

THE QUIRKY - SPOOKY TRAIL



Start at the Tower of London.

- Throughout its long history, the Tower has served as a royal palace and fortress, prison and place of execution, an arsenal, royal mint, menagerie and jewel house. Today, London's great royal fortress is home to some of the most potent symbols of British history: the Yeoman Warders otherwise known as 'Beefeaters', ravens and Crown jewels.
- The last execution to take place there was in 1941 of German spy Josef Jakobs, and the tower served as a prison until 1958.
- Superstition states that if the ravens ever leave the fortress then the kingdom will fall. Charles II then insisted the ravens of the tower be protected.

Head across Tower Bridge to the HMS Belfast.

- Tower Bridge was actually built from a previously rejected design by Sir Horace Jones and Sir John Wolfe Barry. Sadly, Jones died one year into construction and never got to see his finished bridge.
- The bridge took a total of 8 years and £1 million to build.

Continue going west along the Thames to get to Bankside Pier

- This walk will also take you along where some queued to pay respects to the Queen during her lying-in-state. The queues reached a maximum of 10 miles long.
- Note your route go under the south part of Southwark Bridge. This design wasn't the first bridge to span the site. The predecessor was colloquially known as 'The Iron Bridge'. After the company went bankrupt, the bridge you see today was opened in 1921.
- Just by the entrance to Bankside Pier, you will notice Shakespeare's Globe. The globe required more than 1,000 oak trees to be built. You may notice the unique roofing of the Globe. This thatched roof required a special permission after a law banned thatched buildings following the Great Fire in 1666.

Get the river boat from Bankside to Embankment Pier.

- Enjoy a ride along the River Thames, declared 'biologically dead' by the Natural History Museum in 1957.
- London's sewer system was built in 1865 due to The Great Stink in 1858. The Great Stink happened due to the hot weather in the summer exacerbating the smell of the human and industrial waste which had been dumped in the river.
- The Thames had its last major flood to affect central London in 1928. The result of heavy snowfall in the Cotswold's, leading to parts of Chelsea Embankment to collapse. You will also be able to see Lion's head mooring rings. They are now said to act as a flood warning system to superstitious Londoners.

Head to 14 Buckingham Street and look up to see Samuel Pepys' plaque – This was the home of the famous diarist after the Great Fire of London in 1666.

- Heading towards Buckingham Street from Embankment Pier, note the stone arch past the stone urn with shrubbery. This is The Watergate for the 1st Duke of Buckingham's grand house – [York House](#) – which once lay behind the gate.. Once it lay by the river as the grand entrance to his London home. Now the gardens and the Embankment displace the river, covering the Circle and District Lines beneath them.
- Note the names of the surrounding streets – Buckingham, Villiers, George and so on. There was once even an 'Of Alley' further up Villiers Street towards Charing Cross. All of them refer to the 1st Duke, whose son, 2nd Duke, sold the land on condition that all the streets and alleys reflected their ownership.
- Tall, handsome and charming, the [first Duke](#) was the young Charles I's favourite (and his father, James I's) and figures in Alexandre Dumas' The Three Musketeers in the scandal of the diamond studs at the French court.
- Samuel Pepys lived through the Great Plague of 1665 and the Great Fire the following year.

Make your way up Villiers Street to Charing Cross Station.

- The Cross in front on the station entrance is a Victorian replacement for the Eleanor Crosses, commemorating the death of Queen Eleanor in 1290. The devastated king, Edward I, had a cross erected in her memory at each nightly resting place on the journey to London, starting in Lincoln. Only three out of twelve original crosses remain.
- The station didn't always look like this. In 1905 part of the roof collapsed, killing 6 people.
- Charing Cross station also played a key role during the First World War. It was one of the main stations for supplies and troops leaving for the western front.

Try to avoid any ghosts at the Adelphi Theatre

- The Adelphi Theatre currently homes the [Back to the Future musical](#), and if we travel back in time too, there is a haunting history to the theatre. William Terriss was an actor in the Victorian era known for his heroic roles. He was killed by Richard Archer Prince, after getting him fired. Allegedly, after being stabbed at the stage door, he was taken to the stage where he died, his final words being 'I shall come back'.

Revel in urban legend at Bleeding Heart Yard

- There is an urban legend that the courtyard is named after the murder of Lady Elizabeth Hatton, the second wife of Sir William Hatton, whose family formerly owned the area around Hatton Garden. It is said that her body was found here in 1646, *"torn limb from limb, but with her heart still pumping blood."*
- The yard is also linked to Saffron Hill, most notable for being the home of Fagin in Oliver Twist.

Check it out on our interactive map [here](#). Total walking time: 1h 37 minutes

