

# Tourist attractions in London

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**SVEUČILIŠTE U ZAGREBU**  
**UČITELJSKI FAKULTET**  
**ODSJEK ZA UČITELJSKE STUDIJE**

**LUKA KRIŠTOFIĆ**

**DIPLOMSKI RAD**

**TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN**  
**LONDON**

**Čakovec, srpanj 2019.**

**SVEUČILIŠTE U ZAGREBU**  
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**(Čakovec)**

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## **SUMMARY**

The aim of this thesis was to present the most prominent tourist attractions in London. The author reviewed five relevant literature sources and numerous articles and web sites. His interest in London and its tourist attractions stems from various sources concerning British culture and way of living. This thesis describes the most recognizable museums, galleries, royal sights, sacral objects and other tourist attractions that can be found in London. Those tourist attractions are portrayed through ten neighbourhoods, from which all have their unique flavour. These neighbourhoods include: (1) The West End, (2) The City, (3) The South Bank, (4) Kensington & Hyde Park, (5) Clerkenwell, Shoreditch & Spitalfields, (6) The East End & Docklands, (7) Hampstead & North London, (8) Notting Hill & West London, (9) Greenwich & South London, (10) Richmond, Kew & Hampton Court. The author hopes that this thesis has shown London and its tourist attractions in the most representative way.

Keywords: London, tourist attractions, sightseeing

## SAŽETAK

Cilj ovog rada bio je predstaviti najistaknutije turističke atrakcije u Londonu. Autor ovog rada pregledao je pet relevantnih knjiga, mnoge članke i web stranice kako bi prikazao temu na najbolji mogući način. Njegovo zanimanje za London potječe iz različitih izvora koji uključuju britansku kulturu i način življenja. Ovaj rad opisuje najprepoznatljivije muzeje, galerije, znamenitosti kraljevske obitelji, sakralne objekte i ostale turističke atrakcije koje se mogu naći u Londonu. Te turističke atrakcije su prikazane kroz deset gradskih područja, od kojih svako ima jedinstvene karakteristike. Ta područja uključuju: (1) The West End, (2) The City, (3) The South Bank, (4) Kensington i Hyde Park, (5) Clerkenwell, Shoreditch i Spitalfields, (6) The East End i Docklands, (7) Hampstead & North London, (8) Notting Hill i West London, (9) Greenwich i South London, (10) Richmond, Kew i Hampton Court. Autor se nada da je prikazao London i njegove turističke atrakcije na najreprezentativniji način.

Ključne riječi: London, turističke atrakcije, razgledavanje

# 1. INTRODUCTION

London is the largest city in Europe. It is home to about 8 million people and covers 625 square miles (1,600 square kilometres). The present capital of Great Britain was founded by the Romans in the first century AD as both a convenient administrative and communications centre as well as the port for trade with Continental Europe. For many centuries it has been the main residence of British monarchs as well as the centre of business and government. That is one of the reasons why it is so rich in historic buildings and treasures from all periods. London is not only full of many museums, churches and galleries, but is also an exciting contemporary city, packed with lots of shops and entertainment venues (Leapman, 1995).

If there were just historic and antique magnificence in London such as Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, Hampton Court, the city would still rank as one of the world's top destinations. But England's capital is much more. As a tireless innovator of art and culture, London has always been a city of ideas and the imagination. English may be the national tongue, but over 300 languages shape London's identity. These languages also represent cultures that live through different music, clothing, and aromas one can experience in London streets (Harper, Fallon, Maric and Filou, 2012).

The West End, South Bank and the City are perfect neighbourhoods for sight-packed exploration. Central London is the place of majority of museums, galleries and most iconic sights, while Hampstead Heath or Greenwich Park are ideal for enjoying in greenery and open space. Kew Gardens, Richmond or Hampton Court Palace could be another option to find effortlessly good-looking panoramas of riverside London (Harper, et al., 2012).

The attractions on offer are virtually endless so this thesis highlights the most important of those and gives a short description on each of the attractions. The author of the thesis portrays the most prominent tourist attractions in London. The attractions are described in ten chapters which represent the same amount of the neighbourhoods in London.



## **2. THE WEST END**

Although it is considered as a compact area, the West End is loaded with sights. Regular visitor would ideally need half a day for the big museums (such as the British Museum or the National Gallery) and at least a couple of hours for places like Westminster Abbey and Buckingham Palace. The West End holds a lot of energy and there is no better way to enjoy it than by walking around and taking it all in. Atmospheric places that are suitable for breaks from intense sightseeing include Covent Garden, Trafalgar Square and St James's Park. Westminster and Whitehall are very quiet in the late hours, so for those people who would like to entertain themselves in late hours, Soho is the perfect choice with its vibrant clubs and bars (Harper, et al., 2012).

### **2.1. Westminster Abbey**

Westminster Abbey has been the burial place of Britain's monarchs since the 13<sup>th</sup> century and setting for numerous coronations and royal weddings. It is one of the most beautiful and breath-taking buildings in London, with an exceptionally diverse array of architectural styles, ranging from French Gothic of the nave to the amazing complexity of Henry VIII's chapel (Leapman, 1995).

Today it is a church dedicated to regular worship and to the celebration of great moments in the life of the nation. Westminster Abbey is not a cathedral or a parish church. It is under the jurisdiction of a Dean and Chapter, subject only to the Sovereign and not to any archbishop or bishop. William the Conqueror was the first monarch who had been crowned in the Abbey, with the exception of Edward V and Edward VIII who were never crowned. Coronation Chair is still inside the Abbey and can be seen during the visits. Westminster Abbey is full of tombs and memorials of the famous British people (Ernest Rutherford, David Livingstone and Sir Isaac Newton). Poets' Corner, which is situated in south transept, is place of tombs of many British poets such as Geoffrey Chaucer, Ben Jonson, John Dryden, Robert Browning and many more. The north transept consists of lots of memorials to British statesmen. The grave of the "Unknown Warrior," whose remains were brought from Flanders in 1920, is in the center of the nave close to the west door. There are

approximately 3,300 burials in the church and cloisters. Westminster Abbey also contains over 600 monuments – the most important collection of monumental sculpture in the country

(<https://www.westminster-abbey.org/about-the-abbey/history/history-of-westminster-abbey>, 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2019).

## **2.2. Houses of Parliament**

The Houses of Parliament, also known as the Palace of Westminster, is the seat of the two parliamentary houses of the United Kingdom: the House of Lords and the House of Commons. In the middle of the eleventh century, court of the King Edward the Confessor were moved to the Palace of Westminster located next to river Thames. In 1265 a parliament was established with two houses: the Lords and the Commons. In 1834, the Palace of Westminster was destroyed by fire, sparing only the Jewel Tower, the crypt and cloister of St. Stephens and Westminster Hall. After the fire, there was a competition organized to create a new building for the two houses of parliament. Sir Charles Barry (who won the competition) created a big but balanced complex in neo-Gothic style and incorporated the buildings that survived the fire. In 1870, the whole complex was finished (more than thirty years after construction had started) and it included the Clock Tower, Victoria Tower, House of Commons, House of Lords, Westminster Hall and the Lobbies. Big Ben, the elegant clock tower is the most famous part of Charles Barry's design. Initially called St. Stephen's Tower, it was soon named after the tower's largest bell, the Big Ben. The tower that stands opposite to Big Ben is the Victoria Tower, built in 1860. Records since 1497 of both the House of Lords and the House of Commons are contained in this tower. Westminster Hall is the oldest hall of the Houses of Parliament. It is dating back to 1097. The large roof was built in the fourteenth century and replaced the original roof which was supported by two rows of pillars. Both the House of Lords and the House of Commons are open to public

(<http://www.aviewoncities.com/london/housesofparliament.htm>, 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2019).

### **2.3. British Museum**

British Museum is the oldest public museum in the world, established in 1753 to house great collections of physician Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753). Architect Robert Smirke is responsible for the main part of the present building (1823-1850). Over the course of time, Sloane's collection has been enriched with many gifts and purchases, and museum now holds artefacts spanning thousands of years of world culture. On the west side of the ground floor, there are Roman, Egyptian, Greek and western Asiatic exhibits; the British library exhibits with the new Mexican Gallery on the east and the Oriental collection on north side. Library reading rooms fills up the rest of space on the floor. Collections that are not permanently displayed are held throughout the museum and close to the entrance in rooms 27 and 28 (Leapman, 1995).

### **2.4. Buckingham Palace**

Buckingham Palace is, without a shadow of doubt, one of the major tourist attractions in London and one of the several palaces owned by the British Royal family. The original building was constructed in 1705 as a country house by John Sheffield, the duke of Buckingham. The house was bought in 1761 by King George III who had it modified by William Chambers. Later on, King George IV asked famous architect John Nash to expand the house (in that period known as Buckingham House) – into a palace. The palace was still unfinished in the time when King George IV as well as his younger brother and successor King William IV both died. The first person to reside in the palace was Queen Victoria. Today, a part of the palace is still used by the Royal family. Along with the royal family, numerous staff members still live here. The palace has approximately six hundred rooms, including a ballroom, throne room, swimming pool and a picture gallery. During the summer months there is opportunity to visit some of these rooms (this is the time when Royal family is not in the Buckingham Palace) – including the luxuriously decorated State Rooms: the Throne Room, Green Drawing Room, Silk Tapestry Rooms, Picture Gallery, State Dining Room, Blue Drawing Room, Music Room and White Drawing Room. Queen's Gallery is another spectacular part of the palace that is open to visitors. There you can find works of art from the royal collection.

(<http://www.aviewoncities.com/london/buckinghampalace.htm>, 29th May, 2019).

The Changing the Guard, also known as Guard Mounting is one of the most interesting free shows in London and is happening right in front of the Buckingham Palace. The old guard is moving up the Mall from St. James's Palace to Buckingham Palace and shortly after, the new guard approaches from Wellington Barracks. Then inside the courtyard captains of the old and captains of the new guards in symbolic fashion transfer the keys to the palace (Honnor, Jewers, O'Neill, Stein & Wijeratna, 2012).

## **2.5. National Gallery**

National Gallery is the London's art museum that stores Great Britain's national collection of European paintings. It is situated on the north side of Trafalgar Square in Westminster. 1824 was the year of the foundation of the National Gallery when British government bought total of 38 paintings from the estate of the merchant John Julius Angerstein (1735–1823). The collection was first displayed in 1824 but it was reopened to the public in its current place. The structure is neoclassical, and is designed by Greek Revival architect William Wilkins. Nowadays, the collection consists of 2,000 works and people argue that National Gallery has most representative sampling of European painting in the world. It has the most complete and versatile collection of Italian Renaissance paintings outside Italy, with paintings by most of the great Florentine and Venetian masters of that period. The gallery also contains works by various British, Dutch, French, Spanish, and Flemish painters from the 15th to the 19th century. Raphael, Leonardo and Vermeer surely are among the most recognizable names one can stumble upon in the gallery. The museum also has small collection of French Impressionist and also Postimpressionist paintings (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/National-Gallery-museum-London>, 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2019).

## **2.6. Tate Britain**

This impressive neoclassical institution is not perhaps as ambitious as its sibling Tate Modern on the South Bank, but its galleries are a great place to explore British art from 1500 to the present. The gallery first opened in 1897, and it was funded by the sugar magnate Sir Henry Tate. During that time, the museum included the Linbury Galleries on the lower floors were staging temporary (and often quite popular) exhibitions, while on the other hand, upper floors were showing the

permanent collection. Today, one can find classic works by John Constable, Thomas Gainsborough, George Stubbs, David Wilkie, Francis Bacon, Duncan Grant, Barbara Hepworth, and Ben Nicholson and an outstanding display from J.M.W. Turner in the Clore Gallery. The Tate Britain is also host to annual Turner Prize exhibition from October to early December every year. (Honnor, et al., 2012).

## **2.7. Churchill War Rooms**

In 1938, with war in Europe in sight, British government found a suitable site for a temporary emergency government shelter while plans for moving to the suburbs were being finalized. They selected a basement and converted and modified it to suite the purpose. At the end of August 1939, relocations plans were not realized, and with the war just behind the corner, the cabinet and chiefs of the armed forces decided to move underground. The bunker served as a very important part of the war cabinet until the end of WWII in August 1945. All the important staff members slept here and tried to find solution to end the war. It was not until 1948 when British government finally revealed the existence of war rooms, and it became a museum only in 1984 (Harper, et al., 2012).

The Cabinet War Rooms look almost exactly the same when the lights were turned off on 15 August 1945 when Japan surrendered and everyone headed off for a celebration. Preservation of rooms is extremely high including the map room (which was the operational centre), Churchill's office, the room where the cabinet held more than 100 meetings, the Telegraph Room with a hotline to Roosevelt, and several bedrooms where senior ranking officers slept. On the walls of the Chief of Staff's Conference Room there were original maps that were not discovered until 2002. People who visit Churchill War Rooms can easily navigate using free audioguide which is very informative, entertaining and features plenty of anecdotes including Winston Churchill himself (Harper, et al., 2012).

A great addition to the Cabinet War Rooms is the Churchill Museum-homage to impressive politician and wartime icon. Different zones explore his life achievements but also failures. Person who is visiting the Churchill Museum can see various objects and documents many of which, such as his personal papers, had never previously been released to the public. In the centre of exhibition is an

interactive timeline, with tons of facts, figures, and all sorts of tales (Honnor, et al., 2012).

### **3. THE CITY**

When it comes to sightseeing, there is almost impossible number of places one can visit in the City. The Tower of London and St Paul's Cathedral are definitely biggest names on the list, and at least half a day should be allowed to visit them properly. While over 300 000 people work in the City of the London, only 8000 live here. To see the City in its full speed, it is best to come here during the week. Weekends tell a different story, giving lot more space for quiet observation of the neighbourhood (Harper, et al., 2012).

#### **3.1. Tower of London**

Right after he became king in 1066, William the Conqueror built a fortress made of wood to guard the entrance to London from Thames Estuary. White tower was completed in 1097, while other fine buildings have been added over the later centuries. Over the course of time, the Tower has served as a royal residence, treasury and armoury but is most recognizable for its infamous prison for enemies of the crown (Leapman, 1995).

The most famous exhibits in Tower of London are definitely the Crown Jewels. The world's best known collection of precious objects, now displayed in magnificent exhibition room, includes beautiful regalia of crowns, sceptres, orbs and swords at coronations and similar occasions. Vast majority of the jewels date from 1661, when Charles II approved replacements for regalia destroyed by Parliament after the death of Charles I (Leapman, 1995).

Tower of London is today one the world's biggest tourist attractions and a world heritage site, attracting people from all over the globe. And when the gates are locked and all the visitors have gone, the Tower has a life of its own within its walls. The Tower of London is still home to the Yeomen Warders and their families, the Resident Governor, as well as the garrison of soldiers (<https://www.hrp.org.uk/tower-of-london/history-and-stories/the-story-of-the-tower-of-london/#gs.f5p2t4>, 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2019).

### **3.2. Tower Bridge**

Perhaps the second most recognisable symbol of London after Big Ben, Tower Bridge is quite astonishing up close. It was built in 1894 as a much-needed crossing point in the east and it was equipped with a then revolutionary bascule mechanism that was crucial for clearing the way for incoming ships. Tower Bridge lifts around one thousand times a year and about ten times a day in summer. Housed inside Tower Bridge is the Tower Bridge Exhibition which explains the whole mechanism and how everything works out. It is fascinating to get inside the bridge and look along the Thames from its two walkways. A lift takes you to the top of the structure, 42m above the river, from where you can walk along either on west-facing or east-facing walkways. If someone wants to learn real mechanical details, this can be done in Engine Rooms where lots of information can be found (Harper, et al., 2012).

### **3.3. St. Paul's Cathedral**

When the Great Fire of London in 1666 left medieval cathedral completely devastated, Christopher Wren was commissioned to rebuild it. He experienced quite considerable resistance from authorities, because they wanted a conventional Latin cross with a long nave and short transepts, which was believed to steer the people's attention on the altar, while on the other hand, he had his design for a church on a Greek Cross plan (where all four arms are equal). Despite the differences he had and the compromises he had to make, Christopher Wren created a splendid Baroque cathedral, which was built between 1675 and 1710 and has since then formed beautiful setting for a number of state ceremonies (Leapman, 1995).

Christopher Wren was trained as a scientist, but he instead began his impressive architectural career at the age of 31. He became a main contributor in the rebuilding of London after the Great Fire of 1666., building a total of 52 new churches. Christopher Wren never actually visited Italy, but his work was influenced by Roman, Baroque and especially Renaissance architecture, as it can be seen in his masterpiece, St. Paul's Cathedral (Leapman, 1995).



### **3.4. Museum of London**

Museum of London is definitely one the best museums someone can find in Great Britain's capital. It offers breath-taking and fascinating experience walk through the various incarnations of the city from Anglo-Saxon village to 21st-century metropolis. The first gallery shows ancient settlements that were predecessors of the capital as we all know it today. This part is followed by the Roman era with lots of interesting models and various displays. The rest of the floor will take one on the journey through the Saxon, medieval, Tudor and Stuart periods, climaxing in the Great Fire of 1666. From here you can visit the modern galleries, which were opened in 2010, where, in Expanding City, you can find all sorts of jewellery and fashion. Highlights of the galleries leading up to the present day include a 1908 taxi cab, an interactive water pump that makes clear the disadvantages of the once insanitary water system and many more. Two shops and a cafe are also available during the visit (Harper, et al., 2012).

## **4. THE SOUTH BANK**

The South Bank was once considered as neighbourhood which has only arts venue to offer, but the South Bank today has transformed into one of London's must-see neighbourhoods. The sights stretch along the Thames, starting with the London Eye, running past Tate Modern, the Millennium Bridge and Shakespeare's Globe, extending on waterside pubs, busy boutique shopping quarters, a cathedral and one of London's most-visited food markets (Harper, et al., 2012).

### **4.1. Tate Modern**

The Tate Modern is surely one of London's most iconic art galleries. Not only that it has an international collection of modern and contemporary artworks that few other galleries can beat, it also holds a significant architectural value that is worth visiting. It is impossible to imagine how empty would London's modern art scene look without Tate Modern. Tate Modern is part of four Tate venues in Great Britain along with Tate Britain, Tate Liverpool and Tate St Ives in Cornwall. 2000 was the year of opening of the Tate Modern, making use of the old Bankside Power Station. The impressive structure on the banks of the Thames was designed after WWII by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, the same architect who is responsible for Battersea Power Station. It was converted by Herzog & de Meuron, who returned to supervise a massive extension project. This started with the opening of the Tanks in 2012, and ended with the new Switch House extension in 2016. The bent pyramidal structure marked the most significant new opening of a cultural institution since the British Library on Euston Road. The Switch House that was mentioned before gave more space and possibilities (<https://www.timeout.com/london/art/tate-modern>, 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2019).

Tate Modern's permanent collection on levels 3 and 5 is now arranged in accordance to both chronology and thematic aspect. Over 60,000 works are on constant rotation, and the curators have very broad palette of painters and sculptors to choose from. Georges Braque, Henri Matisse, Piet Mondrian, Andy Warhol, Mark

Rothko, Jackson Pollock, Joseph Beuys, Damien Hirst, Rebecca Horn, Claes Oldenburg and Auguste Rodin are among best representatives (Harper, et al., 2012).

## **4.2. London Eye**

The structure of London Eye was designed by the architectural duo of David Marks and Julia Barfield, husband and wife. They had an idea of for a large observation wheel as part of a competition to design a landmark for the new millennium. They have not won the competition, but eventually they got support of British Airways, who sponsored the project. Almost two years were needed to construct this huge observation wheel. Over 1700 tonnes of steel were used for the structure and more than 3000 tons of concrete were used for foundations. The famous futuristic capsules were shipped all the way from France via tunnel. Each capsule is eight meters long and it has five hundred kilograms. The observation wheel turns pretty slow and people have time to enter the capsule. A whole turn lasts thirty minutes. Capsules have a glass construction so people have 360 degree view over London. Buckingham Palace, St. Paul's Cathedral and the Houses of Parliament are clearly visible from the capsules. On a sunny and clear day one can see as far as forty kilometres (<https://www.aviewoncities.com/london/londoneye.htm>, 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2019).

## **4.3. Shakespeare Globe**

This impressive theater is a replica of Shakespeare's open-roof theatre that was built in 1599 and burned down in 1613. That was the place where most of the Shakespeare's work had a premiere. American actor and director Sam Wanamaker worked very hard for several decades to raise funds for the theater's reconstruction 200 yards from its original site, using authentic materials and techniques. The project came to the realization in 1997 (Honnor, Jewers, O'Neill, Stein & Wijeratna, 2013).

Because the building is quite open to rain, snow, etc., people have to be prepared for unusual conditions. Umbrellas are not allowed, but raincoats can be obtained for a reasonable price. The theatre season runs from April to October and includes works by Shakespeare and some of his contemporaries (Harper, et al., 2012).

## **5. KENSINGTON & HYDE PARK**

With its trio of famous museums, Kensington is mandatory sightseeing for everyone. Museums open relatively early so it is not required to start touring very early. With its excellent range of hotels, Kensington is the great for temporary location during London's visit. Shoppers will adore the King's Road, and families will appreciate visiting Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens which are crucial for understanding why Londoners love their parks so much (Harper, et al., 2012).

### **5.1. Victoria & Albert Museum**

Victoria & Albert Museum, or also referred as the V&A is an enormous museum that is devoted to all disciplines, all periods, and all nationalities known to mankind. It was first opened in as the South Kensington Museum in 1857, but it was renamed in 1899 in honor of Queen Victoria's late husband and since then it has become one of the country's favourite cultural institutions. Many collections at the Victoria & Albert Museum are presented on basis of some kind of category: textiles, sculpture, jewelry and many more. The British galleries (rooms 52–58) are devoted to British art and design ranging from 1500 to 1760. The Asian Galleries (rooms 44–47) are full of treasures, but one of the most exquisite gems on display is the collection of highly decorative samurai armor in the Japanese Gallery (Room 44). There are also galleries devoted to China, Korea, and the Islamic Middle East as well as the galleries that were open in 2009: a Buddhist Sculpture gallery, a new Ceramics gallery, a Medieval and Renaissance gallery, which has the largest collection of works from the period outside of Italy (Honnor, et al., 2012).

### **5.2. Hyde Park**

Although London is largest city in Western Europe, home to more than 8 million people, the capital of Great Britain contains surprisingly extensive stretches of green space. In fact, over the third of it is made up of greenery – in parks, gardens, but also in canal side paths, abandoned railway tracks and industrial land (Smith, 2009).

Hyde Park started as Henry VIII's hunting grounds, along with the smaller St. James's and Green parks to the east. It is still used by the Household Cavalry, who

live at the Hyde Park Barracks. This is where the brigade that mounts the guard at Buckingham Palace resides and you can see them leave to perform their duty around 10:30. Hyde Park is a great place for walking, watching the locals or just simply relaxing. In the south end of the park there is a Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Fountain which opened in 2003, and it is the perfect place to visit some of the nearby cafes (Honor, et al., 2012).

### **5.3. Natural History Museum**

Natural History Museum, which is located near the Victoria and Albert Museum in South Kensington, was formerly an integral part of the British Museum, which originated in 1753 when the government acquired the collections of Sir Hans Sloane. The museum opened to the public in 1881, when the natural history collections were moved to current location. The building itself was particularly designed for the purpose by Alfred Waterhouse, and it is an excellent example of Victorian Romanesque architecture. Natural History Museum has been broadened many times. The purpose of this was to provide more storage space. In 1963, the Natural History Museum became fully independent of the British Museum. The museum's collections consist of approximately 70 million specimens from all parts of the world. Between these are a large number of type specimens, plants and animals from which species were first described and named. There are also important historical collections, such as those of James Cook resulting from his expeditions to the Pacific and of Charles Darwin from his voyage on HMS Beagle (<https://www.britanica.com/topic/Natural-History-Museum-London>, 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2019).

The Natural History Museum is divided into four zones: the blue zone, which includes the dinosaur gallery and Images of Nature; the green zone, which has the ecology and creepy galleries; the orange zone, which has a wildlife garden; and the red zone, which has the geological displays (Williams, 2017).

## **6. CLARKENWELL, SHOREDITCH & SPITALFIELDS**

These three redeveloped post-industrial areas northeast of the city contain a few key areas, sights and shops that you will want to explore in the daytime. All three neighbourhoods also have excellent cafes, restaurants, bars and clubs that will please anyone. There are many options in Clerkenwell and Spitalfields, but Shoreditch remains the centre of the late-night activity. On the other hand, Spitalfields is the best choice for relaxed strolling, especially on Sunday. The Geffrye Museum and Dennis Severs's House stand out as being the most prominent sights in these neighbourhoods (Harper, et al., 2012).

### **6.1. Geffrye Museum**

Geffrye Museum was opened in 1914 in a spot that was (in that time) in the centre of the furniture industry. The museum inside is devoted to domestic interiors, with each room of the main building furnished to show how the homes of the relatively rich middle class would have looked from Elizabethan times through to the end of the 19th century. The extension that was provided in 1998 contains some 20th-century rooms (a flat from the 1930s, a room in the contemporary style of the 1950s and a 1990s converted warehouse with IKEA furniture). It also contains a gallery for temporary exhibits, shop and restaurant. The garden is also organised by era and it is reflecting the museum's exploration of domestic interior through the centuries (Harper, et al., 2012).

### **6.2. Dennis Severs' House**

For hundreds of years, Spitalfields has welcomed lots of different waves of refugees. Huguenot weavers were one of the first mass groups to settle there. They came to London because of the business and employment opportunities. Using their craftsmanship skills, many of them entered into the silk weaving industry. Very soon, Spitalfields became the centre of the silk industry (<https://hidden-history.com/article/dennis-severs-house>, 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2019).

One of the properties that had connection with these Huguenot refugees in Spitalfields is Dennis Severs' House. Denis Severs, who was an artist from

California, bought the property in 1979. Between 1979 and 1999 he furnished the house to recreate the character of the eighteenth – century house, along with an imaginary Jervis family to reside the house. Each room tells a part of the Jervis families’ story from 1724 to 1914. The is not typical museum, but it serves more as a piece of living history and performance art with the story of a Huguenot family at its centre (<https://hidden-history.com/article/dennis-severs-house>, 2nd June, 2019).

Each of the 10 rooms re-creates a specific time in the house’s history from ranging from 1724 to 1914. From the cellar to the bedrooms, the interiors demonstrate both the original function and design of the rooms, as well as the good and bad sides of the area’s history (Harper, et al., 2012).

## **7. THE EAST END AND DOCKLANDS**

The East End and Docklands has a few standout sights but will really repay those happy to wander and soak up the distinguish character of each of its neighbourhoods. The three main to visit are Olympic Park (and neighbouring Hackney) the Docklands and Whitechapel. These neighbourhoods do not have many big attractions but they are great places to visit. The Whitechapel Gallery and Museum of London Docklands are surely highlights of above mentioned areas (Harper, et al., 2012).

### **7.1. Whitechapel Gallery**

The Whitechapel Gallery was founded in 1901 with goal to bring great art to the people of east London. Many great artists had their first show and display in the Whitechapel Gallery. In 1939 Picasso's masterpiece *Guernica* was displayed at the Whitechapel Gallery on its first and only visit to Britain. Jackson Pollock presented his first major show in Britain in this gallery in 1958 and in 1970 and 1971 the first shows of David Hockney, Gilbert & George and Richard Long were staged here with almost universal acclaim. Exhibitions in the 1980s and 1990s included Donald Judd, Cy Twombly, Cindy Sherman and Lucian Freud. Since 2000, the Gallery has shown Liam Gillick, Nan Goldin, Cristina Iglesias, Paul McCarthy, Mark Wallinger and Franz West. The Whitechapel Gallery is internationally wide known for its exhibitions of modern and contemporary art and also its education and public events programmes. The Whitechapel Gallery is very important part of the capital's cultural landscape growth of east London as a leading contemporary art neighbourhood (<https://www.whitechapelgallery.org/about/history/>, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2019).

### **7.2. Museum of London Docklands**

This museum, which is housed in a converted warehouse dating from 1802, shows a comprehensive overview of the entire history of the Thames from the arrival of the Romans in AD 43. The tour starts on the 3rd floor with the Roman settlement of Londinium and continues all the way to the ground floor.



Highlights of the museum include scale model of old London Bridge, Sailortown, bars and lodging houses of a mid-nineteenth-century, and other interesting galleries such as London, Sugar & Slavery, which questions London's role in the transatlantic slave trade (Harper, et al., 2012).

## **8. HAMPSTEAD AND NORTH LONDON**

North London is a big place and it would take a week to fully explore its sights, parks, nightclubs and whatnot. Hampstead Heath and Camden Market should be on top of everyone's list. Camden is a major sight, while Hampstead Heath offers a glorious day out and a look into how North Londoners spend their weekends. The London Zoo and the British Library are probably the biggest tourist attractions in these neighbourhoods. Many families live in this area, and it is most busy at the weekend. This means that most sights are relatively quiet during the week, with the exception of the Wellcome Collection and the British Library (Harper, et al., 2012).

### **8.1. British Library**

“British Library, national library of Great Britain, formed by the British Library Act (1972) and organized by July 1, 1973. For much of the 20th century its holdings were divided among the British Museum library (with some 12 million volumes) and several other buildings, but in 1997–98 a new complex was opened in London near St. Pancras Station in order to unify its vast collections. The British Library holds more than 25 million printed books as well as hundreds of thousands of periodicals, microfilms, rare manuscripts, and titles in electronic form. Its special offerings include the Oriental and India Office Collections (transferred from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1982), the National Sound Archive (formerly the British Institute of Recorded Sound, incorporated into the library in 1983), printed music, a map library, and philatelic materials.”  
(<https://www.britannica.com/topic/British-Library>, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2019).

The museum was founded in 1753 on the basis of the collections of Sir Hans Sloane, Edward and Robert Harley, and Sir Robert Cotton. George II presented to the library what is now known as the Old Royal Library (collection of books gathered by the kings of England from Edward IV to George II). The museum library soon become one of the world's largest and most astonishing with the addition of the second royal library, which was presented by George IV in 1823. With further growth of book collection, extra space had to be obtained in Bloomsbury, as well at the Bayswater and other locations across London. During the air offensives in World War II, over 225,000 volumes of newspaper were destroyed at the British Museum, and tens of thousands of newspapers were burned at Colindale (where the many of

the newspaper collections were moved to). In 2013 the Colindale library was closed, and its items were transferred to a new high-end storage facility at Boston Spa. In April 2014, a special reading room (the Newsroom) opened at St. Pancras library. Thanks to that, people can access to microfilm, digital newspapers, radio, television, internet news, as well as the opportunity to ask for the transfer of print copies of specific newspapers, periodicals, and journals from the Boston Spa facility (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/British-Library>, 3rd June, 2019).

The highlight of a visit to the British Library for regular visitor is definitely the Sir John Ritblat Gallery where the most precious and high-profile documents are filed. The collection stretches almost three thousand years of history and contains manuscripts, religious texts, maps, music scores, autographs, diaries and many more. Among the most precious religious texts and fragments are Codex Sinaiticus - the first complete text of the New Testament that was written in Greek in the 4th century; a Gutenberg Bible (1455), the first Western book printed using movable type and the amazingly illustrated Jain sacred texts. Important historic documents include one of the four remaining copies of Magna Carta (1215) and Captain Scott's final diary. Literature works include Shakespeare's First Folio (1623) and manuscripts by some of Britain's best-known authors (such as Lewis Carroll, Jane Austen, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy). Music enthusiasts will appreciate the Beatles' earliest handwritten lyrics and original scores by Handel, Mozart and Beethoven (Harper, et al., 2012).

## **8.2. London Zoo**

“London Zoo, formally Zoological Gardens, zoo in the northern part of Regent's Park, in the City of Westminster, London. It has one of the most comprehensive animal collections in the world and the largest zoological library of any zoo. The London Zoo is administered by the Zoological Society of London. The zoo opened in 1828, and its initial collections were augmented by the additions of the royal menagerie from Windsor in 1830 and the menagerie from the Tower of London soon afterward. It opened the world's first reptile house in 1849 and the first public aquarium in 1853. The zoo was severely

affected during World War II, when its animals were killed or removed elsewhere; its edible fish ended up on London tables. In 1955 a reconstruction program was begun, and within 10 years a footbridge, the Elephant and Rhino Pavilion, a walk-through aviary, and an animal hospital had been built. A pavilion for small mammals followed in 1967. In 1972 the zoo added the Sobell Pavilion for apes and monkeys; the structure also houses the zoo's giant pandas and the Zoo Studies Centre. A summer children's zoo, originally established in 1938, was reopened in 1994" (<https://www.britannica.com/place/London-Zoo>, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2019).

The most recent novelty at the London Zoo is Penguin Beach, which naturally encloses space featuring a pool with underwater viewing areas. Gorilla Kingdom is a project and programme that is trying to preserve gorillas in Gabon and the Democratic Republic of Congo in central Africa. Other highlights include Clore Rainforest Lookout and Nightzone – a tropical climate room with complete rainforest setting, and Butterfly Paradise where numerous butterflies fly around (Harper, et al., 2012).

## **9. NOTTING HILL AND WEST LONDON**

Three reasons prevail when it comes to visiting West London. First reason could be Portobello Road Market; second reason could be Leighton House, and third reason could be that the visitors are sleeping in one of the many hotels in the neighbourhood. West London is not full of first class sights like some other areas, but everyone should spend some extent of their time walking along the Grand Union Canal towards Little Venice or visiting Portobello Road Market. For those staying in the area, there are some excellent options for dining and entertainment, which will save some time from going into the West End. Hammersmith, Shepherd's Bush and Earl's Court are great places for finding something delicious to eat. For nightlife, Notting Hill and Shepherd's Bush are full of life, while Kensington is home to the capital's most amazing clubs. Other areas will be pretty quiet after 11pm (Harper, et al., 2012).

### **9.1. Portobello Road Market**

Portobello Road Market is one of the iconic London attractions with the usual mix of street food, fruits and vegetables, antiques and colourful fashion. The busiest day in the week is definitely Saturday, when antique dealers set up shop (from Chepstow Villas to Elgin Cres). Saturday is also time when the fashion market (beneath Westway from Portobello Road to Ladbroke Rd) is super busy – although you can also look for fashion on Friday and Sunday. If you continue on Portobello Road towards Golborne Rd (famous for its vintage furniture and clothes shops), one can see section with kitchenware, more fruits and vegetables stalls, as well as second-hand goods and whatnot (Harper, et al., 2012).

### **9.2. Leighton House**

The Leighton House Museum was the London home of painter Frederic Leighton, 1st Baron Leighton (1830–1896), who commissioned the architect and designer George Aitchison to build him a combined home and studio, needed for its incorporation of tiles and other elements purchased in the Near East to build a magnificent Qa'a (room). It is located at 12 Holland Park Road in the Holland Park

area of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in west London ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leighton\\_House\\_Museum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leighton_House_Museum), 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2019).

George Aitchison designed the first part of the house. Building started shortly after, and the house, which cost £4500 at the time, was ready for occupation by the end of the year. The building is made of Suffolk bricks with Caen Stone in a Classical style. The building of house extended over 30 years. The main room was the first floor studio with a large central window in order to supply plenty of light for painting. In 1889 an additional winter studio was added to the building. Before he died in 1896, George Aitchison added his final extension to the house – a picture gallery in 1895. After Leighton died in 1896, the belongings of the house were sold, including at least one thousand of his own drawings, almost all of which were bought by the Fine Art Society. The museum has on permanent display works of art by various famous artists including names such as John Everett Millais, Edward Burne-Jones and George Frederick Watts, as well as 81 oil paintings by Leighton himself ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leighton\\_House\\_Museum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leighton_House_Museum), 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2019).

## **10. GREENWICH AND SOUTH LONDON**

Greenwich is full of grand architecture, great museums and gorgeous parks. With the Royal Observatory, the National Maritime Museum, the Imperial War Museum and the magnificent Eltham Palace, Greenwich should be one of the highlights of anyone's visit to London (Harper, et al., 2012).

### **10.1. Royal Observatory**

Greenwich is on the prime meridian at 0° longitude, and the ultimate standard for time around the world has been set here since 1884, when Britain had the world's biggest maritime power (Harper, et al., 2012).

“The observatory is actually split into two sites, a short walk apart—one devoted to astronomy, the other to the study of time. The enchanting Peter Harrison Planetarium is London's only planetarium, its bronze-clad turret poking out of the ground like a crashed UFO. Shows on black holes and how to interpret the night sky are enthralling and enlightening. Even better for kids are the high-technology rooms of the Astronomy Galleries, where cutting-edge touch screens and interactive programs give young explorers the chance to run their own space missions to Ganymede, one of Jupiter's moons. Across the way is Flamsteed House, designed by Christopher Wren in 1675 for John Flamsteed, the first Royal Astronomer. A climb to the top of the house reveals the 28-inch telescope, built in 1893 and now housed inside an onion-shape fiberglass dome. It doesn't compare with the range of modern optical telescopes, but it's still the largest in the United Kingdom. Regular viewing evenings reveal startlingly detailed views of the lunar surface. In the Time Galleries, linger over the superb workmanship of John Harrison (1693–1776), whose famous Maritime Clocks won him the Longitude Prize for solving the problem of accurate timekeeping at sea and greatly improved navigation” (Harper, et al., 2012: 372).

### **10.2. Imperial War Museum**

London's Imperial War Museum was founded in 1917 with goal to record the story of WWI and the contributions made by the people of the Great Britain. The

museum opened in 1920 by act of Parliament, and its first location was in the city's magnificent Crystal Palace, the breath-taking glass building in Hyde Park. In 1939, it was decided that it would be good to also include World War II artefacts at the Imperial War Museum. Today the museum covers all major military conflicts that Great Britain was involved to (<https://www.aviewoncities.com/london/imperialwarmuseum.htm>, 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2019).

When someone enters the museum, first thing to notice is vast array of tanks, warplanes, artillery and other war machinery in large exhibits gallery. The museum also shows the effects of war on both the military and civilians. The largest exhibits focus on World War I and World War II, but other big conflicts involving Britain since 1945 are also covered (Cold War, Korean War, Falklands and Gulf War. Highlights include a walk-through recreation of a front-line trench in 1916 and the Secret War exhibition, which focuses on Britain's secret agencies MI5 and MI6. Many parts of the museum's collection are not on display but can be accessed for study. These items consist of approximately international war posters, a large video and photo archive and more than 10,000 private documents of people involved in war (<https://www.aviewoncities.com/london/imperialwarmuseum.htm>, 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2019).

### **10.3. National Maritime Museum**

Telling the long and eventful history of Britain's sailing, this museum is one of the biggest tourist attractions in Greenwich. Museum space extended with the Sammy Ofer Wing, which opened in late 2011. The exhibits in the National Maritime Museum are arranged on the basis of a certain theme. Highlights include Miss Britain III (the first boat to exceed 100mph on open water) from 1933, the 19m-long golden state boat built in 1732 for Frederick, Prince of Wales, and the huge ship's propeller installed on level 1. The museum also contains the uniform coat of Horatio Nelson; the exact same coat that Horatio Nelson was wearing when he was shot. Another highlight is replica of the lifeboat used by explorer Ernest Shackleton and some of his men after the Endurance sank on their epic mission in Antarctica. The Your Ocean exhibit on level 1 shows the science, history, health and future of



the sea, while on level 2 kids will love firing a cannon or manoeuvring a tanker into port by using the Bridge Simulator (Harper, et al., 2012).

#### **10.4. Eltham Palace**

This house was built between 1933 and 1937 by the textile merchant Stephen Courtauld and his wife Virginia. The house is very impressive due to its entrance hall with its dome and huge circular carpet with geometric shapes, to the dining room with silver-foil ceiling and fireplace. The couple also had pet lemur, the heated cage, complete with tropical murals and a bamboo ladder leading to the ground floor (Harper, et al., 2012).

The original palace was built on this site in 1305 and used as a royal residence from the 14th to the 16th century. Little of the palace remains, apart from the restored Great Medieval Hall. Its hammerbeam roof holds the place of the third best in the country, behind those at Westminster Hall and Hampton Court Palace (Harper, et al., 2012).

## **11. RICHMOND, KEW AND HAMPTON COURT**

If some part of the London could be described as a village, it would definitely be Richmond. It is full of greenery, parks and cottages. Actually the entire southwest from Putney to Twickenham is a revitalising and refreshing alternative to central London. It is a great place for 'diving' into endless botanic discoveries at Kew Gardens, getting lost in the maze at Hampton Court Palace or just simply walking in Richmond Park. The author of this thesis portrays Hampton Court Palace and Kew Gardens because these are the most interesting sights in the neighbourhoods (Harper, et al., 2012).

### **11.1. Hampton Court Palace**

Hampton Court Palace served as a royal residence from the 1520s when King Henry VIII took over its development. Over the years the palace became known for its amazing furnishings, tapestries, and paintings. Hampton Court Palace owns a lot of items that are property of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. This collection is fully displayed and contains material from the 16th, 17th, and early 18th centuries. In 1689, Sir Christopher Wren destroyed a considerable amount of the Tudor palace and started building a new palace for King William III and Queen Mary II. In 1760, George III, who became king of the Great Britain, abandoned Hampton Court as a royal residence. In 1838, Queen Victoria opened the gardens and state apartments to the public (<https://www.tripsavvy.com/hampton-court-palace-guide-1583692>, 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2019).

With over 500 years of royal history, Hampton Court Palace has something to offer all visitors. Dating from Henry's days are the beautiful Tudor kitchens. From 1529, the Tudor Kitchens make up of 55 rooms, which were staffed by 200 hundred people providing 600 meals twice a day for the Royal court. Fascinating fact is that the King Henry VIII's court would have drunk an incredible 600 gallons of ale every year. In this section of the palace is the Great Hall, England's last and greatest medieval hall which once served as King Henry VIII's dining hall for his staff. Also worth seeing are the Georgian Rooms used by George II and Queen Caroline on the

court's last visit to the palace in 1737. In the Cartoon Gallery, the real Raphael Cartoons (that are now in the Victoria & Albert Museum) used to hang, but now there are just late-17th-century copies. Most interesting parts of the Queen's Private Apartments are: her drawing room and bedchamber, where she and the king would sleep if they wanted to be alone and the Queen's Bathroom, with its tub set on a floor cloth to soak up what is necessary. Beyond the palace are the amazing gardens. There can be found the Real Tennis Court dating from the 1620s and designed for real tennis, which was completely different type of game from that played today. Further on, people can see the Great Vine. Planted in 1768, it's still producing almost 320kg of grapes per year. Absolute must-see in Hampton Court is 800m-long maze, made of hornbeam and yew and planted in 1690. Approximately 20 minutes are needed for average visitor to reach the centre (Harper, et al., 2012).

## **11.2. Kew Gardens**

“Set amongst a series of parks and estates along the River Thames' south-western reaches, this historic landscape garden includes work by internationally renowned landscape architects Bridgeman, Kent, Chambers, Capability Brown and Nesfield illustrating significant periods in garden design from the 18th to the 20th centuries. The gardens house extensive botanic collections (conserved plants, living plants and documents) that have been considerably enriched through the centuries. Since their creation in 1759, the gardens have made a significant and uninterrupted contribution to the study of plant diversity, plant systematics and economic botany.” (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1084>, 6th June, 2019).

The overall representation of Kew Botanic Gardens with their buildings and plant collections is example of botanical science and garden art that subsequently was dispersed throughout the world. The 18th century English landscape garden concept was adopted in Europe and Kew's influence in horticulture, plant classification and economic botany spread worldwide from the time of Joseph Banks' directorship in the 1770s. Mid-19th century garden, which overlays earlier royal landscape gardens is centred on two large iron framed glasshouses - the Palm House and the Temperate House that became models for conservatories around the world (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1084>, 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2019).

Highlights of the Kew Gardens include Temperate House in the southeast of Kew Gardens which is the world's largest surviving Victorian glasshouse. Next to it is the Evolution House which traces plant evolution for over 3500 million years. In the Arboretum people can enjoy the walkways and examine tree anatomy. A visit to Kew can be interesting journey for everyone (Harper, et al., 2012).

## 12. CONCLUSION

The intention of the author of this thesis was to outline some of the most prominent tourist attractions in London. If he were to mention every landmark and possible tourist attraction in London, he would probably have written at least one hundred pages. He thinks that he has emphasized the most important sights whether they are museums, churches, houses, galleries, royal buildings or anything in between. Top sights that are described in this thesis are divided into ten neighbourhoods across the capital of Great Britain.

These neighbourhoods include: (1) The West End, (2) The City, (3) The South Bank, (4) Kensington & Hyde Park, (5) Clerkenwell, Shoreditch & Spitalfields, (6) The East End & Docklands, (7) Hampstead & North London, (8) Notting Hill & West London, (9) Greenwich & South London, (10) Richmond, Kew & Hampton Court. Each neighbourhood is special in its own way and offers a unique experience of England's capital.

The author of this thesis thinks that London is definitely one of the world's most cosmopolitan cities, featuring superb modern architecture, bold street fashion, a vibrant arts scene, and restaurants and nightlife for every taste, so everyone should see it at least once in a lifetime.

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## **STATEMENT ON SELF-COMPOSED THESIS**

I declare that I composed this thesis by myself, using the references above mentioned, as well as my personal knowledge. The guidance of my mentor, Dr. Vladimir Legac, Ph.D. was of great significance, and I am truly grateful for his effort.

Signature of the candidate: \_\_\_\_\_