

Our Mutual Friends

Dickens Walk #3: Soho & Covent Garden



Duration: 1.5 hours approximately
Start: Embankment Tube Station

- Turn left on coming through the ticket barriers at Embankment tube station and go out into Embankment Place; walk straight ahead up Villiers Street and look left into the covered Goods Delivery way. This was the site of **Warren's Blacking Factory**, Hungerford Market, where Dickens worked as a child, in 1824-1825. The site is now underneath Charing Cross station.
- Continue a few metres up Villiers Street and turn right down the steps onto the footpath behind Embankment Gardens (called Watergate Walk). Halfway along, opposite the Watergate, go up the steps on the left into **Buckingham Street**. No. 15-16, the first building on the right, is the site of a house where Dickens lived in 1834, while working as a Parliamentary reporter for his uncle's newspaper, *The Mirror of Parliament*, and later for *The Morning Chronicle*.
- Walk up Buckingham Street to the top, turn right into John Adam Street, and 2nd right into Robert Street. This leads to **Adelphi Terrace**, at the end overlooking the Thames, where Miss Wade met Rigaud, observed by Arthur Clenham, in *Little Dorrit*.
- Go to the far end of the Terrace and turn left up Adam Street. Cross Strand and go through the archway into Bull Inn Court. At the top, turn right into **Maiden Lane**; opposite (at Nos. 34-35) is *Rules* restaurant; Dickens dined there often, and had a regular table at the rear of the first floor. Continue to the end of Maiden Lane, turn right and then left at the bottom, back onto Strand.
- Walk 200 metres and turn left into **Wellington Street** beside the Lyceum theatre. Opposite the theatre is the site of the office of the weekly magazine, *Household Words*, which Dickens edited from 1850 to 1859.
- Further up **Wellington Street**, on the right, the building at the junction with Tavistock Street has a plaque on the wall which says, "*This building*

housed the offices of Charles Dickens's magazine *All the Year Round* and his private apartments from 1859 to 1870". *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Great Expectations* were published in serial form in the magazine in 1859 - 1861.

- Continue up **Wellington Street** for one block. On the left, on the far side of Russell Street, is the site of the old Bow Street Police Court, where the Artful Dodger was charged with theft in *Oliver Twist*.
- Turn right here, go along Russell Street to the end, and turn left into **Drury Lane**. A few metres up on the left is Drury Lane Gardens, formerly a graveyard (note the mortuary chapel on the right of the entrance). This was where Esther's father was buried and where Lady Dedlock died on the steps, by the entrance, in *Bleak House*.
- Continue up Drury Lane to Long Acre; turn left there, walk 200 metres and turn right at Mercer Street; pass the Seven Dials column and continue to the end of Mercer Street. Cross Shaftesbury Avenue and go along St. Giles Passage, to the right of the Odeon cinema. Turn left at the end of the block, and, keeping the gardens on your right, follow the railings round to the end of Stacey Street. Turn left into the unmarked Flitcroft Street (more of an alleyway), which leads to Charing Cross Road. Turn right there and cross the road into **Manette Street**. This is claimed to be the home of Dr. Manette and his daughter, Lucie, in *A Tale of Two Cities*. In the novel the house is described as being in "a quiet street-corner not far from Soho Square" and that "A quaint corner than the corner where the Doctor lived, was not to be found in London. There was no way through it, and the front windows of the Doctor's lodgings commanded a pleasant little vista of street, that had a congenial air of retirement about it." Not so today. There is a passage at the end into Greek Street now, under the **Pillars of Hercules** pub. This was the original for the 'Hercules Pillars' pub in *A Tale of Two Cities*.
- Turn left at Greek Street and go to the end; cross Shaftesbury Avenue and turn right. Take the first left at Gerrard Place and right into **Gerrard Street**. Here was Mr. Jaggers' home in *Great Expectations*. Described as "a house on the south side of that street, rather a stately house of its kind, but dolefully in want of painting, and with dirty windows. So, up a dark brown staircase into a series of three dark brown rooms on the first floor." The dinner Pip attended there, with three companions, is described in Chapter 26.
- Continue to the end of Gerrard Street, turn right and cross Shaftesbury Avenue again. Go ahead up Wardour Street, passing **St. Anne's church** on the right. This is said to be the church where Lucie Manette was married to Charles Darnay in *A Tale of Two Cities*.
- Take the third turning on the left into Brewer Street, walk 250 metres and turn right at Lower James Street. This leads to **Golden Square**, where Ralph Nickleby lived in *Nicholas Nickleby*. Turn around, go back down Lower James Street, and continue straight ahead to Piccadilly Circus.

Walk ends at Piccadilly Tube Station on the Piccadilly & Bakerloo Lines.