

Our Mutual Friends

Dickens Walk #1: Southwark & City



Duration: 1.5 hours, approximately
Start: Southwark Tube Station on Jubilee Line

- Cross Blackfriars Road from the station and go along Union Street.
- Pass under the railway bridge and turn right by the Union Jack pub into Great Suffolk Street.
- 1st left into Copperfield Street (formerly Orange Street, renamed, as were many streets in this area, after Dickens's characters).
- 2nd right into Sawyer Street, although the rest of Copperfield Street is worth a look first.
- At the end of Sawyer Street (formerly John Street, renamed after Bob Sawyer in *Pickwick Papers*) cross Southwark Bridge Road into **Lant Street**, where Dickens lodged with a Mr. & Mrs. Russell in 1825 – the site of the building is now occupied by the Charles Dickens Primary School, which also blocks the street. Dickens based the Garlands in *The Old Curiosity Shop* on the Russells, and Bob Sawyer lodged here, in *Pickwick Papers*.
- Turn right alongside the school in Toulmin Street to turn left at the end into Great Suffolk Street. The site of the **King's Bench Prison**, where Mr. Micawber was held in *David Copperfield*, and to which Arthur Clenham was urged to go, instead of to the Marshalsea, in *Little Dorrit*, is behind the block of flats on the opposite side of the road, and can be viewed by a short detour down Stones End Street – it stood where the flats on the grass embankment are now, opposite the little pub.
- Back on Great Suffolk Street, go to the end and turn left on Borough High Street.
- Cross at the traffic lights by the church of **St. George the Martyr**, where Amy Dorrit was baptised, slept one night when locked out of the Marshalsea, and married Arthur Clenham in *Little Dorrit*, (a representation of her in stained glass can be seen in the east window, if the church is open).

- Go past the front of the church and turn right beside the library into Angel Court (not signposted, but there is a fingerpost pointing to the Coroner's Court along the alley). The wall on the right, with street lamps attached to it, was the south wall, and all that remains, of the **Marshalsea Prison**, where Dickens's father was held for debt in 1824. There is a plaque on the other side of the wall, viewable from the public gardens. The prison figures largely in *Little Dorrit*.
- Back on Borough High Street continue going north, away from the church, passing many yards on the right where there were coaching inns in the past, including the **George Inn**, mentioned in *Little Dorrit*, and White Hart Yard - site of the **White Hart Inn**, where Mr. Pickwick caught up with Alfred Jingle and Rachel Wardle, and where he first met Sam Weller in *Pickwick Papers*.
- At St. Thomas Street turn right and enter **Guy's Hospital** through the ornate main gates on the right, cross the car park in the forecourt and through the triple-arched entrance beyond, into the colonnade. In the left-hand garden is one of the recesses from the sides of the old **London Bridge**, in which David would sit in *David Copperfield*. Bob Sawyer was a medical student here in *Pickwick Papers*.
- Go back to Borough High Street, cross over and turn right. As you approach London Bridge there are steps on the left (with signs pointing down to Glaziers Hall and Minerva Court) – this is where Nancy met Mr. Brownlow and Rose Maylie in *Oliver Twist*, and betrayed Fagin to him, resulting in her death at the hands of Bill Sykes. There is one remaining arch from the old bridge visible at the foot of the steps, crossing Tooley Street.
- At the foot of the steps turn right and follow the Thames Path westwards, keeping as close to the river as possible.
- Just opposite Southwark Cathedral is an open space leading to the river, with the words on the parapet wall, "THERE ARE TWO THINGS SCARCE MATCHED IN THE UNIVERSE – THE SUN IN THE HEAVENS AND THE THAMES ON EARTH". The stretch of **the river** here was where Gaffer and Lizzie Hexam made a living pulling corpses from the river in *Our Mutual Friend*.
- Continue west past the replica of the Golden Hinde, through Pickfords Wharf, Clink Street, and along Bankside to **Southwark Bridge**. The previous bridge here was the **Iron Bridge** where Amy Dorrit would pay a penny toll to walk in *Little Dorrit*. The current bridge dates from 1921, but is in similar style and materials.
- Cross the river and go up Queen Street and on into King Street to reach the **Guildhall** of the City of London. The Bardell v. Pickwick hearing was held here in *Pickwick Papers*.
- Go back to the top of King Street and turn left into Gresham Street, which leads into Lothbury.
- Turn right into Princes Street, beside the Bank of England, to the square in

front of the Bank to visit **Royal Exchange**, mentioned in *A Christmas Carol*, *Little Dorrit*, and *Great Expectations*. It is now a shopping mall.

- Walk east along Cornhill, beside the Royal Exchange, and turn right into Ball Court. Scrooge's counting house in *A Christmas Carol* was located in this vicinity, and Dickens was a frequent customer at **Simpson's Eating House**, which still stands here.
- Follow the winding Ball Court to the end, turn left into Castle Court and right into St. Michael's Alley - Pickwick stayed at the George and Vulture inn, which still stands here, after the lawsuit in *Pickwick Papers*.
- Cross the double courtyards of George Yard beyond the pub and turn left at the bottom into Lombard Street.
- Turn right into Plough Court and left at the end into Lombard Court. Follow this until you reach Gracechurch Street and turn right.
- You will see **The Monument** ahead, mentioned in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, reached by crossing Eastcheap into Fish Street Hill.

Walk ends at Monument Tube Station on the Circle & District Lines.