


Walk to Westminster





Written by the Revd Geoffrey Roper, a URC Minister who served in Crawley, Streatham, Seaford and Chelmsford and as General Secretary of the Free Churches' Council, Associate General Secretary of Churches Together in England and with the Council for World Mission.

With grateful thanks to the Revd Professor David Thompson DD, Hannah Clark and Laura Taylor for their input, and the Revd Jenny Mills, Simon Peters and Andy Jackson who tested the route many times.

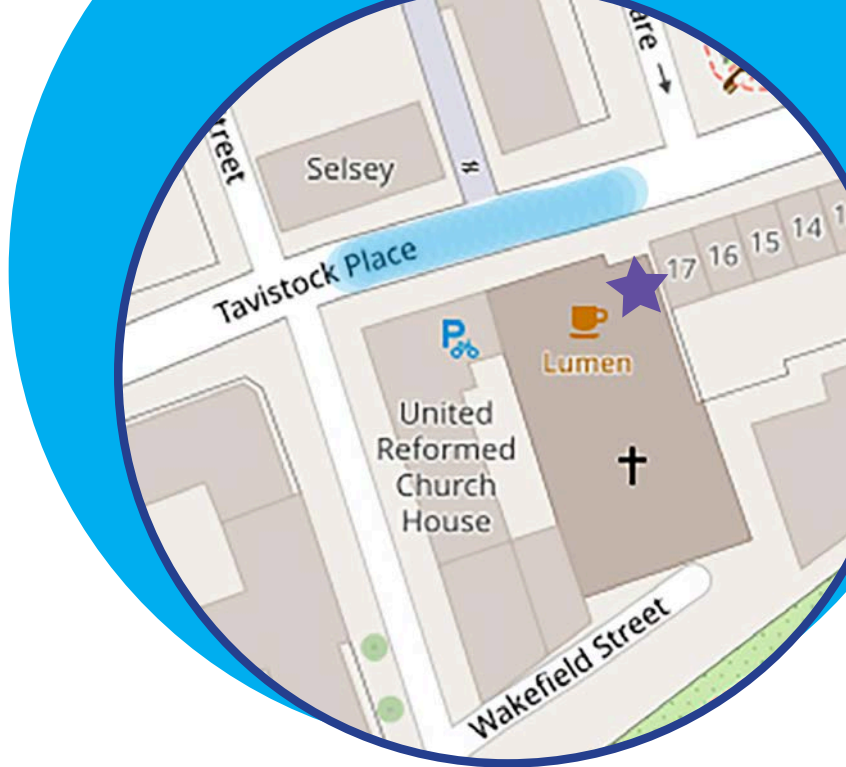
On your journey, please be aware and careful of mobile phone thieves and pickpockets, especially by busy access roads.



= points of interest

Please allow around one hour for this journey.





- Leaving Church House by the front door brings you onto Wakefield Street. Turn **right** and walk to the corner of the building.
- Turn **right** to see Lumen adjoining Church House – formerly Regent Square URC and now a community and meeting centre, operated by Thames North Synod of the URC.

Facts about Lumen

The 'National Scotch Church' opened here in 1827, coming from a site in Hatton Garden, and before that, from a site in Westminster close to the now Methodist Central Hall.

It originated with services in the Scots' Gaelic language, for young Scots who had moved to London in search of work. This is marked in



the large stone inscription: ECCLESIA SCOTICA
(Scottish Church).

They had an energetic preacher from the Church of Scotland who drew large congregations, so the new development site of 'Regent Square' was chosen to provide sufficient space for them.

Fun fact: The name 'Regent Square' was chosen when King George IV was regent during his father's reign.

Nineteenth century organist Henry Thomas Smart composed the tune 'Regent Square'. You may recognise the tune in some versions of 'Praise, my soul, the King of heaven', 'Glory be to God the Father' and 'Light's abode, celestial Salem'.

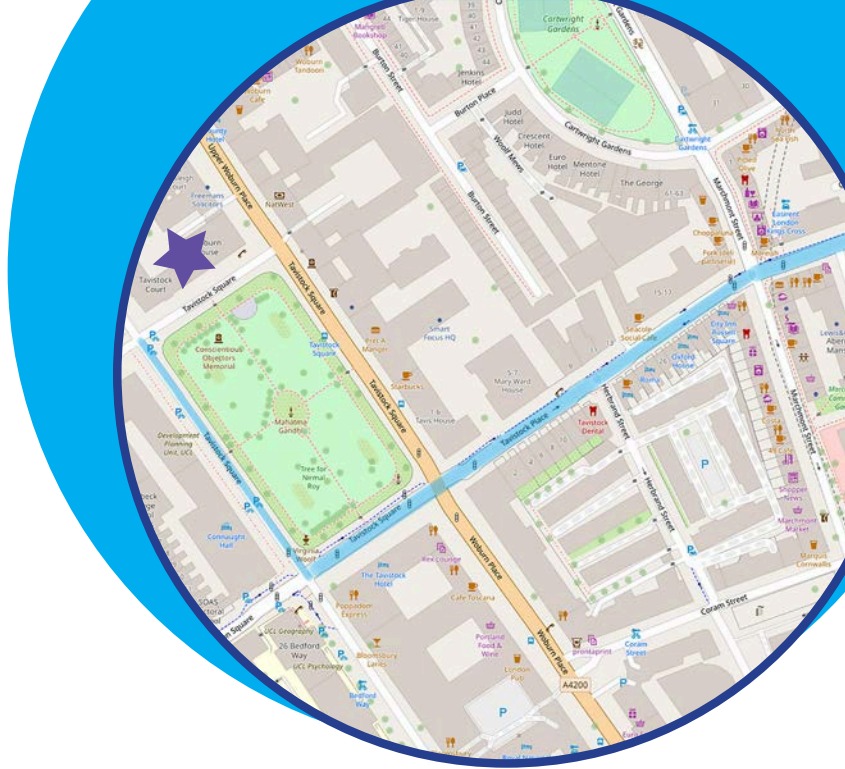
1841-1867: The Revd James Hamilton was influential in the founding of the Presbyterian Church of England (which eventually took place after his death). He was instrumental in producing its first hymnals. English Presbyterian Synods were often held here for this reason.

1897: The church bought the adjoining site and built halls and the denomination's headquarters office.

9 February 1945: One of the last V-rockets of the Second World War landed in Wakefield Street, destroying the Presbyterian church office. It killed ten people and caused severe structural damage to the church building. You can see the commemorative plaque in Church House.

1955: Church House opened.
The foundation stone of the replacement church building was laid by Lord Reith (the BBC Director General) in 1965.
Can you see the inscription at the base of the tower?





- Facing Lumen, turn back and go west along Tavistock Place.
- Cross the first junction, Hunter Street and Judd Street, at the traffic lights.
- Continue west on Tavistock Place.
- Cross Marchmont Street (where the comedy actor Kenneth Williams grew up above his father's hairdressers) at the traffic lights.
- Continue straight along Tavistock Place.

Opposite Herbrand Street T-junction, note the building formerly home of the Mary Ward Institute, named after the author Mrs Humphrey Ward (*The Marriage of William Ashe*). It was built as part of an architectural competition.



- Cross at the traffic lights to Tavistock Square; the entrance is opposite the Tavistock Hotel.

The central monument is for Mahatma Gandhi, erected in 1968, attracting to the square many other memorials with themes of peace. What other memorials of peace can you see when you walk?

- Exit the north-western side of Tavistock Square and turn **left**. At the corner of Tavistock Square and Endsleigh Street, you will see Free Churches House.

Facts about Free Church House

The Free Churches Group was founded in 1940 as the Free Church Federal Council. It now provides the London office of Churches Together in England.

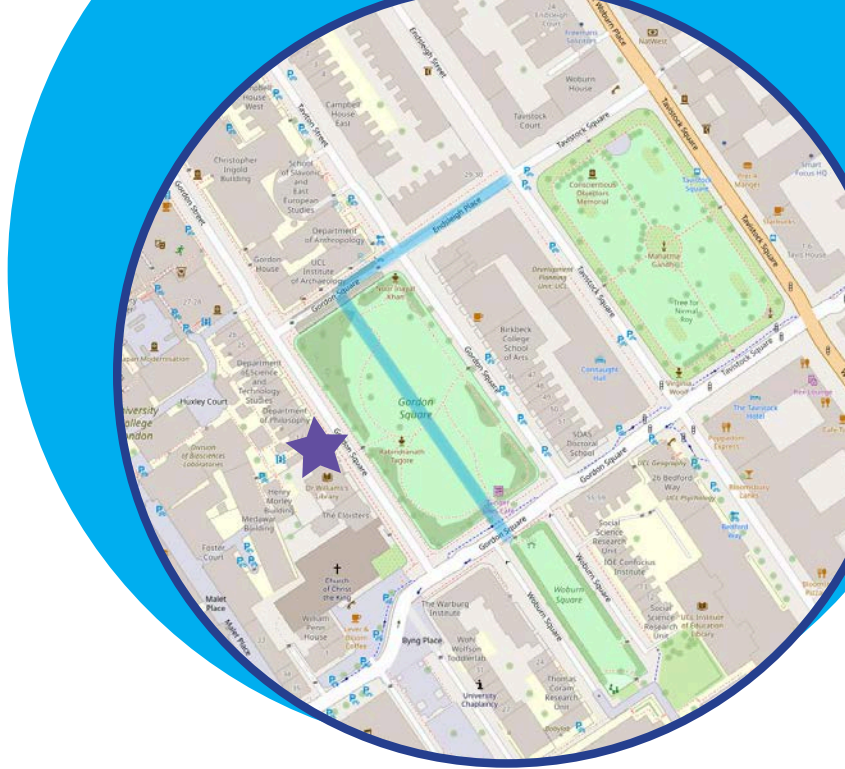
Tavistock Court was built in the early 1930s by RW Black, heir to generations of Churches of Christ boot and shoe manufacturers in Leicester (the Churches of Christ were represented at the formation of URC in 1972 and their Re-formed Association joined the URC in 1981).

The building was created to provide headquarters for the Free Church. You can see carved reliefs at ground floor level incorporating saints from Church history.

Try to spot them all: A monk, a nun, St Eustace's vision of a stag (with a crucifix between the horns), Poseidon (Neptune), Amphytrite and two 16th century ships.



Fun fact: The ships symbolises the arrival of Christianity in a Roman Galley and its onward transmission to the new world. URC ministers who served in the role of Free Churches' Moderator include John Huxtable, Arthur Macarthur, John Johansen-Berg and Tony Burnham.



- Continue from the western corner of Tavistock Square, cross the road and continue straight along Endsleigh Place.
- You will see some trees at the end of the road.
- Cut through Gordon Square Garden to Gordon Square.

Dr Williams's Library

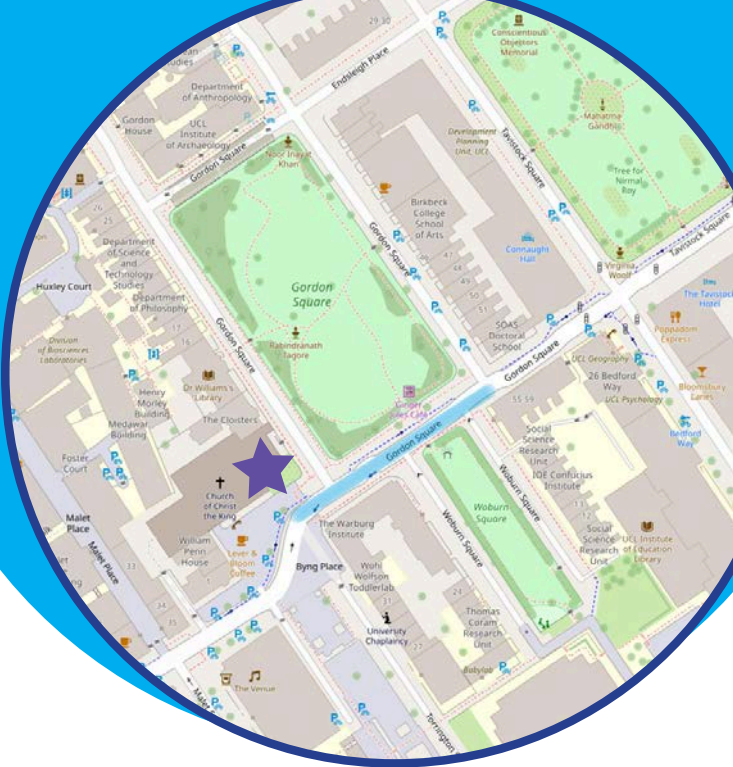
As you take the central exit of the garden, opposite is Dr Williams's Library, founded by Presbyterian, the Revd Dr Daniel Williams (Wrexham 1643-1716), to give ministers and their students access to a wide selection of books and manuscripts.



A range of research and publications are kept within the library, such as:

- Congregational Union archives
- Congregational Church in England and Wales archives (1966-1972)
- Works from minister and hymn writer Richard Baxter (1615-1691)
- The Ent'ring Book of Roger Morrice – who provided intelligence to Whig politicians (those inclined toward defending the interests of dissenters in the late 17th century)
- The minutes and papers of the Westminster Assembly
- The Westminster Confession and directory of worship (which proposes a generally Presbyterian polity for the Church of England).



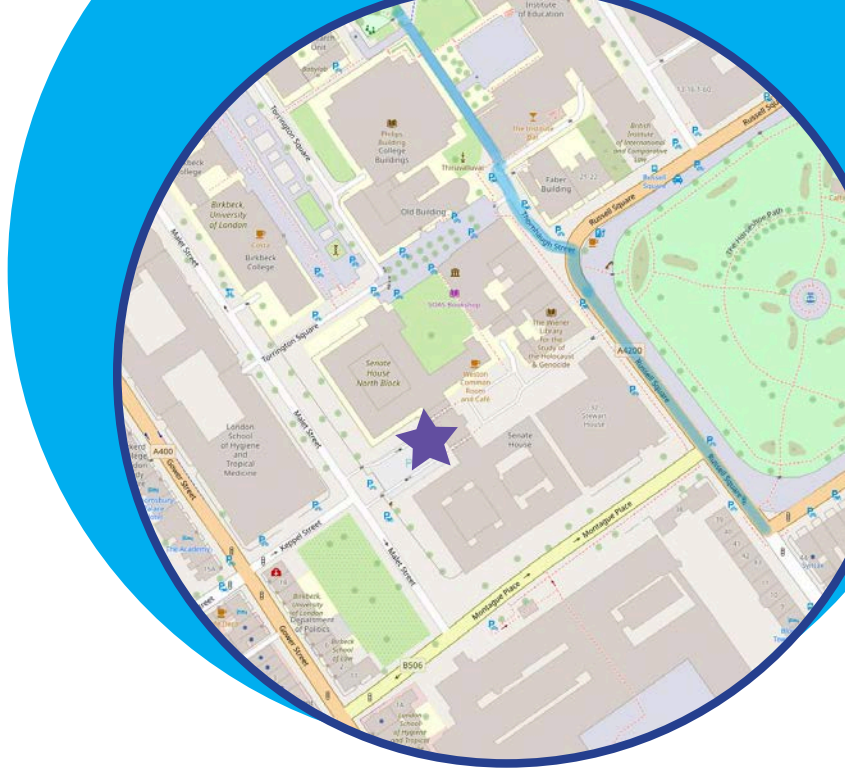


- Look to your left and you will see a Gothic church building. It was erected by followers of Edward Irving, many of whom left with him when he and the Regent Square church parted ways in 1832.
- Walk to the end of the road to see the church in full.
- To the left of the church, you will see a white, classic style building. This was Coward College (one of the precursors of New College), a school of divinity of the University of London which trained Congregational ministers until the 1970s. It has now moved to Finchley Road. The former Coward College in front of you more recently housed a Quaker International Centre.

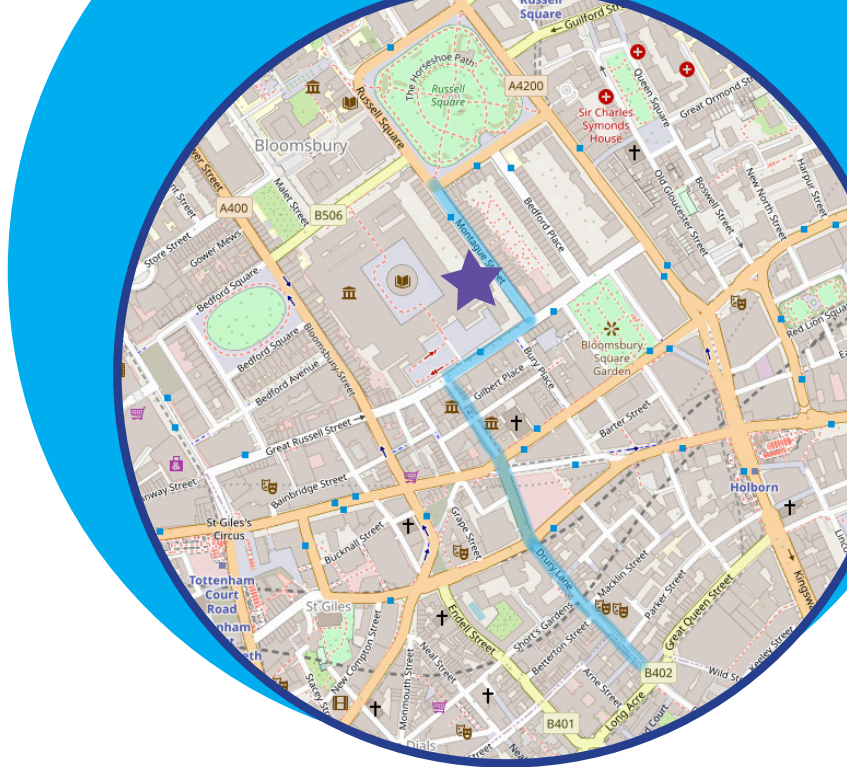


- From the eastern corner of Gordon Square (with the church on your right) turn **left** and go along Woburn Square, through the gardens by the gate facing the zebra crossing. (There is a small play area in this garden).
- At the end of Woburn Square, the building facing you marked SOAS is the School of Oriental and African Studies.
- Their special collections contain the archives of two predecessor bodies of the Council for World Mission: the Presbyterian Foreign Missions and the London Missionary Society.





- Go up Thornhaugh Street – the pedestrian path between UCL Institute of Education (right) and SOAS (left).
- You will now be in the south west of Russell Square.
- Walk up along the side of the square to number 24: Senate House, centre of London University. The tall building through the black gates is Senate House library.
- Continue straight, with Russell Square on your right.
- From here, you will be following the Jubilee Walkway.
- Look down to see metal indicator discs in pavement as you go, pointing you in the right direction. The logo is St Paul's Cathedral.



- Continue forward at the junction with Montague Place, taking you onto Montague Street.
- On your right, you will see the northern entrance of the British Museum, which contains many artefacts of biblical archaeology – a great detour if you have time!
- Go to the end of Montague Street and turn **right** on to Great Russell Street.



- Cross Great Russell and Bury Streets on zebra crossings.

- Pass the front entrance of British Museum and turn **left** on to Museum Street.



- Continue straight down the pedestrian path, past the bollards, then cross over Little Russell Street, continuing straight to the junction of New Oxford Street and Bloomsbury Way.

- Here, you leave the Jubilee Walkway, which loops east to Bloomsbury Square.

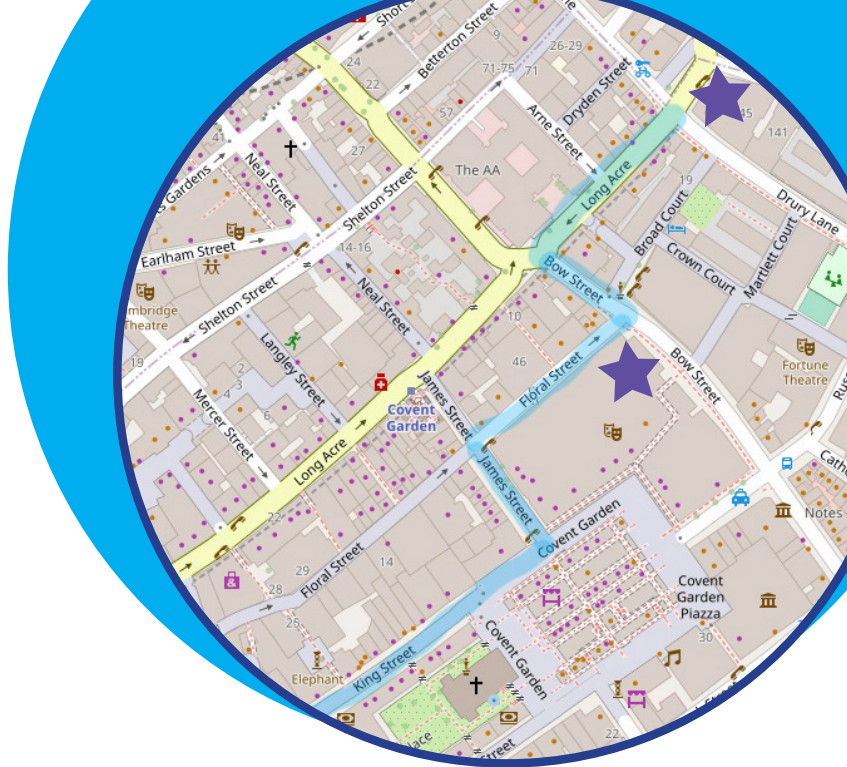
- Instead, cross Bloomsbury Way/New Oxford Street (A40) and High Holborn by pedestrian crossings to continue south along Drury Lane.

Note the Oxfam Shop:

The Revd Henry Moxley, minister of Summertown Congregational church (Oxford, 1936-49) was a founding member of Oxford Committee for Family Relief and was involved in operating the first Oxfam Shop.

- At the next junction, we re-join Jubilee Walkway, which you will see on the left.



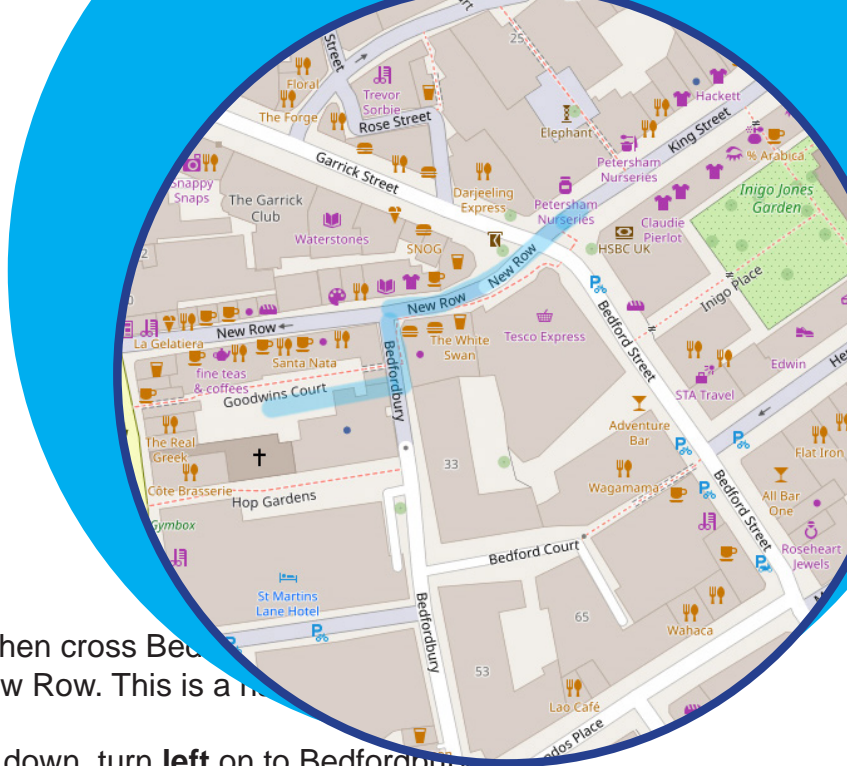


- Cross Drury Lane by zebra crossing to the start of Long Acre, opposite the 'Prince of Wales' pub.
- Keep an eye out between buildings for Broad Court on your right as you walk down Drury Lane.
- When you see a statue of ballerina, you are at Bow Street.
- Cross Bow Street and turn **left** on to Floral Street.
- Cross Floral Street, passing Royal Opera House on your right.



- At the end of that building, turn **right** to enter Covent Garden Piazza.
- Once you have explored the Piazza, turn **right** at the exit to join King Street.



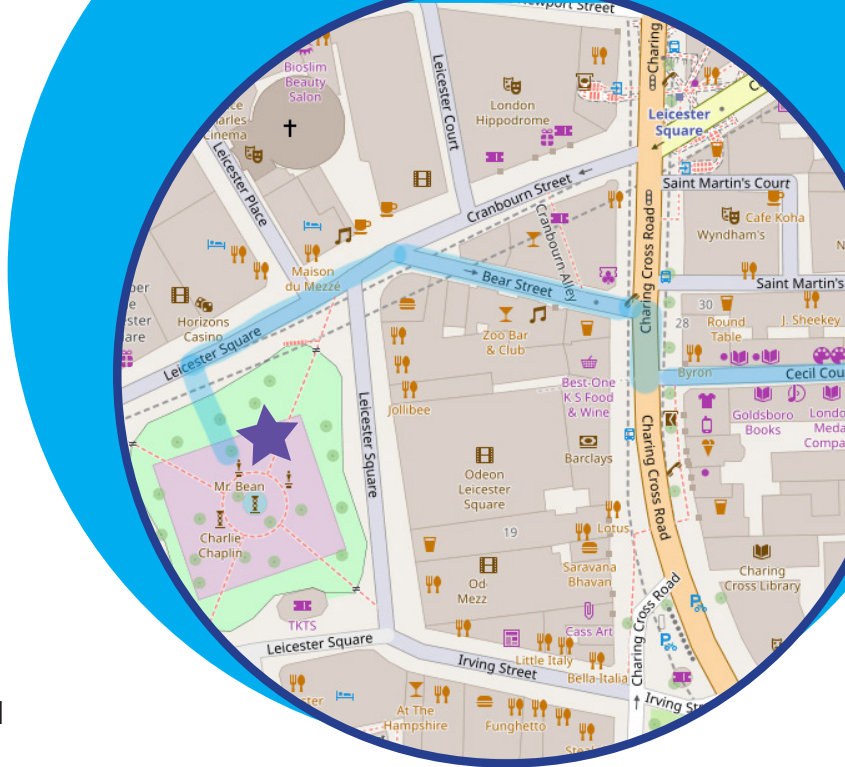


- Go **left**, then cross Bedfordbury and go **right** along New Row. This is a main road.
- Half way down, turn **left** on to Bedfordbury.
- Between numbers 23 and 24, go down Goodwin's Court; the alleyway on your **right**.

Step warning:

Wheelchair users, those with push-chairs or mobility disabled may avoid a sudden step down at the end of Goodwin's Court by staying on New Row and crossing to St Martin's Court which ends alongside Wyndhams Theatre. Turn **right** to reach sooner a crossing to Cranbourn Street, leading to Leicester Square.

- After passing through Goodwin's Court (**mind the step**) look to the left to see the spire of St Martins-in-the-Fields church.



- Cross St Martin's Lane and continue ahead on Cecil Court, home of many book and art shops (slightly to the left).
- Turn **right** on to Charing Cross Road.
- Cross the road and immediately turn **left** into Bear Street.
- Follow to the road **left** to reach Leicester Square.

Optional detour:

Continue along Charing Cross Road to Wyndhams Theatre and cross at the lights into Cranbourn Street (which will lead you to Leicester Square).



Leicester Square

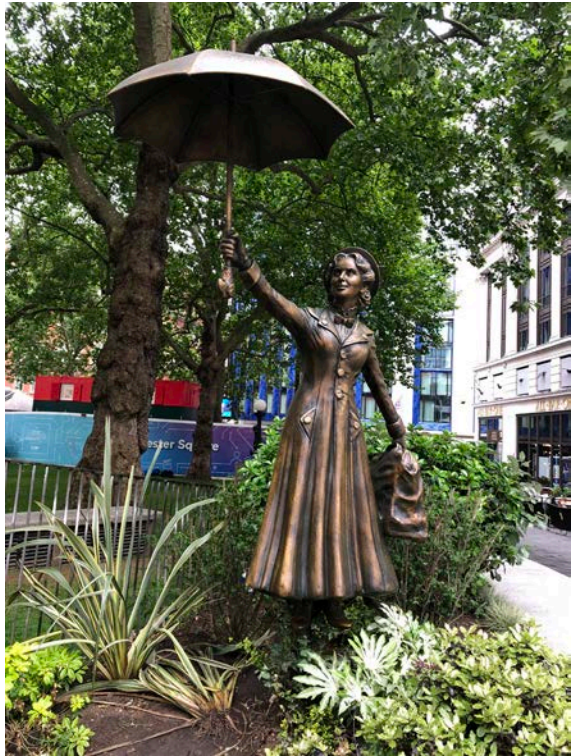
The Square's garden is sometimes obstructed by temporary structures or red-carpet events.

- Depending on location of any crowd-control measures, the simplest route around obstacles is to turn **left** on entering the Square.
- Pass in front of Odeon Leicester Square, turn **right** when possible and then turn **left** before reaching Odeon Luxe.

Note the statue of William Shakespeare whose Twelfth Night (1600-02) includes the line:

*“I had as lief be a
Brownist as a politician.”*

‘Brownist’ from Robert Browne (1633) was the first popular nickname for Congregationalists.





- Work your way to the centre of the lower (southern) side of Leicester Square and turn into St Martin's Street (on the left of Odeon Luxe), passing Westminster reference library.
- Cross Orange Street and then look back over your left shoulder to see Orange Street Congregational church (aka 'Orange Street Covenant Church').
- Continue down Orange Street, then down the slope between the Main Wing and Sainsbury Wing of the National Gallery and under the arch to the **left**.
- If the arch is closed, turn **right** at the National Gallery and then **left** at the end of the road, onto Whitcomb Street.



Follow this road and you will come out opposite Canada House. The junction below will be on your left:

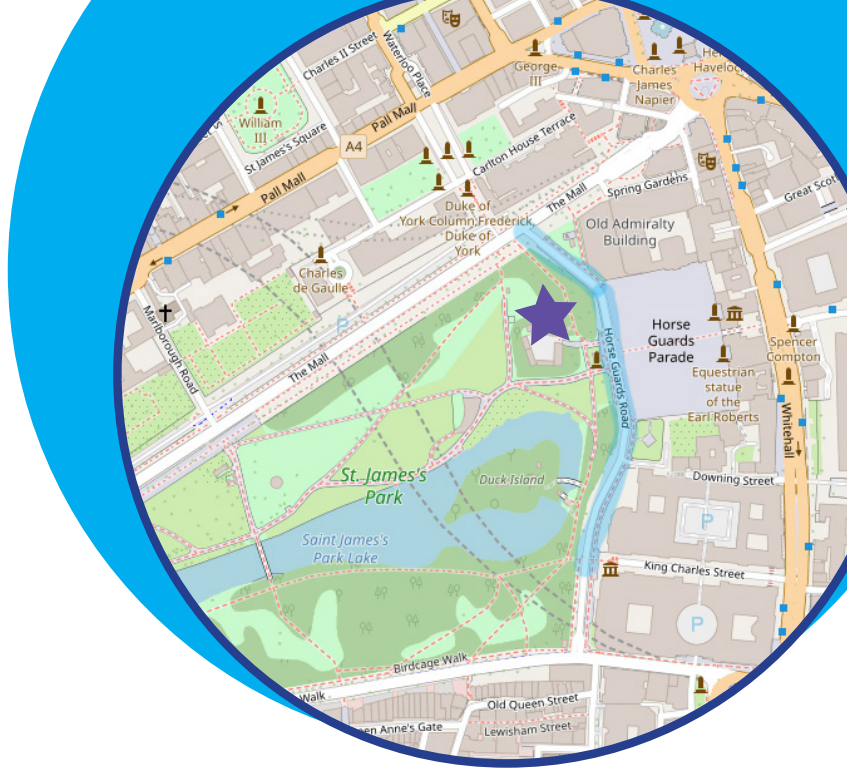
- Cross at the junction of Pall Mall East and Trafalgar Square to Canada House.
- Continue straight past Canada House on your right and Trafalgar Square on your left.
- You will be walking past Nelson's Column.
- On far side, beyond Nelson's Column, is a statue of Sir Henry Havelock (1795-1857) a notable Baptist convert.





- Cross at the lights on the junction of Cockspur Street and Trafalgar Square to view Charles I statue at the far left.
- Veer **right** to leave Trafalgar Square through Spring Gardens to The Mall, just south-west of Admiralty Arch.
- Walk beside The Mall, past Royal Marines memorial, Mall Galleries and Institute of Contemporary Art to the foot of Duke of York's Steps.
- Can you see the Duke of York's column high on the right?





- Opposite the Duke of York's Steps, cross from The Mall at the second set of light-controlled crossing over to Horse Guards Road.

St James' Park

You will be walking along the outskirts of St James' Park. Look to the left to see:

- St James' Park
- Wartime 'Citadel'
- National police memorial
- The Horse Guards Parade Ground.

- Follow the path along the edge of St James's Park past Duck Island Cottage.
- You will be on the right side of Horse Guards Road.
- Follow to return to roadside facing King Charles Street.
- On your left, you will see the memorial dedicated to Robert Clive above the steps off King Charles Street.





- Continue forward to cross Birdcage Walk at the traffic lights (**watch out: there are separate lights for cyclists and pedestrians!**)

Optional short cut:

If you are caught in the Great British weather or wish to cut the tour short, you can use Storey's Gate from Great George Street/Horse Guards Way to head straight to the Methodist Central Hall).

- Turn **left** on to Great George Street.
- Cross both sets traffic lights at Parliament Square, towards the Houses of Parliament.
- Then turn **right** and walk down Parliament Square.

- The Committee Room projecting forward from Westminster Hall was site of Commons committee hearing into United Reformed Church Bill in 1972.
- Continue walking beside the Houses of Parliament until you see statue of Oliver Cromwell on a plinth.
- This is 'Cromwell Green'. Here, Parliament Square becomes St Margaret's Road.





- Cross St Margaret's Road to pass between St Margaret's Church and Abbey Church of St Peter, Westminster.
- If the gates are locked, return to the traffic lights and turn **left**. Follow the road to go around St. Margaret's church. With Westminster Abbey on your left, you will cross the traffic lights to reach Storey's Gate.



Abbey Church of St Peter

- The Abbey contains the tomb of David Livingstone and a memorial to Isaac Watts.
- It was the scene of the Westminster Assembly, which produced the Westminster Confession: touchstone for

English-speaking Presbyterians worldwide. It was also the venue for URC's Thanksgiving Service on 5 October, 1972.

- St Margaret's Church was the site of successive Presbyterian and Congregational churches. In 1640, the Revd Stephen Marshall was appointed lecturer (weekdays preacher) and given £200 pa along with a house!
- He also ministered to a Presbyterian congregation from 1642.
- Change of power and influence later supplanted Presbyterian Sunday worship with Congregational: William Strong was minister of the Independent (ie Congregational church within Westminster Abbey) from 1650 until his death in 1654.
- There is a commemoration tablet on outside of Westminster Abbey.
- The next minister was the Revd John Rowe (1654-1661), until independent worship ceased in 1660.





- After cutting past the churches, you will exit onto (Broad) Sanctuary. Go **left** and cross at lights. Cross at the zebra crossing to Westminster Methodist Central Hall. The entrance is half way down Storey's Gate, below the flag. As you arrive, note the gold mailbox and plaque to First General Assembly of United Nations.

You have arrived!

Now it is time to join us for our 50th anniversary service. Doors open from 2pm and seating is first come, first served.

Your way home

Those whose onward journey is via Victoria Station may like to detour either to see Westminster Chapel, Buckingham Gate (site of the Congregational Assembly which took the decisive vote on 11th May 1971) and/or Carteret Street (site of Livingstone House where Congregational HQ moved in with London Missionary Society – now CWM – shortly before the Union).

Scavenger hunt

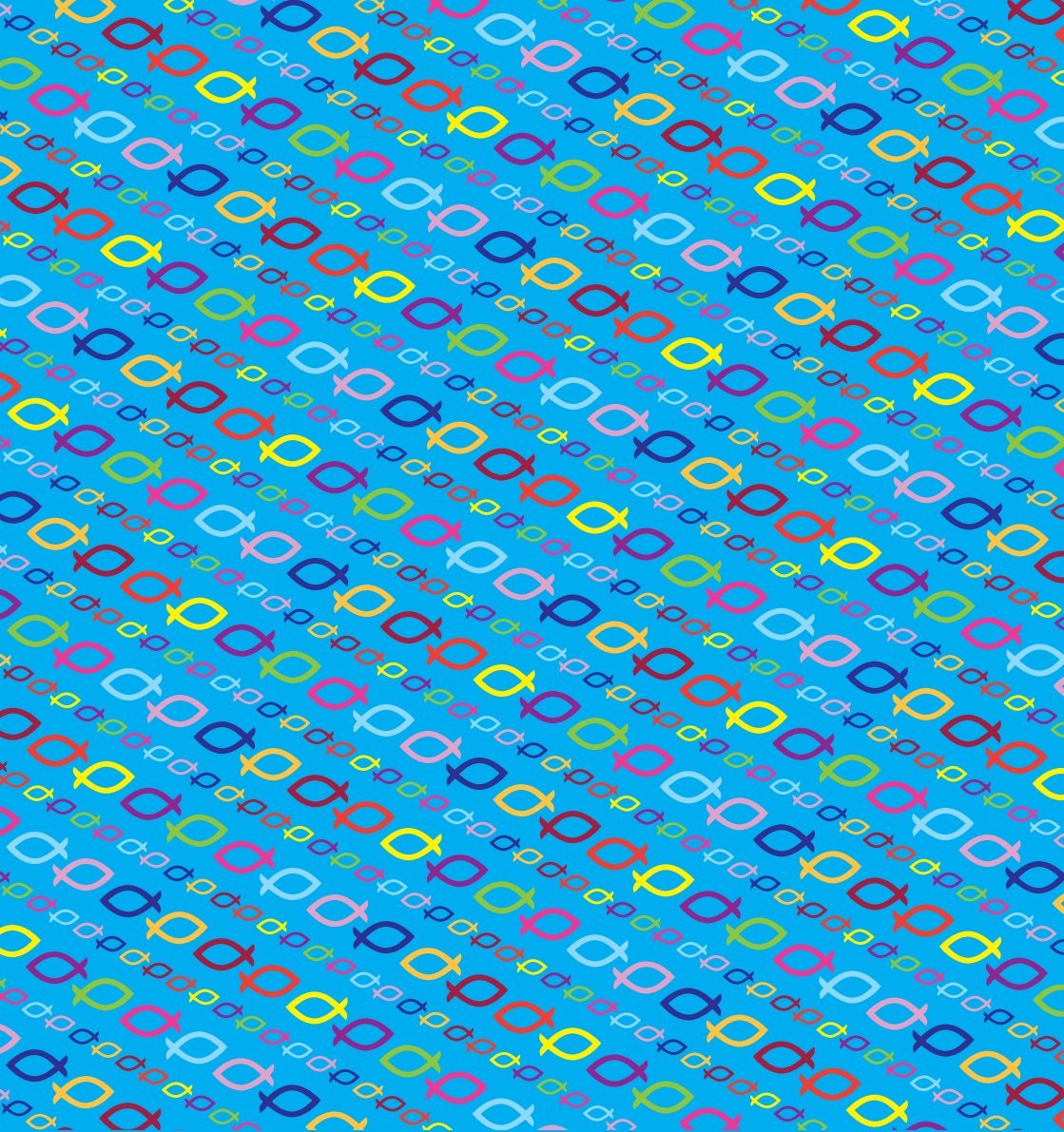


1. Which animals are on the Royal Institute of Architect's award at Lumen?
2. What item is Louisa Blake holding in Tavistock Square?
3. What date was the tree planted in memory of Hiroshima in Tavistock Square?
4. Towards the back of Tavistock Square, there is a large rock – which two qualities give us hope?
5. When was the Dr William Library founded?
6. When did Robert Hereford die?
7. When was The Plough pub established?
8. What is St. Paul's Church also known as?
9. Which famous supermarket was involved in a new building at the National Gallery?
10. What is wrapped around Lord Nelson on the column?

www.urc.org.uk/50

www.urcshop.co.uk/50





A virtual version of this tour and scavenger hunt answers can be found on our website:
www.bit.ly/walktowestminsteranswers

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