

LONDON BEYOND TIME AND PLACE

with PHILIPP RÖTTGERS

[A Walk beyond Time and Place](#)

London: A Legacy An Iron Maiden London Walking Tour

An Iron Maiden Walking Tour through London sounds not difficult at first. The city has been one of the most important settings in the band's history.

There is the Marquee club in Soho, where Iron Maiden (but also Blaze Bayley's band Wolfsbane) played early gigs. There is the O2 Arena, where Maiden played their last London gig on "The Legacy of the Beast" tour (a slightly bigger location than the Marquee). Steve Harris was born in Leytonstone in East London and the band was perceived as proper East End band. The famous "Beast over Hammersmith" concerts were, as the name suggests, filmed and recorded in Hammersmith, on the other side of town. The band recorded in various studios like the Battery Studios in North London, as did its members on their solo projects. Bruce Dickinson's final shows with Iron Maiden in 1993 were filmed at Pinewood Studios west of central London, several weeks after the proper tour had ended. Band members were introduced to each other in music clubs in Camden or Soho, Bruce Dickinson was at Queen Mary College on the Mile End Road in East London, Janick Gers lived in Chiswick for some time, "The Best of the Beast" was promoted in Piccadilly Circus... so you see the problem. How does one include all the significant locations in a coherent walk?

And what about all the places that are related to the band's lyrics? London has always been the centre of the political and cultural history that inspired many of the band's songs. There is William Blake, the greatest London visionary, who influenced Bruce Dickinson's superb solo album "The Chemical Wedding". The American Edgar Allan Poe, author of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (which inspired the Maiden song "Murders in the Rue Morgue"), studied at boarding schools in Chelsea (West London) and Stoke Newington (North London). "The beast" itself Aleister Crowley, inspirer of songs like "Revelations" or "Moonchild", was

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of course also from London and lived in Chancery Lane in his youth. And “the Alchemist” John Dee had his house in Mortlake on the southside of the River Thames.

You cannot visit all these places in one go. But maybe we can play with madness?

While it might be quite easy to find “Maiden locations” – locations related to Maiden’s history or to historic events in Maiden songs – it can be a bit more difficult to turn it into a self-guided walk. However, my advantage is that London and its symbols and history help me. A place like London is so full of history, that you can create your own story – you can see and interpret things and buildings that others would put into a completely different context. The walk I offer is just one possibility. So, let us become Nomads and start our walk.

An Iron Maiden Walking Tour Through London

The tour

Start: Embankment Underground Station

End: Lambeth North Underground Station

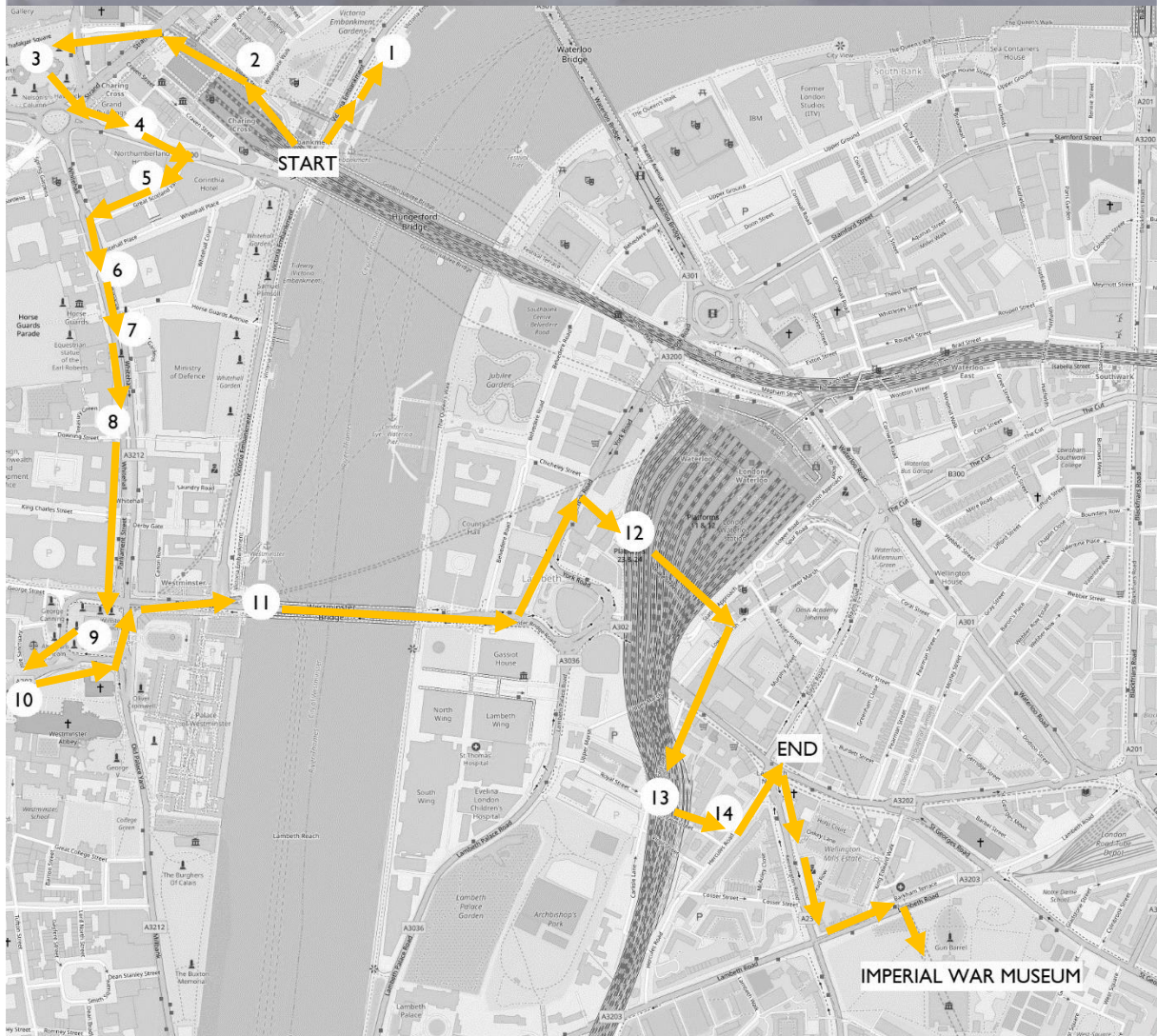
(Alternatively: The Imperial War Museum)

Duration: 2 h (approximately)

Start: Embankment Underground Station – **1:** Cleopatra’s Needle – **2:** Villiers Street – **3:** National Gallery, Trafalgar Square – **4:** The Sherlock Holmes Pub – **5:** Great Scotland Yard – **6:** Whitehall – **7:** Equestrian statue of Douglas Haig, 1st Earl Haig – **8:** 10, Downing Street – **9:** Parliament Square – **10:** Westminster Abbey – **11:** Westminster Bridge – **12:** Leake Street Arches – **13:** Mosaics in Carlisle Street and Centaur Street – **14:** Hercules Road – **End:** Lambeth North Underground Station / **Alternatively:** Imperial War Museum

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Best of times: Two minutes to midnight. Just kidding, the best time is actually throughout the day so you can see all the sites and statues properly and if you want, you can visit the museums on the way. So best of times is morning until afternoon.

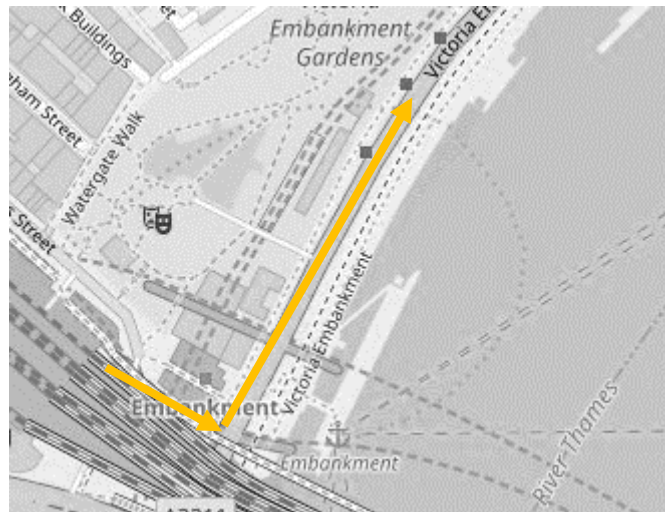
Please be careful on your walks! Pay attention when you cross roads while reading the tour guide. If you get lost, just try to get back to the former point on the route or to one of the main thoroughfares.

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Start: Embankment Underground Station

Embankment Underground Station – Cleopatra’s Needle



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The walk starts at Embankment underground station. You can begin the proper walk right away by leaving the station via the left exit to Villiers Street (that is the exit to Charing Cross station). However, if you wish to see London's oldest man-made monument, I would advise you to take the right exit, that leads to the River Thames. It takes two minutes of your time, then on you go. Cross the road and turn left. Walk towards Cleopatra's Needle. On your right the Thames flows steadily and mighty.

Cleopatra's Needle dates back to 1450 BC, being one of two obelisks originally set up by Pharaoh Thothmes III at the entrance to the Temple of the Sun at Heliopolis in Ancient Egypt. It was erected in London in 1878. The transport from Alexandria was difficult and cost several seamen their lives. Just like their pharaoh, these men must have been "slaves to the power of death".



The place is allegedly one of the most famous suicide spots on the river. The whole of London is full of ghosts and ghostly tales, and especially the Thames has a reputation for being a haunted area. I am sure, there is also a "Ghost of the Navigator" among them.

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*Cleopatra's Needle – Embankment Underground Station – Villiers Street –
Duncannon Street – Trafalgar Square/National Gallery*



Turn around again and walk back along the Victoria Embankment. Turn right into Embankment Station again and walk through the station and you'll emerge onto busy Villiers Street. Walk along the street. Two doors down the fence of Gordon's Wine Bar on your right, you will see Kipling House, thus named for the author of "The Jungle Book", Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936), who lived there from 1889 to 1891. Kipling is also the writer of the novella "The Man Who Would Be King" from 1888 and even though the Maiden song of the same title, written by Steve Harris and Dave Murray, seems to have no connection to Kipling's work, it is worth a mention.

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Once you reach the end of Villiers Street, turn left. On your left there is Charing Cross Station. Cross the road on the streetlight in front of the station and walk along Duncannon Street towards the National Gallery. On your right is St-Martin-in-the-Fields, the church known for its regular lunchtime and evening concerts. Many ensembles perform there, including the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields. You are in the cultural centre of Westminster.



In the National Gallery, you will find illustrations by the beloved English Romantic painter, engraver and illustrator John Martin (19 July 1789 - 17 February 1854). Iron Maiden's artwork designer Derek Riggs repeatedly and undoubtedly pointed out John Martin as his role model, the man who inspired most of his works from the early Maiden years. His paintings are typically vast and melodramatic depictions of religious subjects and fantastic compositions. In them, the minimal figures are placed in imposing landscapes. So, if you are looking for the illustrations that influenced for example the "Live After Death" artwork, you should visit the National Gallery and look at Martin's biblical paintings (however, during the pandemic you will have to book in advance to go inside the gallery).

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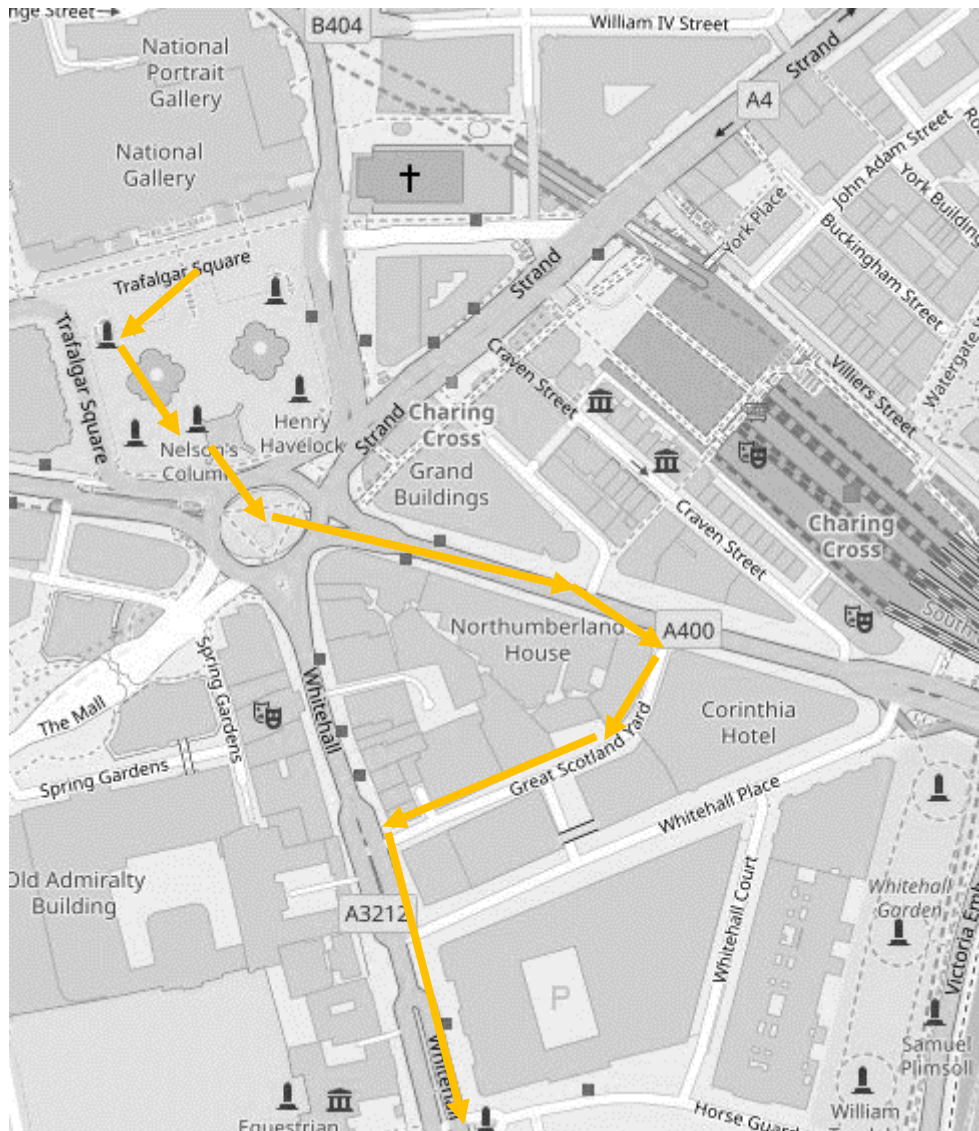


From the main entrance of the National Gallery, walk anticlockwise around Trafalgar Square until you reach the statue of Sir Charles James Napier GBC. Napier was an officer of the British Army's Peninsular and later a Major General of the Bombay Army. The whole next stretch of the walk will be full of references to Britain's war history, a topic that the British seem to like to celebrate a lot. The colours of the Union Jack don't run from cold bloody war. And Iron Maiden have referred to several wars and war stories in their lyrics.

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*National Gallery – Trafalgar Square – Northumberland Avenue – The Sherlock
Holmes Public House – Great Scotland Yard – Whitehall*



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From Napier's statue, walk over the square to its centrepiece, Nelson's Column, one hundred and sixty-seven feet tall. Trafalgar Square was constructed between 1829 and 1841 and is conceived as England's memorial to her greatest sailor Admiral Nelson. Standing at Nelson's Column, cross the road on the next streetlight on your left and go to the traffic island with the Equestrian Statue of Charles I in the middle, the only English monarch to be executed. Cross the traffic island and go left into Northumberland Avenue. Walk along the Avenue until you come to the corner where Northumberland Avenue meets Northumberland Street. There, you will see the famous and excellent Sherlock Holmes Pub.

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The Sherlock Holmes pub depicts Sherlock Holmes and Dr John Watson on its windows as well as their creator Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. It is well worth a visit. Even if you overcome the temptation to stop for a pint, you might want to take a look inside. There are drawings and photographs from movie adaptations on the walls, and a Holmesian bookshelf in the corner to the right of the bar. Sometimes the old black and white Sherlock Holmes movies, with Basil Rathbone as the master detective and Nigel

Bruce as Dr Watson, are shown on the TVs. If you go upstairs into the restaurant area, there is a truly magnificent recreation of Holmes's sitting room at 221b Baker Street. It includes a statue of the detective himself (obviously inspired by Basil Rathbone).

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was heavily influenced by Edgar Allen Poe's detective stories and used them as sources when creating his master detective. Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" was turned into a song by Iron Maiden on their second album "Killers" (1981). Conan Doyle was also a well-known supporter of the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain. One of its resident mediums was Doris Stokes, whose death had influenced Steve Harris when writing the lyrics to "The Clairvoyant" on the 1988 album "Seventh Son of the Seventh Son". He wondered if she had foreseen her own death.

Cross Northumberland Avenue and turn right into Great Scotland Yard. Do not miss it, on your right is a gate that leads to the stable of the Mounted Branch of the Metropolitan

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Police. It is well worth taking a look inside and see the horses. At the end of Great Scotland Yard, you will come out on Whitehall. The building you face is part of the old Admiralty buildings. This was the official residence of the First Lord of the Admiralty.



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Whitehall – Parliament Square



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Turn left and walk down Whitehall. You could tell a historic tale, mostly related to war, to almost all of the statues and buildings that you will see along the way. You will pass the equestrian statue of George William Frederick Charles, 2nd duke of Cambridge (1819-1904), field marshal and commander in chief of the British army. He was the only son of Adolphus Frederick, the youngest son of King George III. A little further on the other side of the road, there is the Horse Guards Parade. Keep walking along Whitehall, cross Horse Guards Avenue. The house on the corner is Banqueting House, the only survivor the Whitehall Palace, that burned down in 1698.



At the building, right at the corner of the street you will see a bust of King Charles I. above a small wooden door. It was close to this door that the king had been led to be executed.

Keep walking along Whitehall and notice the equestrian statue of Douglas Haig, 1st Earl Haig, in the middle of the road. Haig was a British field marshal and commander-in-chief on the Western Front during the First World War from 1915 to 1918. His diary from the First World War period was declared a UNESCO World Document Heritage Site in 2015.

Most interesting for Iron Maiden fans is the fact that Haig was commander during the Third Battle of Ypres, also known as the Battle of Passchendaele. The horrors of this battle have been immortalized in the song "Paschendaele", written by Steve Harris and Adrian Smith, on the 2003 album "Dance of Death".

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The next monument on Whitehall is “The Women of World War II”, and a little further on the right is the entrance to 10, Downing Street, residence of the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. From 1979 to 1990, the first woman to hold that office was Margaret Thatcher, nicknamed “The Iron Lady”. On Iron Maiden’s second single “Sanctuary” from 1980, band mascot Eddie is depicted with a knife in his hand while crouching over her corpse. This caused quite a controversy and on the next single, “Women in Uniform”, she is seen again waiting for Eddie with a machine gun in her hands. It is open to interpretation who is the villain in these covers. Also, there is a slight similarity between the names “Iron Maiden” and “Iron Lady” ...



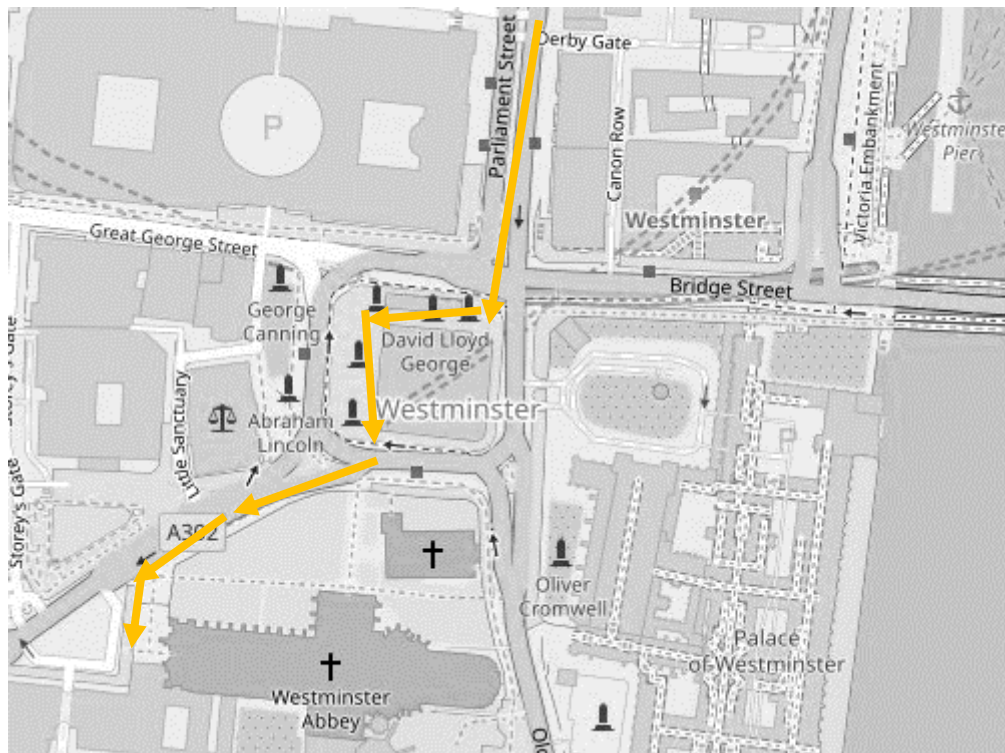
Keep walking until Whitehall turns into Parliament Street. You pass The Cenotaph, a war memorial. Its predecessor was a temporary structure that was erected for a peace parade after the end of the First World War, before the current memorial was permanently erected.

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At the end of Parliament Street, you come out on Parliament Square. On your left is Elizabeth Tower with the famous bell Big Ben, next to it are the Houses of Parliament. Cross the street and turn right to get onto Parliament Square with its many statues and sculptures. The first one you meet is quite familiar. It is Winston Churchill.

Parliament Square – Westminster Abbey



Churchill was one of the greatest statesmen of the United Kingdom, being most famous as Prime Minister from 1940 onwards during World War II. Every Iron Maiden fan knows the part of Winston Churchill's famous speech at the House of Commons on 4 June 1940 that has been used as the intro to "Aces High" on the "Live After Death" live album as well as on the

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“Ed Hunter”, “Somewhere Back in Time” and “Maiden England” retro tours, and on the compilation album “Somewhere Back in Time”. “Churchill’s Speech”, as it was called, dealt with The Battle of Britain, the Second World War air campaign waged by the German Air Force (Luftwaffe) against the United Kingdom during the summer and autumn of 1940. The Battle of Britain was the first major campaign to be fought entirely by air forces, and was also the largest and most sustained aerial bombing campaign to that date.

Maiden songs like “Aces High” from the album “Powerslave” (1984) or “Tailgunner” from the album “No Prayer for the Dying” (1990) deal with the Royal Air Force and singer Bruce Dickinson himself is a passionate aviator.

Another song inspired by Winston Churchill can be found on Iron Maiden’s latest album “Senjustu” (2021). The song “Darkest Hour” (Dickinson/Smith) refers not to just the movie about Winston Churchill, it’s about him as a person as well.



Walk around the Square to the other statues. British politician David Lloyd George, 1st Earl Lloyd-George of Dwyfor OM was elected Prime Minister during World War I, in December 1916, and was the last Liberal to hold that office. Jan Christiaan Smuts, a South African statesman, philosopher, Burian general and British field marshal, was Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa from 1919 to 1924 and from 1939 to 1948. Dame Millicent Garrett Fawcett, GBE, was a British women’s rights activist. She became known in particular as a leader of the women’s suffrage movement. Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela probably need no further introduction and when you cross the road just after Mandela’s statue you come to Westminster Abbey.

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Walk along Broad Sanctuary until you come to the front of Westminster Abbey, the “Royal” and most famous abbey in London (together with St Paul’s Cathedral in the City of London). The two Western towers you see were designed by British architect Nicholas Hawksmoor. In his novel “Hawksmoor”, which connects the churches of 17th century architect Nicholas Hawksmoor to certain London crimes, author Peter Ackroyd toys with overlaying histories and the idea that certain spots in London

influence their surroundings and its population. Ackroyd himself is a London biographer, who wrote a biography about the city itself, but also about some of its famous residents like Charles Dickens and William Blake.

Bruce Dickinson mentions in his own biography that he read Ackroyd’s excellent biography of Blake during the making of his solo album “The Chemical Wedding” (which deals mainly with William Blake and his works) and that it is one of his best books, the other being “London: The Biography”. We will deal with Blake a bit later in this tour, for now I would like you to focus on the statues above Westminster Abbey’s entrance.

Just above the abbey’s main entrance you can see the 20th Century Martyrs, ten statues of individual martyrs who were oppressed, persecuted and had to die because of their beliefs. Everyone of them would deserve their own story. One name we are picking out is that of Oscar Romero, whose statue is the sixth from the right. Óscar Arnulfo Romero y Galdámez was archbishop of San Salvador. He stood up for social justice and political reform in his country, opposing the military dictatorship in El Salvador at the time. He is considered one of the most prominent proponents of liberation theology.

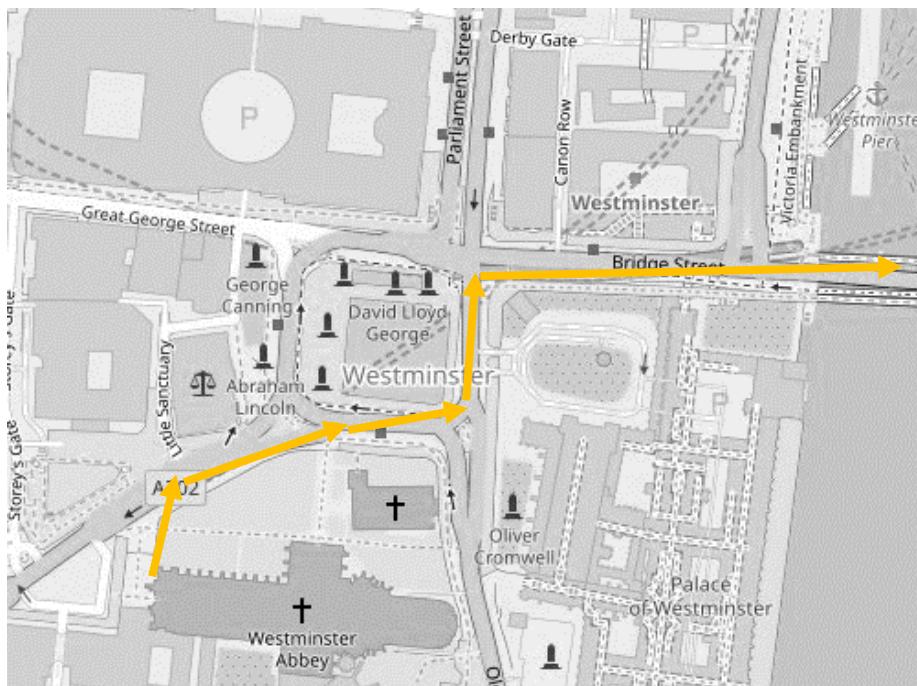
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Iron Maiden are hugely popular in South America and in 2016, during their tour stay in San Salvador, guitarist Janick Gers and drummer Nicko McBrain visited Romero's grave. This was reported on the internet with a photograph and many fans in El Salvador were enthusiastic about it.

Apart from the Maiden songs that deal with religious history like "Sign of the Cross" or "For the Greater Good of God", you should also remember that in Westminster Abbey, there is the so-called "Poet's Corner". There is a memorial to William Shakespeare in there, whose famous line from "Julius Caesar" – "The evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones" inspired Iron Maiden's song title "The Evil That Men Do" (1988). Also, C.S. Lewis is commemorated in Poet's Corner. He was the author of "Out of The Silent Planet", another book title that inspired the Iron Maiden song by the same name, written by Janick Gers, Bruce Dickinson and Steve Harris in 2000.

Westminster Abbey – Parliament Square – Westminster Bridge



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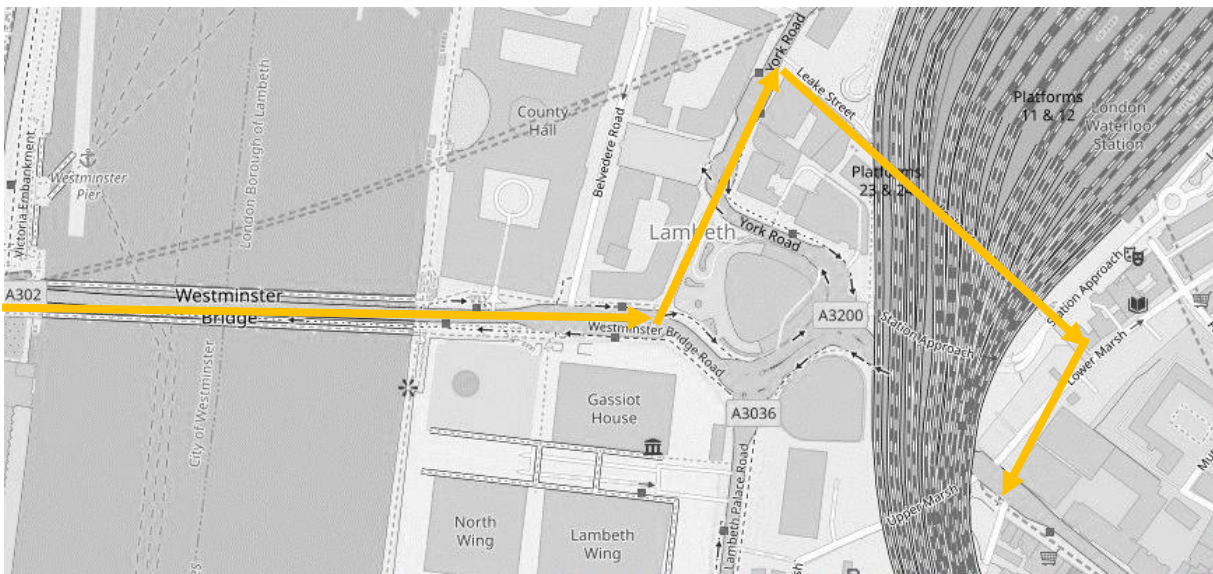
Walk around the Square until you come out where you started and turn right. Walk past the Houses of Parliament and Elizabeth Tower and you come onto Westminster Bridge. At the beginning of the bridge, take a look to your left. The statue of Queen Boudicca stands majestically in her chariot drawn by three horses, over the passing people. Boudicca was a Britanic army commander of (presumably) royal descent who led the ultimately unsuccessful Boudicca Revolt in 60/61 during the early years of the Roman occupation of Britain. During that revolt, Boudicca (or Boadicea according to some sources) took London and burnt it down. Ultimately, fire would become one of the main topics in London's history, but that is not the topic of this tour.



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Westminster Bridge – Leake Street Arches – Lower Marsh – Westminster Bridge Road



Walk over the bridge. Below you flows the Thames. On the other side of the river, on your left, is the London Eye. You are walking over Westminster Bridge. Along the river to the east, you will see more bridges. You will not see London Bridge or Tower Bridge from here, the latter being the most iconic bridge over the Thames (and often



mistaken for “London Bridge” by tourists). London Bridge however is the one before Tower Bridge. It does not look that spectacular, but has the longest history of all the bridges and even has a nursery rhyme written about it: “London Bridge is Falling Down”. This rhyme in turn is taken up by Janick Gers and then singer Blaze Bayley on their song “Man On The Edge” on Maiden’s 1995 album “The X Factor”.

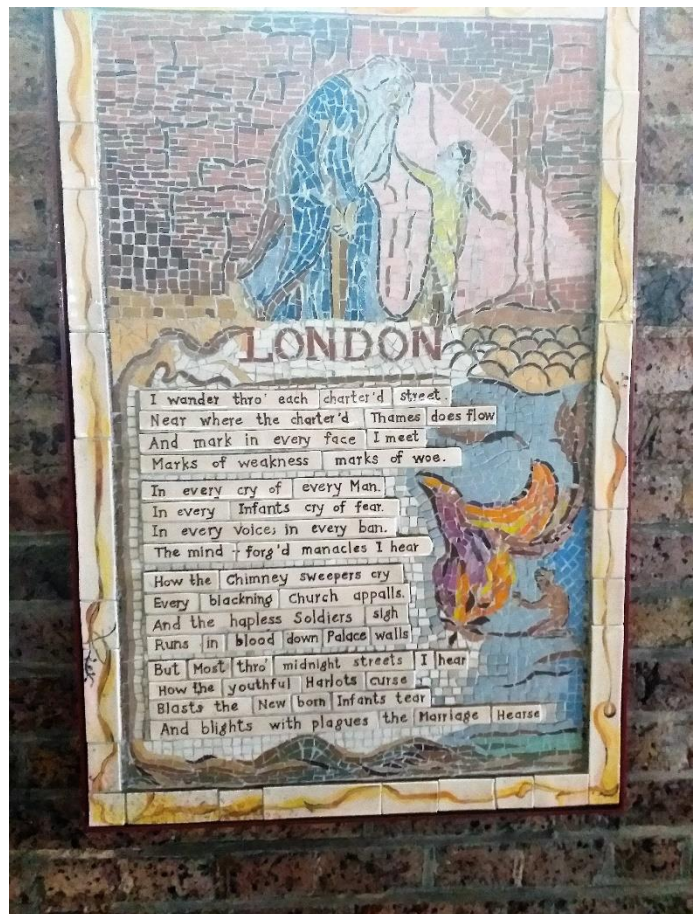
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Keep walking across the bridge and onto the street until the street becomes a curve. Turn left and go into York Road. Walk along York Road until you reach Leake Street. Turn right and walk into the Leake Street Arches.

Here, you will find the Leake Street graffiti tunnel, an inspiring artistic experience that smells of graffiti spray and marihuana. Young artists paint and spray the walls, while families lead their children through this external gallery.

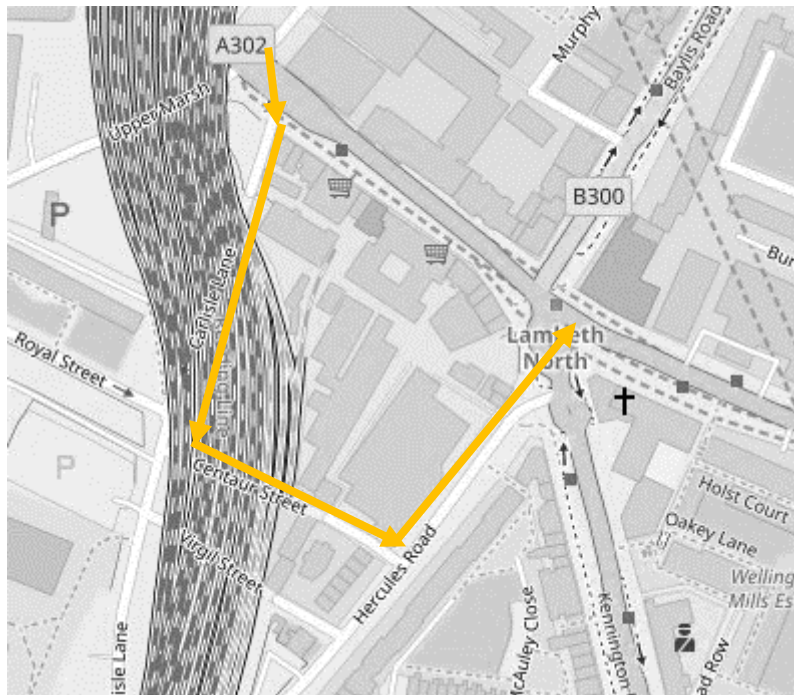
Walk right through it. At its end, keep walking straight up the footway, do not take the curve to the right. You come out on Lower Marsh. Turn right, cross the busy main road and turn into an archway called Carlisle Lane that seems lonely and dirty. Do not be afraid if you see some homeless people in the tunnel. Walking into the passage, you will notice some things on the walls on both sides of the tunnel that look like pictures. When you examine them further, you will realize that they are mosaics; and they all show images by William Blake.



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Carlise Lane – Centaur Street – Hercules Road – Lambeth North Underground Station



William Blake lived from 1757 to 1827 and was an artist, a poet and a visionary. During his lifetime he was not widely recognized, but in the last century his reputation grew and he became an important figure and reference in British culture. Blake was a radical and a genius. He was spiritual, yet he hated organized religion, and believed that all humans are equal. He closely collaborated with his wife Catherine and was seen as madman by some of his contemporaries. His famous works include “The Tyger”, “Glad Day” and most importantly the poem “And did those feet in ancient times” that was turned into the song “Jerusalem” and became an alternative national anthem for Great Britain (it is not to be confused with Blake’s epic work “Jerusalem”).)

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Bruce Dickinson is a huge admirer of Blake. On the cover of his 1998 solo album “The Chemical Wedding” you can see Blake’s “The Ghost of a Flea” and the whole album deals with the work, art and poetry of William Blake and alchemy in general. The masterpiece of the album is Dickinson’s song “Jerusalem”, an interpretation of Blake’s “And did those feet in ancient times”.

There are information signs saying that “Project Blake” was a project by Southbank Mosaics. All the way through Carlisle Lane and then left into Centaur Street you will see his pictures and poems. There are information signs about William Blake in general and Blake in Lambeth, where we are now.



When you come out of the tunnel, you stand in Hercules Road. There is a blue plaque right opposite on the house – the William Blake Estate – where the Blakes’ house once stood.

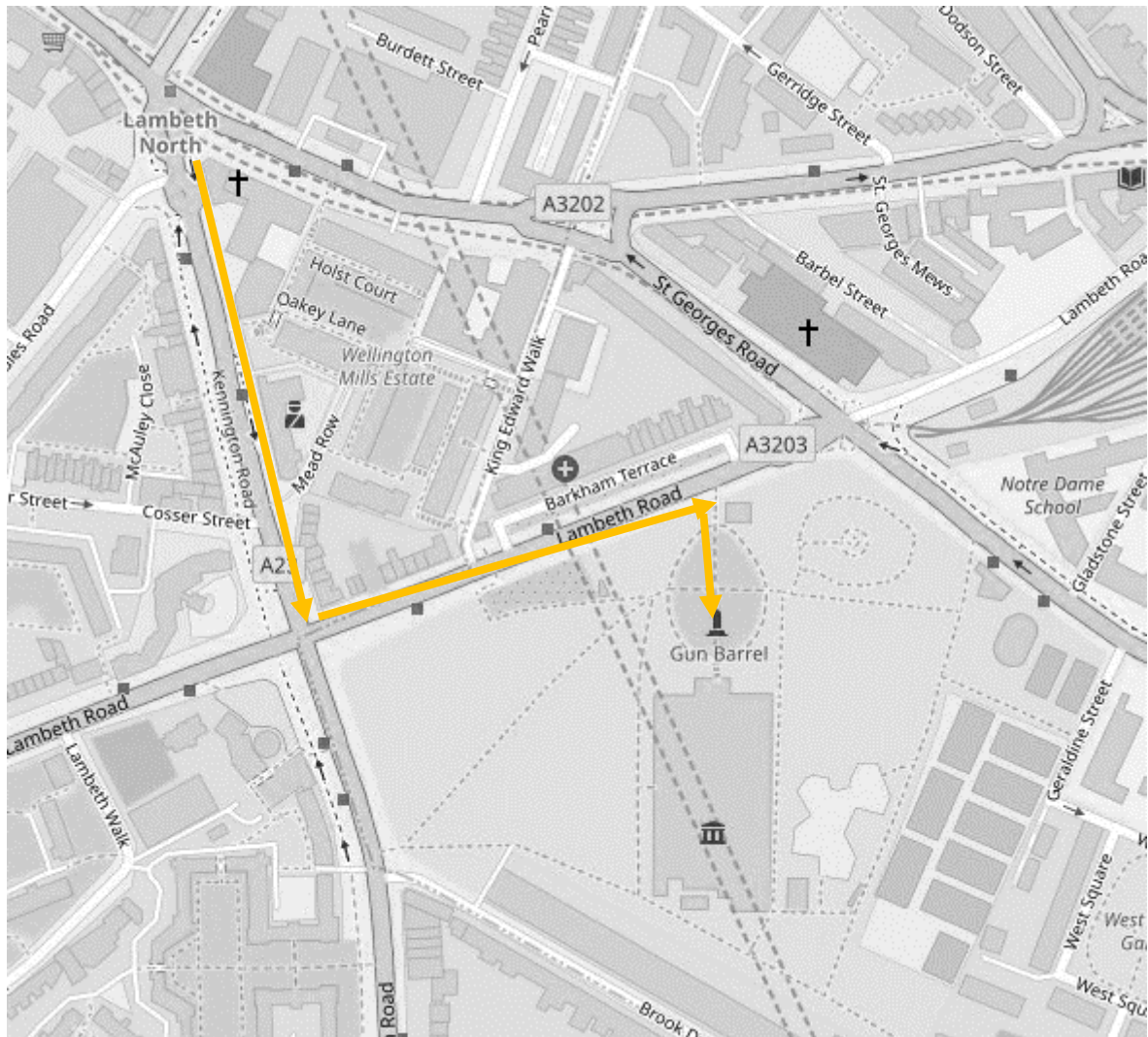


Turn left and walk along Hercules Road until you come to the busy main road. If you cross, right opposite you will find the entrance to Lambeth North Station.

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Lambeth North Underground Station – The Imperial War Museum



If you want, you can also turn right on the main road (it is called Kennington Road) and walk it down until you come to the crossing where there is the Imperial War Museum. Turn left into Lambeth Road and keep walking until you come to the main entrance on the right.

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Before there was The Imperial War Museum, this was the site for the Bethlehem Royal Hospital or “Bedlam”, a famous lunatic asylum, a world within a world. Blake could hear the cries of the inmates from his home; for him it was an “Urizenic institution”. Why not visit the museum now, as the topic of war should still ring fresh in your heads?



This is the end of our “Maiden Walk” through London. You see, you can choose every area of London and find connections to the band’s history and the topics of their songs. Symbols and names of course only work in context. They depend on your own interpretation and on your own “story”. You read places like the streets of London in the way that they fit your personal story. That is the beauty of London.

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We thank you very much and hope you have enjoyed the walk!

If you liked this tour, have a look at [London beyond time and place](#) for more [Self-Guided-Walks](#), [talks](#) and [eerie tales and stories from London's history](#).

Did you like the tour? Have you spotted any errors or mistakes? Do you have any remarks about the route? Leave us feedback or a message at info@london-beyond-time-and-place.com

We are also on social media: [Facebook](#) / [Twitter](#) / [Instagram](#) / [YouTube](#)

Leave us a comment if you liked the tour or have anything to mention!

Thanks!

Philipp Röttgers of [London beyond time and place](#)

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