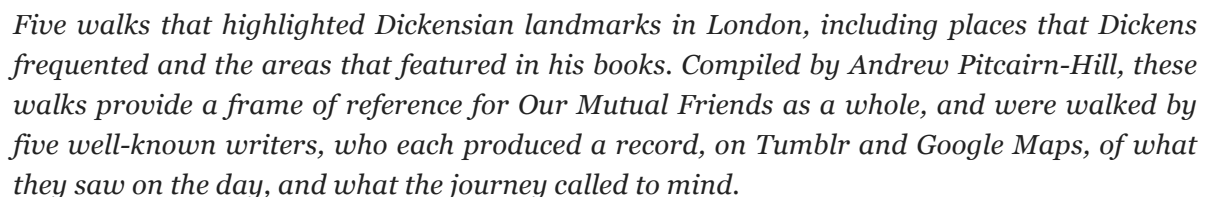


## Dickens Walk #2: Angel to Holborn with Rachel Lichtenstein





## Walk 2: Start

Rachel Lichtenstein is an artist, writer, oral historian and lecturer. Published works include: *Diamond Street: The Hidden World of Hatton Garden*, *On Brick Lane*, *Rodinsky's Room* (with Iain Sinclair), *Keeping Pace*, *A Little Dust Whispered*



## Thomas B. Treacy



## Arlington Way



## Medcalf



## Victorian London



Iain Sinclair once said to me ‘Victorian London is right there, just beneath the surface and if you reach out you can touch it.’



Plaque to Grimaldi, Exmouth Market

Dickens knew many prominent Italian refugees, including Mazzini and Emma Novello. In 1838 he edited the memoirs of the greatest British clown of all time, Joseph Grimaldi, who started his career at nearby Sadlers Wells theatre.

Since 1946, on the first Sunday in February, clowns from all over the U.K. attend a memorial service to Grimaldi at the Holy Trinity Church in Dalston. Nearby in Haggerston Road is the Clowns Gallery, a tiny eccentric museum, which is only open once a month. The most extraordinary exhibit inside is the Egg Register - a collection of painted eggs showing the unique signature make-up of each clown.

Luke Stephenson, Joseph Grimaldi, from *The Clown Egg Register* series, 2008



## London Metropolitan Archives



A quick detour into the London Metropolitan Archives, the city's largest repository of history. Whilst recently researching in the reading rooms I called up 19th century records documenting the crimes of those detained in the Police Office at no. 53 Hatton Garden. The most commonly recorded were: rape, pickpocketing, stealing (often handkerchiefs) the possession of counterfeit coins, assault and vagrancy. This is the same police court that Oliver is brought before the magistrate Mr Fang after being falsely accused of stealing Mr Brownlow's handkerchief.

In the foyer of LMA we examined a copy of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Agas map, a pictorial depiction of Elizabethan London. The River Fleet was clearly visible running along the same route as Farringdon Road today.



## A patch of green



A patch of green in the front garden of a house on Bowling Green Alley, a remnant of the lost landscape of Clerkenwell.

To the North [of the city] lie arable fields, pasture land and lush, level meadows, with brooks flowing amid them, which turn the wheels of the watermills with a happy sound... There are also in the northern suburbs of London splendid wells and springs, with sweet healing clear water... `holywell, `clerkenwell and St Clements are especially famous and often visited; and crowds of schoolboys and students and young men of the city take the air there on summer evenings.'

William Fitz Stephen, *London Eyre*, 1244



## Finsbury Health Centre



The back of the Finsbury Health Centre on Bowling Green Alley looks much like any other nondescript office block but if you turn the corner, into Pine Street and look beyond the overgrown foliage you can see the stunning curved and tiled exterior of a Grade I listed building, which was designed by the Russian Jewish architect Berthold Lubetkin (whose company Tecton also created the penguin enclosure at the London Zoo) and completed in 1938. The centre united modernist design and ideals, having been commissioned by Finsbury Borough Council, who were radical socialists at the time.



## Crossing Farringdon Road



Crossing Farringdon Road, we looked back up towards the City and saw a perfect, uninterrupted view of the dome of St Paul's, one of eight protected views of the church. The massive spire of the Shard now dominates the skyline. Beneath our feet the Fleet flowed down to Blackfriars, imprisoned in a storm drain.



## The drain with the Fleet beneath



In front of the Coach and Horses pub in Ray Street is a drain embedded into the road, the only place along the route where the subterranean river briefly resurfaces. If you bend down near the drain, you can listen to the sound of the submerged waters rushing past.



## Ray Street



Ray Street sits in a depression, once known as Hockley-in-the-hole: the ancient site of an infamous bear-baiting garden where the butchers and drovers of Smithfield gathered together with knights and noblemen to watch blood sports: wrestling, sword fights, cock-fights, boxing and bear-baiting.



## The priory of St John?



C19th workmen, digging about thirteen feet below the surface in Ray Street, came across paving slabs made of old ragstone, worn smooth by the feet of a past generation. Below were piles of old oak, hard and black, portions of an ancient mill. Below them, ancient wooden water pipes that might have belonged to the medieval priory of St John.



## Saffron Hill



Walking along the long narrow street of Saffron Hill, I almost hear the nineteenth century sounds of the place: Italian women selling parmesan, Irish stallholders trading in second-hand clothes, young Italian boys hawking ice-cream and chestnuts and the cacophony of noise that must have spilled out of the overcrowded taverns and workhouses that once lined the street.



## Hatton Garden

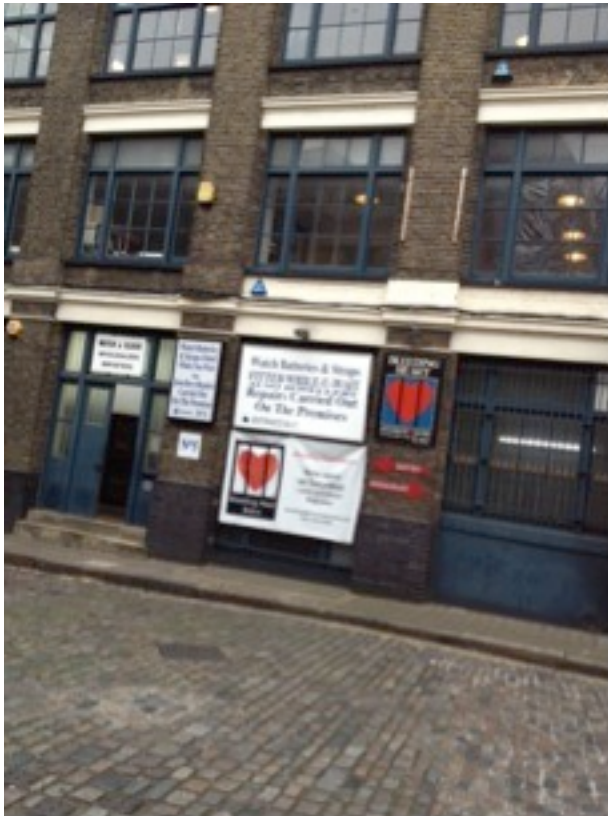


Embossed into this metal sculpture on Hatton Garden are symbols relating to different historical events in the area. The mitre represents the Bishops of Ely, whose vast gardens and estate once occupied the same land as the present day Hatton Garden. The single red rose - the rent Sir Christopher Hatton had to pay to the bishops when he took over the estate in 1576. To decipher the rest, read my book *Diamond Street: the hidden world of Hatton Garden*.

Tom Dixon's artwork is attached to the front of the former Johnson Matthey building, where metallurgists set up business as gold assayers in the 1830s. From a stable in the back yard they experimented with early methods of refining gold. Huge plumes of red smoke could once be seen for miles around.



## Bleeding Heart Yard



The Legend of Bleeding Heart Yard: on the night of the annual winter ball at Hatton House in 1626 a dark handsome stranger entered the ballroom at midnight and began dancing with the beautiful hostess Lady Elizabeth Hatton. In the morning her dismembered body was found torn limb from limb, with her still-pumping heart lying beside it on the cobblestones of Bleeding Heart Yard.

In *Little Dorrit* Dickens tells another legend: ‘of a young lady of former times closely imprisoned in her chamber by a cruel father for remaining true to her own true love, and refusing to marry the suitor he chose for her. The legend related how the young lady used to be seen up at her window behind the bars, murmuring a love-lorn song of which the burden was, ‘Bleeding Heart, Bleeding Heart, bleeding away,’ until she died.’

Local taxi drivers think it’s called Bleeding Heart Yard “‘cause it’s so bleedin’ hard to find”.



## End of walk