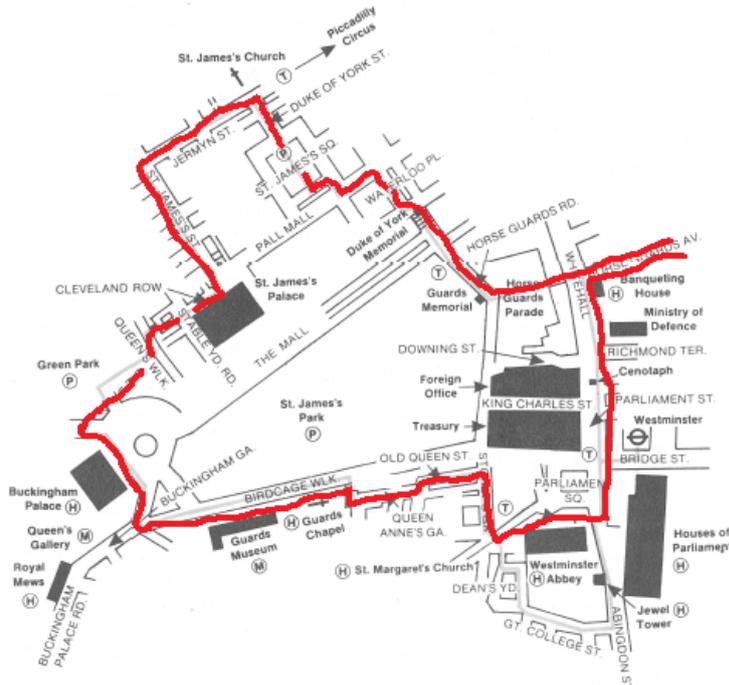


Fetcham U3A

Explore London Group 6

Westminster



Horse Guards. - The mounted guards on duty here come from the Household cavalry descendants of the original mounted guards for whom the Horse Guards building was constructed in the 1750s. There are notices on the inner wall of the courtyard which will tell you more about the Life Guards and how the guard is mounted. What they do not tell you is that each horse and rider stands guard for one hour only at a time and not the whole day.

Go through the archway into Horse Guards parade, the former tiltyard or jousting Field of the Whitehall Palace. Every year in June the square is used for the Trooping the colour ceremony when two thousand red-coated foot guards together with Cavalry and military bands parade their regimental flags during the Queen's birthday Parade. To the left you can see the garden of 10 Downing Street. cross Horse Guards Road at the end of the parade-ground and go into St James' Park passing on your left the war memorial of the Household Division (the Household Cavalry and the Guards infantry combined). Turn right along the tarmac path on the right the ivy-covered citadel was built as a bomb-proof communications centre for the Navy in WW II and is still used by the Defense Ministry today.

Cross the Mall cross over at the traffic lights, admiring the view to the left is Buckingham Palace and to the right is Admiralty Arch. Duke of York's column; The Duke was the second son of George III and commander-in-chief of the British Army at the time of the Battle of Waterloo (1815).

At the top of the steps contains many statues, including on the left, Sir John Franklin, lost while trying to find the north-west passage, around Alaska, and on the right, Captain Scott, the first Englishman to reach the South Pole.

Clubs of Pall Mall - Pall Mall is pre-eminently a street of gentlemen's social clubs. on the left you pass the Athenaeum, Travelers' and Reform clubs, all founded in the 19th century.

Take the first right turn opposite the Italian palazzo-style Reform club into St James 'Square. Turn left along the south side of the square and then right by the pavilion into the gardens. The square was developed soon after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 and, rapidly became the smartest address in London: around 1720 it was home to no fewer than six dukes and seven earls. By 1796, however, the Wedgwood china company had taken over one of the houses as a showroom and since then business has completed its conquest.

Walk straight through the gardens past the statue of King William III -to your right there is a good view of London's oldest theatre, the Haymarket, built in 1820 and go up Duke of York Street towards St James's Church at the top. At the church, turn left into Jermyn Street, famous for its shirt shops and men's outfitters. Isaac Newton, discoverer of the law of gravity lived opposite the entrance to Prince's Arcade on the right. Continue on to St James' Street and turn left towards St James's Palace at the foot of the hill. On the left, the balconied house next to the chemist's is Boodle's Club and opposite, the large house with the blue door is Brooks's Club. Both clubs have been operating for well over two hundred years and have seen countless country estates lost and won at their gambling tables. Further down on the left you pass the battered shop front of Berry Brothers and Rudd, wine merchants who have been in business, originally as grocers, since the 1600s.

St James's Palace - When you come to St James's Palace turn right along Cleveland Row St James's has not been used as a royal palace since the early 1800s although foreign ambassadors are still accredited to the Court of St James. Some of the Palace's contemporary functions are to provide offices for part of the Royal Household and a London base for the Prince of Wales. Continue past the entrance to Stable Yard on the left and go through the passage to the right of the small car park into Queens Walk. Here turn left and then almost immediately right into Green Park, opposite Milkmaid's Passage on your left. Take the left-most of the three tarmac paths and then at the crossroads turn left towards Buckingham Palace, the Queen's London home. If the flag is flying, she is in residence.

Buckingham Palace George III bought Buckingham House in 1761 for his wife Queen Charlotte to use as a comfortable family home close to St James's Palace, where many court functions were held. Buckingham House became known as the Queen's House, and 14 of George III's 15 children were born there. In 1762 work began on remodelling the house to the King's requirements, to designs by Sir William Chambers, at a cost of £73,000. George IV, on his accession in 1820, decided to reconstruct the house into a pied-à-terre, using it for the same purpose as his father George III. With the assistance of his architect, John Nash, he set about transforming the house into a palace. Nash retained the main block but doubled its size by adding a new suite of rooms on the garden side facing west. Faced with mellow Bath stone, the external style reflected the French neo-classical influence favoured by George IV.

Cross the road and turn left along Birdcage Walk, so called because there was a Royal aviary here in the 17th century. On your left is St James' Park and on your right are the Wellington Barracks, used by the various Guards regiments detailed to protect the royal palaces. There are a total of seven regiments of Guards: five infantry (Irish, Scots, Welsh, Coldstream and Grenadier), and two cavalry (Life Guards and Blues and Royals). At the far end of the barracks are the modern Guards chapel and the Guard's museum.

Westminster Abbey, the Methodist Central Hall, The Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre, and Middlesex Guildhall - Westminster Abbey, a new church on an earlier foundation, begun 1245 with building continuing into the sixteenth century. This is a building unique among abbeys for its connection with monarchy and state – the coronation and burial place for kings and queens. The west towers were not completed until the early eighteenth century – begun 1735 to the design of Nicholas Hawksmoor, completed by John James in 1745; a proposed crossing tower was never built. In a building rich in architecture and sculpture, it is the breathtaking Henry VII Chapel of 1503–10, at the east end beyond the Sanctuary, which alone justifies braving the crowds of tourists and the red-coated attendants. Middlesex Guildhall is easy to overlook. Built in 1912–13 by J. G. S. Gibson and Partners, this high-quality building, with striking frontispiece and muscular tower, has been most recently in use as a Crown Court and is now being converted to house the new Supreme Court.

The Palace of Westminster (Houses of Parliament) - The Palace of Westminster was gutted by fire in October 1834; Westminster Hall (Norman with a hammer beam roof of c.1400) survived the conflagration. The new Parliament building by Barry and Pugin (1839–60), required to fulfill both national and international requirements in the capital of the empire, triumphantly married grandeur with accessibility, establishing Gothic not only as a national style but also as a parliamentary style, later employed in both Ottawa and Budapest. On the other side of Bridge Street, linked by subway to Parliament, Portcullis House, by Michael Hopkins and Partners, architects, and Ove Arup and Partners, engineers, was completed as parliamentary offices in 2001

Whitehall - Whitehall refers to the street of government offices between Parliament and Trafalgar Squares and occupies the site of lands owned by Westminster Abbey which subsequently came into the possession of Henry VIII.

The Cenotaph -By Sir Edwin Lutyens (1919–20), the chief national war memorial, originally created in timber and then in permanent Portland stone form, succeeds through its merciful reticence and explicit absence of symbolism.