side of St. Paul's churchyard. It probably formed one end of a sarcophagus and shows a lion fighting a serpent and has a runic inscription in Old Norse.

Many City of London churches stand on the site of ancient shrines that predate Christianity. A Roman temple of Mithras was found near Queen Victoria Street in 1954. It is thought that the initiates performed their rites in secret, fearing Christian hostility. The worshipers buried a marble head of Mithras to prevent them destroying it. Keepers might decide that cultists were using it during the 1920s.



Roman London.



City of London walls.

# A London Chronology

**c.4000 BC** — New Stone Age settlements around the Thames. Archaeological remains from the time include an Acheulian flint hand ax with mammoth bones.

**1400 BC** — The tribes in the area suddenly change their burial traditions. They stop burying belongings with the deceased and instead cast them in the Thames as offerings to river deities.

**1000-200 BC** — Celtic tribes settle the territory of present day London during the transition from the Bronze to the Iron Ages. Bronze swords and cauldrons were made.

**54 BC** — Julius Caesar comes to Britain.

**AD 43** — Roman army conquers Britain during the reign of Emperor Claudius. They establish Londinium as a trading station and port. The name comes from the ancient British Llyndun (elevated, fortified place). London Bridge established by the army.

**AD 61** — The army of the East Anglian Queen Boudicca burns down Londinium and slaughters the inhabitants. Human skulls from the massacre have been found in the Walbrook river bed. The city is quickly rebuilt.

**c.100 AD** — Romans make London the center of their activities in Britain. Worship embraced official Roman deities, Celtic beliefs, and other cults such as Mithraism from Persia.

**AD 130** — A major fire, this time probably accidental.

**c.200 AD** — Londinium is enclosed by a wall twenty feet high by seven feet thick (London Wall). Numerous fishing hamlets and villages of round wattle huts spring up around London. Raids from Saxon pirates prompt building of defenses.

**c.240 AD** — In the reign of the Emperor Diocletian, Londinium becomes the provincial capital.

**286-7 AD** — Carausius rises against Diocletian and proclaims himself Emperor of Britain with Londinium as his capital.

**c.300 AD** — Mithraic temple built. After a while it was used for the worship of Bacchus.

**c.368 AD** — Londinium besieged by Picts, Saxons, and Scots but did not fall.

**c.410 AD** — Roman legions are moved out of Britain.

**c.449 AD** — The end of Roman Britain. Londinium falls into decline. Jutes, Angles, and Saxons occupy the country, the latter build a harbor called Lundenwick.

For almost two centuries there is little archaeological evidence about what went on in London though there are indications of an heretical sect lead by Pelagius. He claimed man could choose between good and evil.

Vortigern, a military leader, becomes ruler of southern Britain and invites Saxons Hengist and Horsa to settle. In the cities people still try to live in Roman style, so a difference between city and country life develops.

**457 AD** — Hengist fights Britons and many flee to London.

There is a big question about what next happened to London. Was it abandoned and left derelict or did people live in it? There is evidence that London was derelict and undefended c.450-475 and that Saxons sometimes went there to loot.

**7th Century AD** — London was once again used as a city. St. Paul's Cathedral founded.

**796** — Under Anglo-Saxon rule London becomes a Royal Residence.

**851** — Danish Vikings sail up the Thames and destroy Anglo-Saxon London.

**856** — Under the Anglo-Saxon Alfred, London revives again and develops into the largest and richest town in England.

**1016 AD** — The Danish King Cnut becomes King of England. London replaces Winchester as the capital of England.

**1066** — After his victory at Hastings, William the Conqueror is crowned in Westminster Abbey.

**1067** — William grants London a charter confirming its rights and privileges.

**1076** — The Tower of London is founded with the building of the White Tower.

**1100-35** — During the reign of Henry I, London is finally established as the capital and asserts its right of self-government, subject only to the King.

**1136** — Fire destroys the wooden London Bridge.

**1176** — Peter de Colechurch rebuilds London Bridge in stone.

**1185** — Knights Templar build the New Temple.

**1189** — Henry Fitzailwym is chosen as first Lord Mayor of London.

**1215** — King John recognizes the Magna Carta and the right of the guilds to choose the Lord Mayor annually.

**13th C** — Large religious houses established by the Dominicans, Carmelites, and Carthusians on the outskirts of the city.

**1245-69** — Rebuilding of Westminster Abbey in Gothic style.

**1312** — Dissolution of the Templars. Their London establishment, the Temple, becomes a law school.

**1327** — Incorporation of first trade guilds which governed the City.

**1348-58** — The Black Death kills one third of London's population.

**1382** — The Peasant's Revolt under Wat Tyler destroys part of the city.

**1450** — Jack Cade, outraged by the misgovernment of Henry VI, marches on London with 40,000 in forces. After defeating the army, his men run amok and are routed.

**1483** — Richard III secures the throne. His nephews, Edward V and Richard, die in the tower.

**1485** — First Tudor King, Henry VII accedes to the throne.

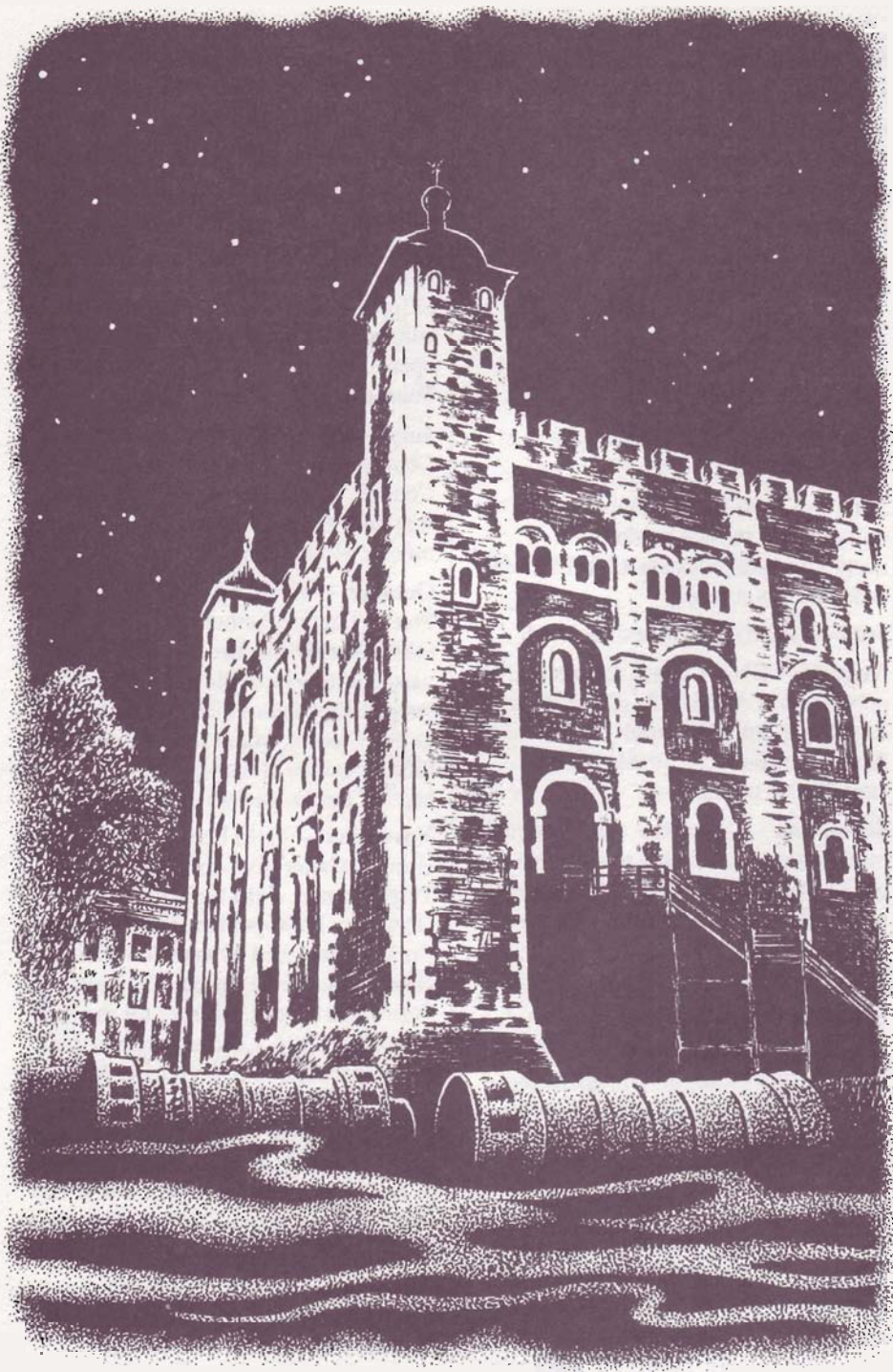
**16th C** — London becomes the most important trading center in the known world.

**1509-47** — Establishment of Church of England and dissolution of monasteries under Henry VIII.

**1599** — Shakespeare's Globe Theatre built on the south bank of the Thames.

**1603** — Accession of James I, first Stuart King.

**1605** — Guy Fawkes and Roman Catholic conspirators fail to blow up the Houses of Parliament in the Gunpowder Plot.



*The White Tower today.*

**1641** — Civil War begins with London under control of Parliament.

**1649** — Charles I is beheaded in Whitehall, establishment of the Commonwealth. Oliver Cromwell becomes Lord Protector.

**1660** — Restoration of the monarchy, Charles II. The population of London reaches half million.

**1665** — The Great Plague claims 100,000 victims in London.

**1666** — The Great Fire lasts four days

and nights, devastates four-fifths of the city, and destroys 13,200 houses and 84 churches. Some 100,000 people made homeless.

**1675-1711** — Sir Christopher Wren rebuilds St. Paul's Cathedral and 52 other churches.

**1694** — Bank of England founded.

**1714** — George I (House of Hanover) becomes King.

**1750** — Westminster Bridge opened, London Bridge cleared of houses.

**1759** — British Museum inaugurated in Montagu House, Bloomsbury.

**1760** — The City's walls and gates are pulled down. City expands in the direction of Westminster.

**1762** — George III makes Buckingham Palace a Royal residence.

**1783** — Newgate prison opens and executions at Tyburn discontinued.

**1801** — The first census. London's population is 860,035. First gaslights in London's streets.

**1826** — University College, core of London University, founded.

**1830** — Establishment of Metropolitan Police under Sir Robert Peel.

**1836** — London's first train service, from London Bridge to Greenwich.

**1837** — Queen Victoria comes to the throne and makes Buckingham Palace the principal royal residence.

**1837-41** — Seven suburban cemeteries founded, churchyard burials prohibited because of cholera.

**1843** — Thames Tunnel, first underwater tunnel in the world, built.

**1840-52** — Building of the new Houses of Parliament.

**1851** — The Great Exhibition, housed in Sir Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace.

**1858** — The Covent Garden Royal Opera House built.

**1860-75** — New sewerage system for London constructed to alleviate the 'Great Stench'.

**1863** — First underground line opened between Bishop's Road and Farringdon.

**1878** — First electric street lights.

**1888** — Jack the Ripper murders five prostitutes in Whitechapel.

**1889** — London County Council set up.

**1894** — Tower Bridge completed.

**1900** — London local boroughs created.

**1901** — Queen Victoria dies.

**1909** — Port of London takes control of docks.

**1910** — Accession of George V, first sovereign of the House of Windsor.

**1914-18** — First World War. German Zeppelin raids kill 670 people in London and injure more than 2000.

# 1920s Timeline

**T**HERE WAS a period of economic boom immediately after the end of the war. It broke in the winter of 1920/21, doubling unemployment. The end of rationing in 1922 heralded the first normal year after the war, though British Summertime, brought in during the war to save daylight hours, was retained. The grave of the unknown soldier in Westminster Abbey and the Cenotaph in Whitehall remained important symbols to which all passers-by would doff their hats.

## The Irish Problem

The most significant British political issue for the early 1920s was the question of Irish independence. Britain had 40,000 troops there after a rebellion in 1916. IRA guerrilla tactics lead up to the multiple dawn raids of Bloody Sunday, 21 November, 1920, when British officers were dragged from their beds and shot. A series of negotiations resulted in the Irish Free State when the British Government drew up the Irish Treaty in 1922 under threat of force if the Irish parliament refused it.

The problem temporarily subsided because the British Government agreed to set up a boundary commission to investigate the reorganization of the border between North and South, allowing Catholic communities to be redesignated as part of Southern Ireland. But when the Commission finally reported in 1925 they failed to draw any conclusion and the border remained as it was. The Irish problem persisted.

## Britain and London in the 1920s

### 1920

**January** — (9th) Government plans to build 100,000 new 'Homes Fit for Heroes'.

**February** — (11th) League of Nations launched in London at St. James Palace. (23rd) War Secretary, Churchill, replaces conscription with volunteer army.

**July** — (13th) London County Council bars foreigners from council jobs. (31st) Communist party of Great Britain founded.

**August** — (2nd) Parliament passes bill to restore order in Ireland, suspending jury trials. (3rd) Catholics riot in Belfast.

### The London Guidebook

**September** — (22nd) "Flying Squad" formed in the Metropolitan Police Force.

**November** — (11th) Unknown Soldier buried in Westminster Abbey. (21st) Bloody Sunday: IRA dawn raids kill 14 police officers in Ireland.

**December** — (11th) Martial Law declared in Ireland. (23rd) King signs Irish partition bill.

### 1921

**January** — (20th) Royal navy sub K5 sinks in Channel. All 56 crew die.

**February** — (16th) Unemployment at 1,039,000.

**June** — (15th) Unemployment at 2.2 million. Two million workers are involved in pay disputes. (25th) Rainfall ends 100 day drought.

**July** — (22nd) Irish Truce declared.

**August** — (23rd) Census reveals British population at 42,767,530 (7.4 million in London). (24th) 27 Britons and 16 Americans die when airship ZR11 explodes on trial at Hull.

**September** — (1st) Nine Poplar councillors arrested for refusing to set a rate that would over-tax the poor. (10th) Crowds in Trafalgar Square demand release of Poplar Nine.

**October** — (8th) Steamer *Rowan* sinks off Scotland. 36 drown.

**December** — (7th) Irish offered Free State by Lloyd-George. Threatens force if treaty not signed. King orders release of all Sinn Fein prisoners. (16th) Parliament ratifies the Irish Treaty.

### 1922

**January** — (5th) Explorer Shackleton dies in the Falklands while on his fourth expedition to Antarctica. (12th) Government announces amnesty for all Irish political prisoners. (13th) Flu epidemic claims 804 deaths last week. (21st) Irish Parliament votes to accept treaty with England to set up the Irish Free State after a nine-day debate, 64 for and 57 against. Very unhappy settlement, called "the grossest betrayal ever".

**February** — (17th) MPs approve Irish Free State bill which sets up a boundary commission to redraw the border at a later date.

**March** — (1st) Civil Aviation Authority established. (21st) Queen Mary opens Waterloo station.

**May** — (22nd) Highest May temperature for 50 years, 88°F in the shade. (23rd)

Sinn Fein declared illegal in six Irish states following a series of violent incidents. (29th) Liberal MP Horatio Bottomley jailed for seven year for fraud.

**June** — (16th) First general election of the new Irish free state. Pro-treaty party is victorious. (22nd) Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson shot in Belgravia by IRA assassins who were caught escaping. (23rd) Police arrest 20 more men in connection with murder. (26th) King opens new site for Wimbledon Tennis Tournament in Queen's Road.

**July** — (17th) King George V opens County Hall, new HQ of London Council. (18th) Joseph O'Sullivan and Reginald Dunn are sentenced to death for murder of Sir Henry Wilson.

**October** — (17th) Lloyd George opens Port of London Authority on Tower Hill. (18th) The British Broadcasting Company formed. (19th) Lloyd George resigns after Tories disown Chamberlain as party leader. Major political upheaval. (23rd) Andrew Bonar-Law re-elected as head of the Conservative party.

**November** — (5th) Lord Camarvon and Howard Carter discover tomb of Tutankhamun. (9th) Sir William Horwood, Metropolitan Police Commissioner is poisoned by arsenic-filled chocolates. (16th) General Election. Tories win overall majority for the first time since 1904. Labour becomes the main opposition party with 142 MPs (63 last time) as Lloyd George's Liberal party is crushed. Churchill loses seat. (21st) James Ramsay MacDonald elected as new Labour leader. (26th) Carter and Camarvon enter tomb of Tutankhamun. Carter sees "Many wonderful things".

**December** — (5th) Irish Constitution Bill, creating the Irish Free State, becomes law. (14th) John Reith is appointed General manger of the BBC.

### 1923

**April** — (4th) Earl of Carnarvon dies from an insect bite. (26th) Duke of York, Prince Albert marries Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyons.

**May** — (2nd) BBC opens Savoy Hill studios. (21st) Baldwin elected Prime Minister after Bonar Law resigned with throat cancer.

**July** — (13th) Lady Astor's Liquor Bill banning sale of alcohol to under-18s.

**September** — (6th) The Tivoli, London's new super-cinema, opens in the Strand.





During the General Strike of 1926.

**November** — (6th) Baldwin calls an election only a year after he led the Tories back to power. Says Government needs a new mandate.

**December** — (7th) General Election returns eight women MPs. Tories fail to secure a working majority.

## 1924

**January** — (10th) Submarine L-34 sinks in the English Channel, 43 dead. (22) Tories conceded Government to Labour backed by Liberals. Ramsay MacDonald first Labour PM.

**February** — (1st) Labour government recognizes USSR. (7th) First woman barrister at Old Bailey, Mrs. Helena Normanton. (16th) Dock strike shuts all ports in U.K. (26th) End of dock strike.

**April** — (23rd) Wembley, British Empire Exhibition opened by King who sends a telegram round the world in 1 minute 20 seconds.

**June** — (29th) Prince of Wales announces he will start looking for a bride, making him the most eligible man in the world.

**October** — (9th) Government call elections after accidentally defaming a war hero. (24th) Foreign offices publishes "Zinoviev Letter" from Moscow to British communists urging infiltration of Labour party. Moscow claims it is a hoax. (31st) Tories win a huge majority.

**November** — (4th) Labour cabinet committee says it cannot determine whether the Zinoviev letter is a hoax.

(19th) Tory cabinet committee concludes Zinoviev letter is genuine.

**December** — (24th) Eight die in Britain's worst-ever air crash when plane stalls after take off at Croydon aerodrome.

## 1925

**March** — (18th) Fire destroys two floors of Madame Tussaud's waxworks museum.

**May** — (9th) King opens second season of British empire exhibition at Wembley. (13th) Britain returns to the gold standard. (18th) Trade Union Congress (TUC) declares Zinoviev letter a fake. (28th) Home Secretary orders all known "subversives" to be barred from entering the country.

**June** — (11th) First reported aerial murder takes place as a London gem dealer is thrown out of an aeroplane.

**September** — Charleston dance craze takes England by storm.

**October** — (31st) British Empire exhibition closes.

**December** — (3rd) Boundary Commission fails to draw any conclusion over redrawing of the partition of Southern and Northern Ireland. (10th) George Bernard Shaw wins Nobel prize for Literature, for *Saint Joan*.

## 1926

**January** — (27th) Logie Baird demonstrates television at the Royal Institution in London.

**February** — (9th) Flooding in London suburbs after 18 days of rain.

**April** — (30th) Coal crisis looms as miners face 13% wage cut and increase in hours.

**May** — (1st) Miners go on strike. Unions call for a general strike of essential services in sympathy. (4th) General Strike starts. Transport services virtually paralyzed. Newspapers stopped. (8th) Churchill edits the *British Gazette* with commandeered presses to publish anti-strike propaganda. (9th) State of Emergency announced. Troops deployed in South Wales, Yorkshire, and Scotland to guard against riots. Middle classes rally to thwart strike, taking on voluntary stop-gap work. (10th) Talks begin to end the strike. (12th) TUC calls off strike as it begins to crumble of its own accord. Miners remain defiant.

## The General Strike

A coal strike had threatened since spring 1925. In March 1926 a report proposed measures to amalgamate smaller pits and reduce wages while pit owners demanded longer hours. Deadlock with the unions resulted in a lockout from May 1. Transport, railway, printers, gas, electricity and heavy industry unions all agreed to a national sympathy strike from midnight May 3. Union response to help the miners get a living wage was phenomenal.

The government's response worked well and there was no serious violence although Churchill ordered patrols of London Streets with armored cars. Troops were only called upon to keep order at the London Docks. Fears of a Russian-style revolution proved unfounded. However, in the official government news bulletin, *The British Gazette*, Churchill denounced British working men as 'the enemy' and demanded 'unconditional surrender'. The BBC managed to preserve relative impartiality.

The General Strike ended when a National Wages Board in the coal industry was proposed. Union leaders believed this would be accepted if the strike was called off. On 12 May the unions called off the national strike, though the miners hung on. When railway bosses tried to sack ex-strikers the stoppage was resumed. This time the government shrank from a real class war and gave in. The miners hung on once more but eventually lost out and had to

take wage cuts. The General Strike failed to help the miners and left the unions impoverished. Fewer people joined them but wages remained stable until 1929 keeping workers fairly calm. The strike was the watershed when the class war lessened in importance in British industrial relations.

**October** — (1st) Alan Cobham sets down on the Thames in his De Havilland 50 biplane, completing his 29-day trip to Australia and back. (2nd) French airliner bursts into flames over Kent killing seven.

**November** — (12th) Miners agree to end pit strike. (20th) British Empire becomes British Commonwealth, making the dominions Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, and Newfoundland equal in status to Britain and capable of determining their own destinies.

**December** — (2nd) Stanley Baldwin ends emergency powers assumed during General Strike. (3rd) Agatha Christie disappears from her home in Surrey. (14th) Christie found in a hotel in Harrogate with amnesia.

## 1927

**February** — (13th) Ten vessels collide and three sink in fog-bound English Channel. (26th) A thousand people a week die from influenza epidemic.

**April** — (5th) Trade Disputes Act passed, preventing further sympathy strikes that made the General Strike so effective.

**May** — (12th) Police raid the offices of USSR trade delegation. (24th) Diplomatic relations with Russia severed after allegations of espionage and organizing subversion in the British Empire.

**June** — (9th) Russia: Soviets execute 20 Britons as spies.

**August** — (16th) Wembley stadium sold for greyhound racing.

**September** — (24th) The wettest summer since 1876 with 80% more rain than normal.

## 1928

**January** — (6th) Thames bursts its banks due to sudden thaw and high tide. 14 drown.

**February** — (12th) Gale sweeps England killing 11.

**March** — (4th) Revealed that the Daily Mail forced publication of the Zinoviev letter, strongly implying that it was a fake. (11th) Blizzards sweep England. 9°C (16°F) in London. (19th) Industrial



Fatigue Research Board concludes that tea helps productivity and prevents industrial unrest. (29th) Suffragette campaign ends as women over 21 get the vote.

**July** — (31st) Government committee says that small pox could be eradicated from the world by vaccination.

**September** — (30th) Professor Alexander Fleming of St. Mary's hospital London discovers penicillin by accident.

**December** — (10th) Piccadilly Underground Station opens. Hailed as triumph of Art Deco architecture.

## 1929

**May** — (31st) General Election returns a hung Parliament yet again. Liberals will determine who has power.

**June** — (7th) Tories concede power rather than risk courting Liberals for a fragile majority. Ramsay MacDonald forms new cabinet.

**July** — (5th) Scotland Yard seize twelve nude paintings by D.H. Lawrence from the Mayfair gallery on grounds of indecency.

**September** — (27th) Britain agrees to restore diplomatic relations with the USSR.

**October** — (14th) R101, the world's biggest airship, makes her maiden voyage over London. (24th) Wall Street Crash. (28th) London Stock Exchange feels the first shock waves from Wall Street. Shares tumble sharply.

**December** — (2nd) Britain's first public telephone boxes come into service in London.

# Reference Material

## Money, Prices, Availability

The British money system during the 1920s was the sterling system of pounds (£), shillings (s) and pence (d). There were twelve pence to the shilling and twenty shillings to the pound. This system was replaced in 1971 by a decimal-based coinage. Higher denominations were achieved with bank notes.

In the 1920s, U.K. circulating coins were many.

Bronze coins were the 1/4d (a farthing), 1/2d (a ha'penny), and 1d (a penny).

Silver coins were 3d (threepence), 6d (sixpence or a tanner), 1s (a shilling or a bob), 2s 6d (a half-crown), and 5s (a crown).

The sole gold coin was the £1 (a sovereign) — these were rare.

Other values were expressed in conversation: ten bob (10s) (ten bob); a *pound*, a quid, or a nicker (£1); five *pounds* or five quid (£5). Among the upper classes, some prices might be quoted in guineas (in value equal to £1 1s), though there have never been guinea coins.

The exchange rate from American dollars was \$5 to £1 at the end of the War, falling to \$4 to £1 by 1930. There was a money exchange office at Charing Cross Station and at Cooks Travel Agency.

### Prices of Selected Items

Gentleman's gold fob watch	£8 10s
Ladies silver wrist watch	£1 10s
Microscope	£4
Telescope	£3 15s
Pocket compass	£1 5s
Box camera	£1 10s
Zeiss Icon camera	£12 5s
Kodak cine camera	£25
Film, devel. & printing	6d per photo
Radio	7s 6d
Headphones	2s
Radio aerial	6d
Ball of string	2 1/2d
Parker fountain pen	17s 6d

Portable typewriter	£6 15s
Handbag	5s 6d
Trunk	£5 10s
Brandy flask	£1
Good quality cricket bat	£1 12s
<b>Webley</b> 12 bore shotgun	£22
100 shotgun cartridges	15s
.45 revolver	£2 6s
100 revolver bullets	5s
Pen knife	5s 6d
Full picnic hamper (Fortnum and Masons)	£7 19s
Sleeping bag	£2 10s
Tent, 10ft x 8ft	£9 18s 9d
Camp stove	7s
Electric torch	8s 6d
Travelers' medicine kit	£2 5s 6d
London post office directory	£2 15s
<b>Wisden's</b> Cricketer's Almanac	5s
<b>Dunlop</b> British Touring Atlas	2s 6d
Chauffeur's uniform	£5 15s
Evening dress suit	£10
Plain white shirt	8s 6d
Bowler hat	£1 5s
Top hat	£1 12s
Cloth cap	8s 6d
Silk stockings	7s 11d
Petrol, gallon	1s 6d
Tin of baked beans	5d
Jar of jam	7½d
Bottle of fruit cordial	1s 6d
Large loaf of bread	8d
A dozen eggs	2s 2d
A pound of butter	2s
A pound of steak	1s 5d
Pint of beer	6d
Bottle of whisky	10s 6d
Milk, quart	7d
Cigarettes, 20	11½d

These average prices could, of course, vary greatly. Woolworth's and the Co-operative Society were the cheapest chain stores; **Harrods** and Fortnum & Masons were the most expensive shops.

### Chloroform

Chloroform seemed to be in endless supply in 1920s mystery books and thrillers. In fact it could be obtained on prescription for seasickness or toothache and could even be bought over the counter at chemists, though proof of identification and a statement of intended use was required. The Army and Navy Stores in The Strand sold killing bottles for moths and butterflies

in which "chloroform is dropped on the insect from the nozzle".

### Weapons

Springy clubs or weighted sticks used for self defense could be bought from the Army and Navy Store in 1915 for 1s 9d. Other defense weapons could be bought in umbrella shops. These included the Night Companion—a heavy walking stick with a rugged, knobbly top—and sword canes. G.K. Chesterton, Dennis Wheatley, and Evelyn Waugh used them.

Guns were also commonly kept for self defense in the 1920s. Pistols weighing only just over one pound and suitable for the handbag could be bought for about £2. Purchasers were expected to produce a gun license or show a police authorization. To obtain the latter it was necessary to show an intention to be abroad for not less than six months.

### Fireworks

Under the Explosives Acts manufacture of fireworks was illegal without a Home Office license, though *The Boys Own Book* showed how to make them using home-made gunpowder and rolled up newspaper. The ingredients for gunpowder, sulphur and saltpeter, were quite easy to obtain as were potassium, chlorate, and barium nitrate, charcoal, brass, copper dust, and even arsenic (used to color the explosions). Chemists would ask what any dangerous substance was intended for and make a customer sign for it but were usually satisfied if told that it was for making fireworks, especially if approaching November 5th.

### Public Records

Births, marriages, and deaths had to be registered and copies of the certificates were kept in the Public Records Office at Somerset House, the Strand (see page 36).

Lloyd's Register of Shipping, 71 Fenchurch Street, London, provides a unique service for research. It holds an annual register of merchant ships of the world since 1764. This includes owners, place and date built, tonnage

and dimensions, official number and call sign and, from 1764 to 1873, the voyage destination. From 1890 onwards casualty returns for ocean-going merchant ships were registered. This gives details of the ship, cause, place, and date of the loss. Public Record Offices also hold customs and excise details going back as far as the 17th century.

### Postal services

Post office headquarters were at St. Martin-le-Grand near St. Paul's Cathedral. London was divided into

eight postal districts: N, NW, NE, S, SW, SE, E, and W. Each district was subdivided numerically, for instance Soho Square was W1.

It normally cost 1½d for a two-ounce letter with a ½d surcharge per every 2 ounces above that. Postcards were 1d. Airmail service to Europe was 3d per ounce of mail. Collections were made up to midnight from some post boxes and next day delivery was guaranteed for local

letters posted before 5:30pm or 6:30pm at special post boxes using an extra ½d 'late' stamp. There was also a 1d late stamp for foreign letters.

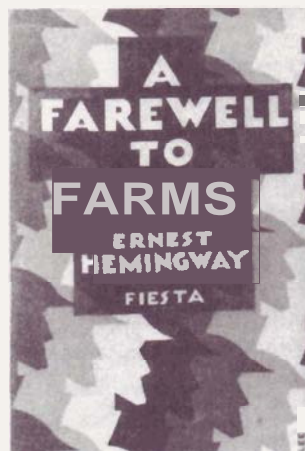
The first post would arrive at around 8am and the last delivery was up to 10pm. There were no deliveries on Sundays. Visitors to London without a permanent address could have letters sent to the GPO marked 'Poste Restante'. Local letters would be kept at a Post Office for two weeks and those from abroad were kept for two months.

### Telegrams

Telegraph offices were open on weekdays from 8am to 7pm. Some were open on Sundays from 8:30am to 10am, though offices at the St. Martin-Le-Grand and main line stations were nearly always open. The minimum charge was 1s for 12 words.

### Transporting the Royal Mail

The post office opened a pneumatic railway to Euston Station in 1863 which never worked very well and was



*Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms*, 1929.

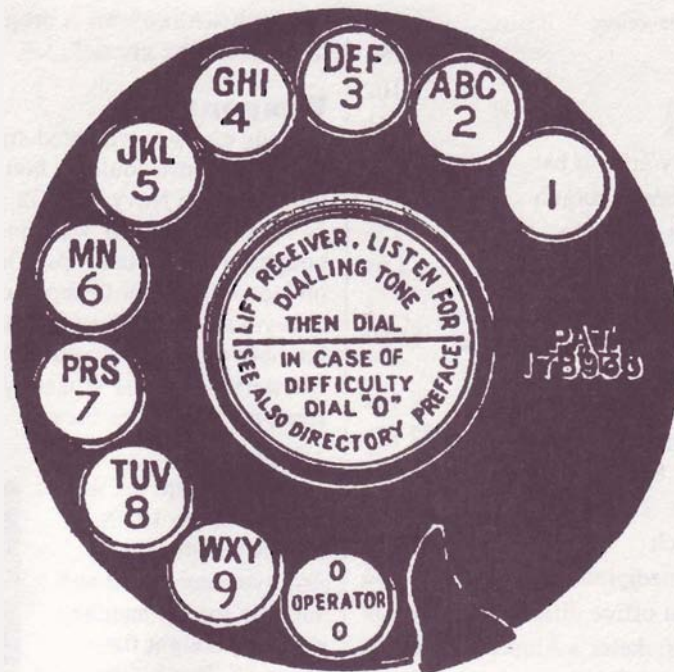
abandoned and forgotten in 1880. On 20 December 1928, a large gas explosion revealed several of the original mail cars still in the tunnel. The tunnel was then taken over for telecommunications.

Pneumatic tubes 2.5 inches in diameter were also used to propel cylinders containing letters and telegraph messages at twenty miles an hour using compressed air. This system was also used by shops and businesses and compressed air pipes often traveled below ground from one building to another. (See also Occult, page 72.)

The first practical underground mail railway opened in 1927 between Paddington and Whitechapel. Work started before WW1, restarted 1923, but was halted by the general strike. It was fully automated and trains traveled thirty-five miles per hour. Each station platform was linked to sorting offices above by shafts. At Paddington it lay underneath platforms 11 and 12, where there were eight chutes. The station at Mount Pleasant contained underground depots, repair workshops, cross-over points and turn-around tunnels arranged in a figure-eight. There are several blind tunnels that were unfinished extensions.

## Telephones

In the 1920s, local London calls cost 2d for three minutes but longer distance calls cost extra. The Post Office ran the entire telephone system and most of London's telephone lines were below ground. Before 1927, all tele-



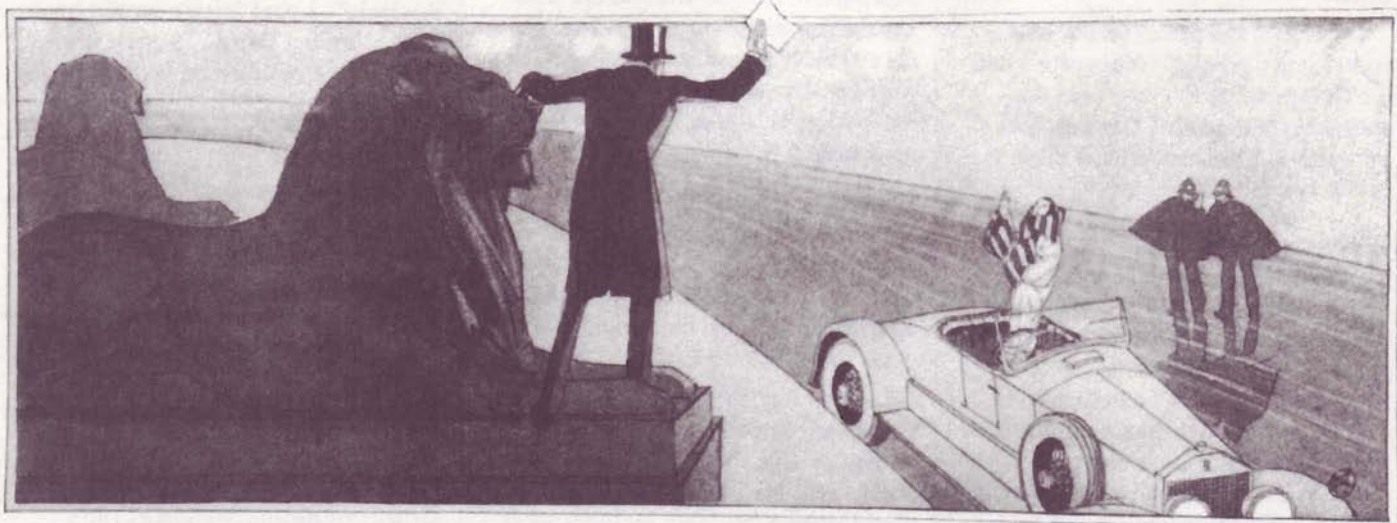
*The standard auto telephone dial, London type, of 1925.*

phone calls had to be connected by the operator. The first automatic telephone exchange, permitting the caller to dial direct, opened in Holborn on 12 Nov. 1927 and was soon followed by others in London.

Each exchange was represented by three numbers and the individual phone within that area by a further four numbers. To make them easy to remember each of the exchanges was given a name based on three letters corresponding to its numbers. The number/letter equivalents on the dial were slightly different than on rotary dials in the United States. On the British dial, the number 0 was the

equivalent for the letter O. No Q or Z existed on either dial.

For instance, **HOLborn** 1234 would be equivalent to the modern telephone number 405-1234. Many areas had identical first three letters or numerical equivalents so alternatives had to be thought of. For instance, **Acton** became **ACOrn** from its old Saxon name of **Oaktown**. South Harrow was called **BYRon** after its famous pupil. New Southgate was called **ENTerprise**, Putney was called **GIBbon** after Edward Gibbon the historian, **Norwood** became **LIVingstone** after the explorer David Livingstone who lived there, and



*Finding a clue in a treasure hunt. For a description of the game, see page 59.*

Northolt was called VIKing as its name meant "holding of the Northmen".

## Power

### The London Hydraulic Power Company

Hydraulic power provided most of Victorian London's lifting power and it continued to run lifts and cranes throughout the 1920s. Pipes belonging to this company stretched from Limehouse in the East to Earls Court Exhibition center in the West, and similarly from North to South London. Its service pipes cross the river in five places. Raw water was pumped at 400 pounds per square inch and the force of pressure was so great that a burst pipe would blow a hole in the road above. By 1927, the heyday of hydraulic power, there were 184 miles of power mains under London.

## Gas

Gas lighting and heating was less popular in the 1920s than in Victorian times but it was still used. There were numerous explosions, both accidental and caused by terrorists, connected with gas mains. London's biggest company was the Gas Light and Coke Company, privately owned.

## Electricity

In the 1920s there were lots of small private electricity companies.

Ferranti owned a big power station at Deptford. Battersea Power Station opened in the 1930s—a cathedral of power with aisles, chancels, naves, halls faced in marble, wrought iron stair rails, Art Deco control room and parquet flooring so perfect that workers were obliged to wear slippers. Before that, the power station at Barking which opened in 1925 was the largest power station in Europe. It had a huge cable tunnel under the river to Woolwich Arsenal which was completed in 1926. A moat and barbed wire fence surrounded the tunnel exit at the arsenal and anyone with permission to enter it had to be accompanied by a policeman with a key. (See also Thames, page 52.) The National Grid, using overhead cables in pylons, was started in 1926 and finished in 1934. From then on all companies had to supply their electricity to the Grid, from which private companies and local municipalities bought it. Most houses in London were wired for electricity by the end of the 1920s.

## Hotels

There were two different types of hotel in Britain in the 1920s. *Licensed hotels* were able to sell alcohol, while *private hotels* were not. Most railway stations had hotels attached to them and St. Pancras

Station Hotel was considered to be extremely fashionable in the 1920s.

Luxury West End hotels charged the most. A room in the Cecil Hotel cost £9 10s per night and The Grand, at Charing Cross, charged £10 10s per night. The Carlton Hotel and Claridges would charge even more than that. It was said that if you needed to ask the price then you could not afford to stay there.

There were plenty of good quality hotels that charged between 10s and 17s 6d for a single room per night, including breakfast. Other meals were extra and would typically cost 4s 6d for lunch and 5s 6d for an evening meal. Temperance Hotels were even cheaper at as low as £3 per week.

## Restaurants

The average cost of a of dinner at a restaurant would be 3s 6d to 4s 6d. Soho was known for its foreign restaurants and the City had chop houses for businessmen's lunches. Some pubs such as Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese in the City were renowned for their excellent food. J. Lyons & Co. tea houses were very popular. The main vegetarian restaurant in London during the 1920s was run by the Food Reform Society at St. George Street.



*Learning the Charleston.*

# Cockney Rhyming Slang

The following would have been current usage during the 1920s. It's worth pointing out that many slang couplets were commonly abbreviated to their first words only. Thus "plates of meat" for "feet" might actually be spoken only as "plates", and "butcher's hook" for "look" would be "butcher's".

Ache and Pain = Rain

Adam and Eve = Believe

Albert Hall = Wall (as in "drive up the wall" or annoy)

Apple Fritter = bitter (beer)

Apples and Pears = stairs

Apple Sauce = horse

Baa Lamb = tram

Back Porch = torch

Barnet Fair = hair

Bread and Honey = money

**Big Ben = ten**

Bill Stickers = knickers

Black and White = night

Boat Race = face

**Bo-Peep = sleep**

Bottle and Stopper = copper (policeman)

Brahms and Liszt = pissed (**drunk**)

Bubble and Squeak = Sneak (to inform)

Bucket and Pail = jail

Cat and Mouse = house

**Charming Wife = knife (WW1 term)**

China Plate (or just china) = mate (friend)

**Chopsticks = six**

Cob of Coal = dole (welfare benefit)

**Crown Jewels = tools (usually a man's private parts)**

Daiquiri Dock = clock

Dicky Dirt = shirt

**Ding Dong = sing song (usually around a pub piano)**

Dog and Bone = phone

Dog's Tooth = truth

Door to Door = four

East India Docks = **pox** (VD)

Eels and Liquor = nicker (slang for £1)

Fine and Dandy = brandy

Fisherman's Daughter = water

Flea and Louse = house (usually a brothel)

Frog and Toad = road

**Full Moon = loon (lunatic)**

Garden Gate = magistrate

Gay and Frisky = whisky

God Love Her = mother

Gone to Bed = dead

Half Inch = pinch

Harnstead Heath = teeth

Hit and Miss = kiss

Inky Smudge = Judge

Jam Jar = motor car

Jack Frost = lost

Jack the Lad = bad

**Jack the Ripper = kipper**

Jam Tart = sweetheart ('tart' later meant a loose woman)

Joe Hook = crook

Kick and Prance = dance

**Left in the Lurch = church**

**Lillian Gish = fish**

Loaf of Bread = head

**Macaroni = pony (slang for £25)**

Marble Halls = balls (slang for testicles)

Mince Pies = eyes

Mile End = friend

**Moby Dick = sick**

Mother's Ruin = gin

Muddy Trench = French (a WW1 term)

Mum and Dad = mad

Noah's Ark = park

Ocean Liner = shiner (black eye)

**Oxo Cube = tube (underground railway)**

Pen and Ink = stink

**Penny Bun = one**

Pig's Ear = beer

Pitch and Toss = boss

Pork Pies = lies

Rabbit and Pork = talk

Richard the Third = either bird or turd

Robin Hoods = goods (sometimes stolen goods)

Rosie Lee = tea

Saint and Sinner = dinner

Salvation **Army** = barmy

Saucepan Lid = **kid** or quid

Shillings and Pence = sense

Sighs and Tears = ears

Slice of Toast = ghost (shocked, as in "you look like you've seen a ghost")

Smash and Grab = cab

Soup and gravy = Navy

Sunny South = mouth

Sweeney Todd = Flying Squad (special motorized police)

Tea **Leaf** = thief

Trouble and Strife = wife

Two and Eight = state (of agitation)

Turtle Doves = gloves

Union Jack = back

Watch and Chain = brain

Weep and Wail = tale (sob story)

**Westminster Abbey** = cabbie

Whale and Gale = out of jail

Whistle and Flute = suit

Widow **Twankey** = Yankee

Yard of Tripe = pipe

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D.G. Wilson, *The Thames: Record of a Working Waterway*.

Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*.

## London and Call of Cthulhu

Supplements to Call of Cthulhu have made some reference to London. Not all of these books will be available at a particular time.

*The Investigators' Companion*. This has a brief mention of the British Museum.

*The Great Old Ones*. The scenario 'Bad Moon Rising' mentions the London-based Diogenes Club, which according to it, was bombed in a Zeppelin raid, rebuilt, and now accepts a broader membership.

*Horror On the Orient Express*. This campaign starts in London with the

investigators being invited to a Challenger Trust Lecture. The sections Dancers in an Evening Fog and The Doom Train involve various London locations, including the East End, Northern Suburbia, fashionable St. John's Wood, and the British Library. Extensive information about the Orient Express luxury train service.

*Masks of Nyarlathotep*. The second part of this campaign is set in London in the 1920s and includes a good, if brief description of the city. It introduces the fictitious Penhew Foundation, a learned institution in Bloomsbury. It also mentions other London locations including Soho and Limehouse.

*The Keeper's Compendium*. This mentions various books and organizations relating to London and England, especially the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the magus Aleister Crowley, and the Horniman Museum, South London, which has a large collection of magical and religious artifacts.

*Green and Pleasant Land*. This was published by Games Workshop and is now out of print, but has a large amount of extremely useful information about London and England in the 1920s.

*The Vanishing Conjurer*: This Games Workshop scenario is out of print. It is set during a West End performance at the Mermaid Theatre near Drury Lane.

*Cthulhu by Gaslight*. A sourcebook about 1890s England, much is also relevant to the 1920s. It devotes a section to London, describing areas and the most famous locations. The supplement considers social, political, and economic life in Victorian Britain, in contrast to life after the Great War. Keepers might let 1920s characters meet, or have as patrons, older versions of investigators that the players used in an 1890s campaign. A new, more compact edition of this book probably will be issued this year.

*Dark Designs*. A series of scenarios set in England in the 1890s, several of which use London as their main location. Some could easily be transposed to the 1920s.

*Fearful Passages*. The scenario 'Slow Boat' is about a canal boat trip from London to Oxford.

*The Thing at the Threshold*. This long campaign contains a section in England during which investigators might choose to visit London.

# Vile Bodies

**“I don’t think people ever want to lose their faith either in religion or anything else. I know very few young people, but it seems to me that they are all possessed with an almost fatal hunger for permanence.”**

— *Father Rothschild, in Evelyn Waugh's Vile Bodies.*

USE THIS SCENARIO, set among London's Bright Young Things, to capture the mood of the city in the 1920s. Investigators from a range of occupations are suitable, though they should know each other and already be in London. The investigators are contacted when the body of Agatha Simms, a young socialite, is found in the Thames. The scenario assumes that at least one player-character is a friend, relative, or colleague of the girl. Other backgrounds—a journalist or policeman—could easily be incorporated.

The Bright Young Thing characters in this scenario are based on the decadent people portrayed in Evelyn Waugh's novel, *Vile Bodies*. Play them as arrogant, self-centered, and jaded. They feel that they have been everywhere and done everything. To arrive late at the theater is "just so boring," to be arrested by the police is "just so boring," anything they have done before, anything unfashionable or anything they don't like, is "just so boring." By contrast, any fashionable thing they have done (but no-one else present has) is "Simply divine!"

## Keeper Information

England was in the midst of the Great War. In the summer of 1916, Michael Compton and Jonathan Blount, two Cambridge university students, were involved in a 'Brideshead Revisited' type romance. Before enlisting, they enjoyed their last summer together at Michael's Blackheath Manor.

While on one of many walks through the estate's woods, they discovered the long-disused Jack Cade's Cavern, its entrance revealed by recent subsidence. A mildewed diary, found in the cave, described the activities of the debauched cult who frequented the caverns seventy years previously. Michael and Jonathan kept their discoveries secret.

Tragically, Jonathan died in the trenches. Michael suffered severe shell-shock. After the war, still deeply unstable, he re-read the diary, the last thing they had shared. The diary revealed that the cave was a temple to a creature called Tsathoggua. The cave's well was a Gate through which a formless spawn of Tsathoggua could be contacted. The cult had used the spawn in orgies, for it would mold itself around their flesh and join their bodies in obscene unions. In compensation, menials were sacrificed to it.

Michael Compton wishes to use the spawn in a similar way. He deeply feels the futility of life and has come to believe that the only way to alleviate the agony of his mood is to experience everything that life has to offer, then embrace insanity. He plans to exceed the limitations of the flesh, gaining immortality by becoming a formless spawn. To do this he needs others to unite with him. He has attracted several jaded Bright Young Things to his cause.

On October 30th, Compton held a private party at the Gargoyle Club. He watched the party-goers carefully, to select those he considered appropriate for his plans. Everyone got extremely drunk and high on cocaine purchased from the drug dealer Brilliant Chang. Toward the end of the party, Michael suggested a game of 'dare poker' in which people had to bid dares as well as money. As he expected, the game prompted many scandalous acts. When only five people were left at the party, Compton thought he had found the ones he was looking for. He invited them to join him at Jack Cade's Cavern the following evening, Halloween, for an experience they would never forget.

Then he gave them a last dare, to drink a black, viscous cocktail and toast farewell to society's bounds. The cocktails were actually fragments of the formless spawn. The ghastly liquid writhed in their mouths and throats.

Agatha Simms' mind snapped briefly at the horrible sensation. When she started to scream, the others stopped her, holding her down and covering her mouth with a cushion to keep her quiet. They accidentally killed her by suffocation. Compton was delighted. The pact was sealed by murder! Confused and drunken, the remaining five dumped the body of Miss Simms into the Thames.

The scenario begins on October 31st, Halloween, shortly before Guy Fawkes' Night. Guy Fawkes' Night is an English tradition that lends itself as a useful red herring (see later). It gets dark early at that time of year. Keepers should be able to make a lot of the cold, foggy, autumn weather.

## Investigator Information

The investigators are contacted to identify the body of Agatha Simms, which has been pulled from the Thames at the Embankment. She is naked except for a coat. Initial examinations cannot show cause of death, nor whether it was suicide or murder. The police will ask when the investigators last saw her, and about her state of mind.

As the investigators are identifying Miss Simms' corpse, something black and slug-like oozes out of a nostril, falls from her face, and slowly tries to crawl away. The Sanity loss to witness this is 0/1D4 SAN. The slug-like thing is the formless spawn fragment that was still inside her. Prompt investigators can capture the fragment before it vanishes down a drain.

The police search the body and find the following items. The investigators are shown the evidence by the police when they are questioned. A successful Know or Idea roll can help explain two of the items.

- A handkerchief.
- A silver cigarette case engraved with her name.



- A small, one-line-per-day appointment diary. (*The appointment diary is quite full, mostly with single word entries such as "43", "Adelphi", or "Savoy". Know roll: these are names of clubs, theaters, and restaurants. The line for 30th October has the word "Gargoyle" written on it, indicating the Gargoyle Club.*)
- A £20 bank note rolled into a narrow tube. (*Idea roll: the rolled-up note makes a narrow tube. This wealthy girl may snort cocaine.*)

## Penny for the Guy

Near the murder scene the Investigators are pestered by a kid asking "Penny for the guy, Mister?"—the traditional request to get money to buy fireworks for Guy Fawkes' Night. A *guy* is a life-sized effigy of a man made from stuffed old clothes and with a mask on its face. Guys are traditionally burnt on bonfires on 5th November (see page 60). Lots of children collect pennies for the guy, but the drug dealer Brilliant Chang uses East End kids as lookouts and dresses up one of his enforcers as a guy to act as a spy. Wherever they go from now on, the investigators see a familiar kid and guy.

## The Gargoyle Club

The investigators will probably visit the Gargoyle Club after seeing the appointment diary entry. For more about the Gargoyle Club, see page 67.

The club protects members' privacy. Unless they are members, investigators may enter the club only with a successful Credit Rating, Art, Fast Talk, or Persuade roll, as the guest of a member, or with an appropriate police warrant. Failing that, the doorman gives general information about the club. He also suggests that they write to the manager with further questions. Inside, the investigators will not meet Compton's cultists, but could encounter other club members and learn the following five points.

- Agatha Simms was a member of the club. A waiter remembers seeing her on the night of 30th October.
- Miss Simms was friendly with Adam Staunton Jones, Nina Hamilton, and others with a reputation for outrageous behavior. Keepers may make up suitably

scandalous, non-scenario-related anecdotes to illustrate this. "Agatha once had a drink or two with a racing car driver. When he fell asleep, she borrowed his identity arm band and took part in the race. Everyone was amazed when she came in first, then they realized she'd cut across country. Totally disqualified and the car was ruined," etc.

- Agatha and her friends were known cocaine users. Brilliant Chang is the main cocaine supplier at fashionable clubs. He also runs an opium den in the Limehouse district.

The staff and members do not want the Gargoyle mixed up in a murder or suicide enquiry. They point out Chang's involvement to draw attention away from the club. They relate newspaper accounts of people dying from drug overdoses and tell lurid stories about the White Slave Trade. None of this has relevance to the case.

- Michael Compton held a private party in a closed room on the night of the 30th. The noisy gathering went on all night. The last half-a-dozen or so left in the early morning, drunken and barely able to walk. At least one was carried out by her friends. Such behavior is common to the club staff. A couple of people remember that Evelyn Fenwick-Smyth and Jeremy Andrews were at that party.

Club members are far more reticent about giving out information to police, private investigators, or journalists than they are to people

they regard as their peers. Successful Credit Rating rolls are needed.

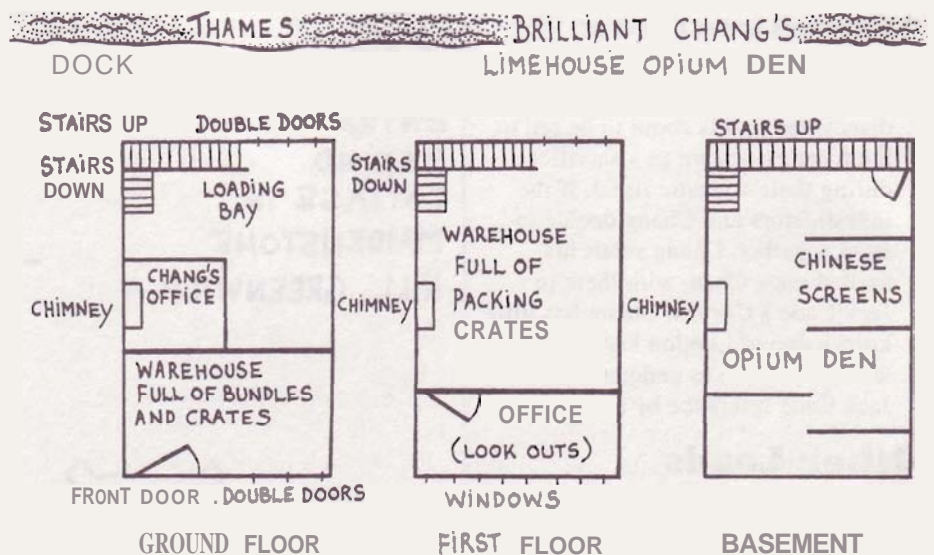
- If investigators suspect something nefarious at the club, they may try to search the establishment. The room in which the party was held has since been tidied. Spot Hidden rolls identify recent wine stains, and new cigarette bums in the carpet, and locate a discarded stocking (Agatha's) behind a radiator.

## Brilliant Chang's Den

Brilliant Chang's base of operations can be found in a **narrow** street of decrepit warehouses backing onto docks at Limehouse. The sign outside says *Oriental Imports*. Inside is his **headquarters**, and a profitable opium den.

By this time, the investigators might believe Brilliant Chang is something of a Fu Man Chu and head off to Limehouse to brave imagined horrors. In fact, Brilliant Chang is in a position similar to the investigators. A prostitute who worked for Chang has disappeared. One of Chang's lookouts saw Michael Compton pick her up in a car. Chang has no idea that Compton fed her to the formless spawn. However, Chang has been gathering evidence and investigating in his own way. He already knows the following two points.

- Michael Compton, Agatha Simms, and some of her friends regularly **bolight** cocaine from him at night clubs.
- Compton had a party at the Gargoyle on the 30th. Chang had three lookouts there. (His own nephew



was working as a temporary waiter. A kid with an enforcer dressed as a guy were near the front.)

A meeting with Brilliant Chang could take many forms. If the investigators try assaulting Chang's opium den or his men, the defender fight to protect themselves, to overpower the investigators, and to take them to Chang for questioning.

If investigators try to sneak into Chang's headquarters, the keeper will have to adjudicate success, but failure results in capture and a conference with Chang. If they approach in a reasonable fashion, posing as clients or simply asking for a meeting, they are dealt with cautiously but politely. Several bodyguards protect Chang at all times.

If the meeting goes badly, the investigators may be roughed up or beaten, then thrown from the docks.

If the meeting goes well, they get useful information. Chang calls in the kid with the guy and they report. If the investigators are somehow spying on Chang, then they could also overhear the same information when he interviews these same agents.

- The lookouts saw Michael Compton and five others leave the Gargoyle Club in the early hours of the morning. One of them, a girl, was carried by two of the others. They took her to a car and drove off. They were talking loudly but slurring their words. The watchers overheard the name "Jack Cade".

- The kid with the guy has since been following the investigators, trying to see what they learn. Chang's nephew has gone to Blackheath to watch Compton's home. He has not reported back yet.

(In fact, Chang's nephew was discovered and is about to be fed to the formless spawn as a sacrifice during their orgiastic ritual. If the investigators and Chang decide to work together, Chang sends his trusted man, Chen, with them to Jack Cade's Cavern. Chang has little knowledge of London history and will not be able to understand the Jack Cade reference by himself.)

## Other Leads

The investigators can follow various avenues of research concerning Jack Cade, backgrounds of witnesses, the

formless fragment, etc. Use the information in this book to help investigators understand what they learn.

## THE DEAD GIRL

Apart from the fact that Agatha is a young socialite, cocaine user, and hedonist, keepers should feel free to adjust her background to fit individual groups of investigators. For example, she could be an American heiress, an English debutante, or an actress. The investigators will need a reason to want to look into the events surrounding her death themselves.

## NEWSPAPERS

A newspaper report by "Chatterbox" in the Daily Express, 31st October, 1925, reads "An outrageous party took place at the Gargoyle Club on the night of the 30th October. Michael Compton challenged his guests to a game of dare poker and some of the goings-on would not have been out of place at a Roman orgy!"

A *Daily Express* journalist gate-crashed the early stages of the party, but knows no more than can be ascertained at the Gargoyle.

## THE FORMLESS FRAGMENT

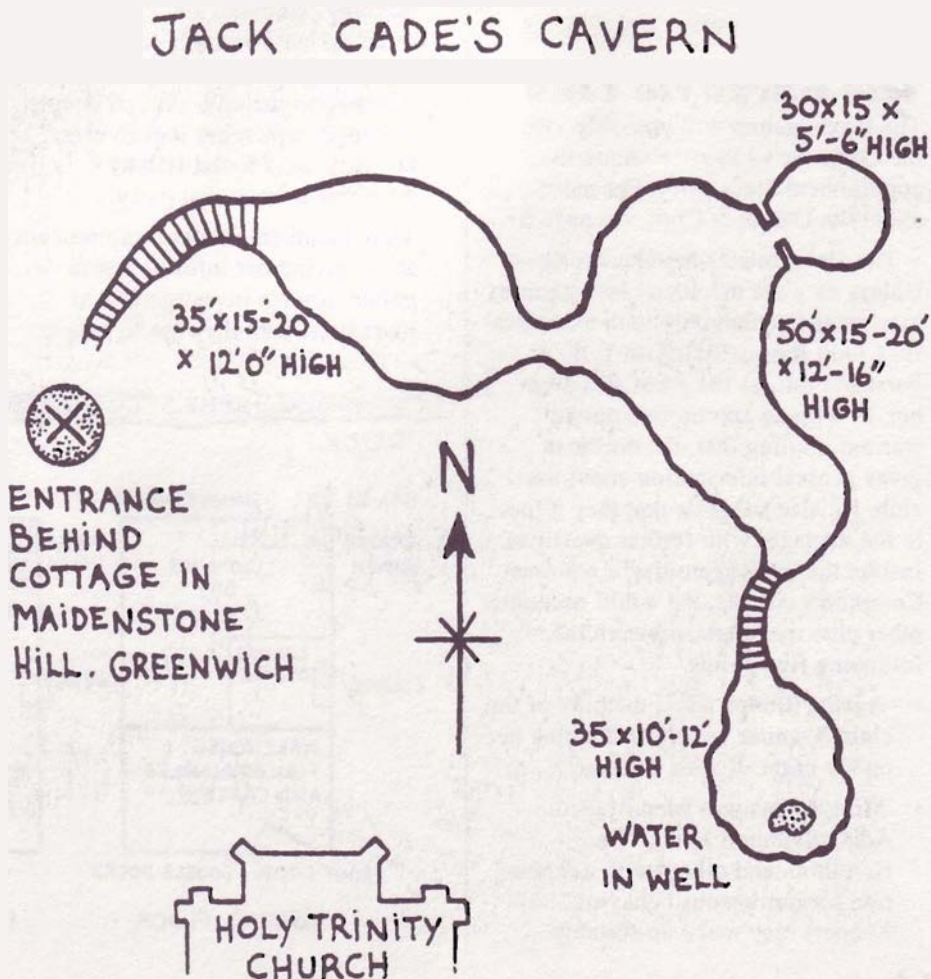
Anyone studying the fragment needs an appropriate successful skill roll and 1D6 hours to discover that the slime is only damaged by fire or certain chemicals. A Sanity roll must be made each hour of the investigation, as the unnatural nature of the fragment becomes evident—it is alive yet it seems impossible that it could be (0/1D4 SAN). The fragment will try to escape at the first opportunity, especially in response to fire-coiling and writhing like steel spring, and almost as strong.

## JACK CADE'S CAVERN

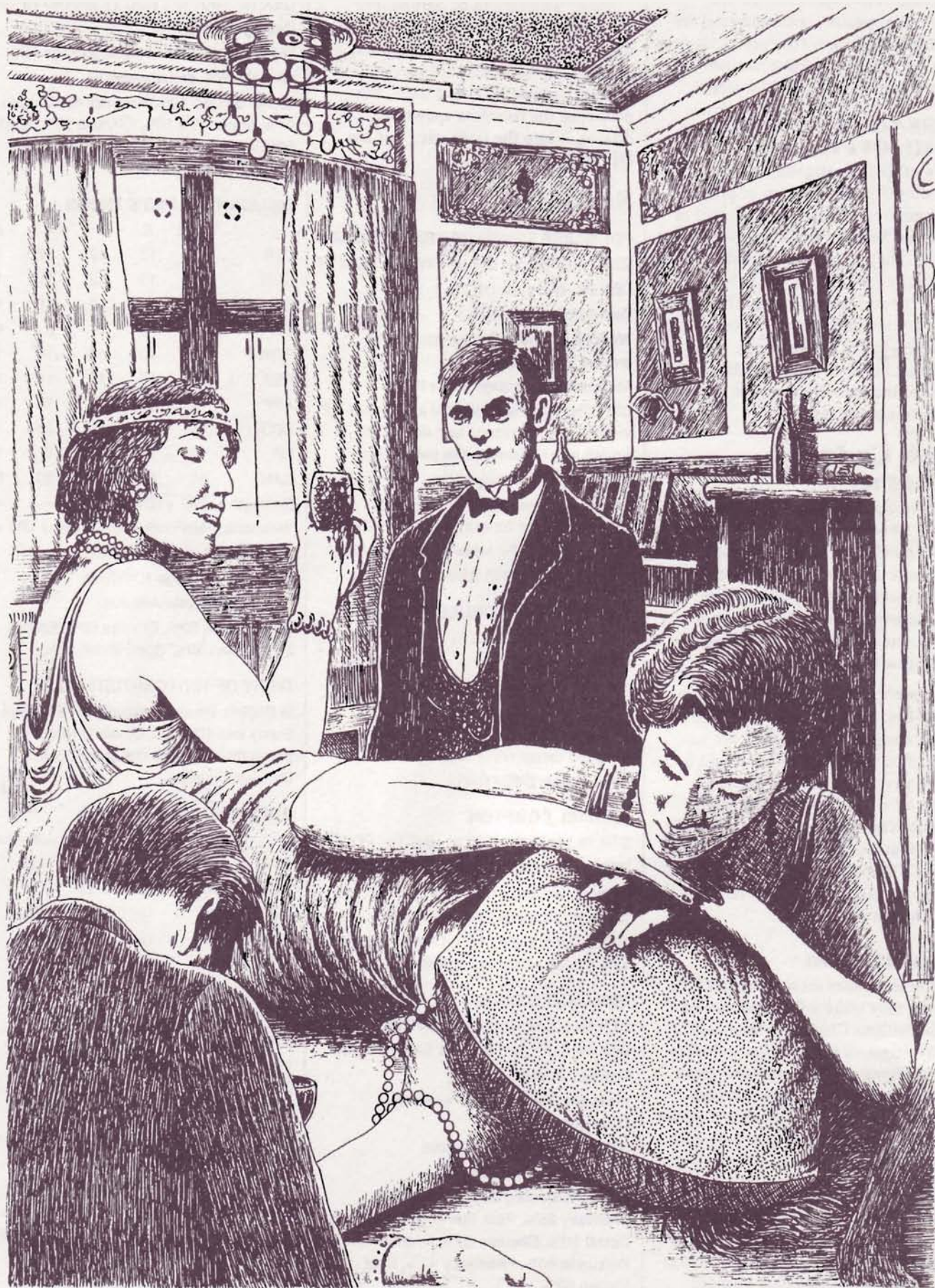
Research on the name Jack Cade will reveal the information on pages 50 and 78. Research on Blackheath or an idea roll will establish the link between Blackheath and the cavern.

## MICHAEL COMPTON

Michael Compton is titled, wealthy, and lives in Blackheath. He attended Cambridge University between 1914 and 1916 and fought in the war between 1916 and 1918 when he was invalidated out (sent home because of a



# Miss Agatha Simms' Demise



disability). Other cultists Evelyn, Nina, Adam, Jeremy, and the late Agatha have often been seen together. They are fashionable, wealthy, and renowned for scandalous behavior. They are all on poor terms with their respective families whom they haven't visited for weeks.

## MESSAGE FROM THE HOME OFFICE

If any of the Investigators are police they should get a telegram or phone call from Special Branch on behalf of the Home Secretary, Sir Joynson-Hicks ("Jix"). They think that a number of members of the Gargoyle Club are foreign or communist spies. The Home Secretary would like to link the murder to a foreigner or a communist. They would also love to arrest Brilliant Chang if the Investigators can get any evidence against him.

## Jack Cade's Cavern

The investigation should lead to Jack Cade's Cavern, where the investigators encounter Compton, his friends, and the formless spawn. As the investigators arrive, the cultists begin their ritual, starting with the sacrifice of Chang's nephew and culminating in merging with the formless spawn.

If the investigators promptly reach the cavern, they are in time to save Chang's nephew. If not, they are too late to stop the sacrifice but might be able to save the bodies, if not the minds, of some of the Bright Young Cultists. The formless spawn tries to swallow at least one investigator but if seriously threatened by fire or incendiary chemicals, it disappears into the well and does not return.

## Conclusion

If the investigators rescue Chang's nephew, they make a firm underworld ally in Brilliant Chang. Alternatively, if the investigators get sufficient evidence against Chang, he is arrested in connection with the murder despite his innocence of that crime, and the investigators reap good connections with the Special Branch at Scotland Yard.

Cultist survivors are insane. Their families place them in expensive, secure private hospitals. These parents and siblings also pull sufficient strings that no murder charges are brought.

Jack Cade's Cavern is sealed, and the episode concludes.

Sanity awards can be earned. For rescuing Chang's nephew, 1D4 SAN. For rescuing a Bright Young Cultist, 1D3-1 SAN each. For killing the formless spawn, 1D10+2 SAN. For defeating the formless spawn, or driving it into the Gate, etc., but not killing it, 1D4 SAN.

## Statistics

FORMLESS SPAWN OF TSATHOGGUA  
STR 22 CON 10 SIZ 25 INT 14 POW 17  
DEX 20 Move 12 HP 18

Damage Bonus: +1D6.

Weapons: Whip 90%, damage 1D6 or grapple (range 25 yds)

Tentacle 60%, damage 1D4 +1D4

Bite 30%, victim is swallowed and loses 1 HP in round one, 2 in round two, and so on.

Spawn may not move while swallowing.

Bludgeon 20%, damage 1D4

Armor: immune to normal or magical weapons except fire or incendiary chemicals.

Skills: Dodge 40%, Listen 40%, Track 15%.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D10 SAN.

FRAGMENT OF FORMLESS SPAWN  
STR 2 CON 10 SIZ 1 INT 14 POW 17  
DEX 20 Move 12 HP 6

Attacks, **etc.:** disgusting, but too small to harm a human

Armor: immune to normal or magical weapons except fire or chemicals.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4 SAN.

MICHAEL COMPTON  
STR 12 CON 9 SIZ 13 INT 15 POW 14  
DEX 13 APP 17 EDU 16 SAN 0 HP 11

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapon: Handgun 25%, Punch 60%.

Skills: Credit Rating 45%, Cthulhu Mythos 13%, Occult 40%, Persuade 65%.

BRILLIANT CHANG  
STR 13 CON 12 SIZ 12 INT 15 POW 15  
DEX 14 APP 12 EDU 13 SAN 70 HP 12

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 50%, damage 1D3+1D4

Grapple 50%, damage special

Sword Cane 25%, 1D6+1D4

Skills: Accounting 30%, Bargain 35%, Chemistry 25%, Fast Talk 40%, Listen 60%, Occult 20%, Chinese 65%, English 45%, Persuade 60%, Pharmacy 40%, Spot Hidden 60%

BRILLIANT CHANG'S NEPHEW  
STR 11 CON 13 SIZ 9 INT 11 POW 8  
DEX 14 APP 10 EDU 11 SAN 40 HP 11

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 50%, damage 1D3

Grapple %, damage special

Skills: Bargain 40%, Fast Talk 40%, Listen 60%, Martial Arts 10%, Chinese 55%, English 55%, Persuade 30%, Spot Hidden 60%, Waiting Tables 50%.

## BRILLIANT CHANG'S THUGS

	*Chen	2	3	4	5
STR	15	13	12	12	10
CON	16	15	12	11	11
SIZ	14	12	12	11	10
INT	12	10	7	8	9
POW	11	10	10	10	10
DEX	16	15	15	11	11
APP	10	10	10	10	10
EDU	11	10	10	10	10
HP	15	14	12	11	11
SAN	55	50	50	50	50

Damage +1D4 +1D4 — — —

Weapons: Fist/Punch 60%, damage 1D3 +db

Grapple 60%, damage special

Knife 35%, damage 1D4+2+db

\*Chen has Martial Arts 30%.

Skills: Listen 50%, Chinese 50%, English 25%, Sneak 50%, Spot Hidden 50%.

## DIARY OF 19TH CENTURY CULT

In English. Bound, handwritten manuscript.

Sanity loss 1D3/1D6; Cthulhu Mythos +3

percentiles, contains one spell, Contact

Formless Spawn.

## BRIGHT YOUNG CULTISTS

	Evelyn	Adam	Nina	Jeremy
STR	12	13	10	10
CON	11	14	13	11
SIZ	13	14	9	12
INT	15	12	13	13
POW	8	11	10	11
DEX	10	6	12	8
APP	15	11	14	13
EDU	16	16	14	16
HP	12	14	11	12
SAN	20	35	33	38
Dmg	+1D4	+1D4	—	—

Weapons: Fist/Punch 50%, damage 1D3 +db

Grapple 30%, damage special

Skills: Art (Make Arch Reference) 15%, Credit Rating 65%, Drink 60%, Drive 25%, Fashion 60%, Occult 20%, Cthulhu Mythos 3%, Recognize Boring Thing 70%.

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# The London Guidebook

In the quick forge and  
working-house of thought,  
How London doth pour out  
her citizens.

— Shakespeare, *Henry V*, IV, v, 22

For seven centuries the reach and power of the British Crown was regularly challenged, but never dispelled. The Crown's capital city, London, in the 1920s three times older than the Crown itself, grew to be the pre-eminent confluence of old privilege, new money, dynamic creativity, social class friction, madness, tuberculosis, science, education, and advanced medical research. Bumbling criminals, evil geniuses, refugee intellectuals, social deviants, harmless eccentrics, moral reformers, occultists, and millions of utterly normal people gravitated to London. The larger any city becomes, the more it becomes the place to be, and the more reasons people find for going there. London was the largest city in the world.

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