

CURIOUS CITIES... LONDON

Unique locations, hidden corners and unusual objects as recommended by...



HAWKSMOOR'S ROCKETS

Sir Christopher Wren is forever associated with the rebuilding of London after the Great Fire but he was ably assisted by several other remarkable architects. One of them was Nicholas Hawksmoor, who designed the rocket-shaped Christ Church Spitalfields.



BONE HILL

Most of London's old graveyards were closed under the Burials Act of 1852 and new ones opened in the suburbs. Only one, Bunhill Fields on City Road, remained and is unusual in it being designated for use by Nonconformists, including John Bunyan and Daniel Defoe.

MICHELIN MAN

Michelin House on Fulham Road, Chelsea opened in 1911 as a tyre depot and service station. After closing in 1985, it was converted into offices, a shop and restaurant, its wonderful Art Nouveau decoration, including a stained glass Michelin Man, retained.



SHAKESPEARE'S PUB

The George in Southwark is London's last galleried coaching inn. Built originally in the 16th century, it also served as a prototype Elizabethan theatre and was most likely patronised by playwright William Shakespeare, who relocated here in 1599.



ROMAN WALLS

Roman Londinium was founded in AD 47 on the north bank of the Thames. Despite now being obscured by modern buildings, it is surprising how many Roman walls can still be seen, including this impressive stretch outside Tower Hill Tube station.



TELEPHONE FIRST

A true London icon stands just inside the doorway of the Royal Academy on Piccadilly. It is the prototype of the red telephone kiosk - known as the K2 - unveiled in 1926 and tall enough to accommodate a gentleman in a top hat.



TEA HISTORY

The British taste for tea is legendary. In 1706, Twinings became one of the first importers of tea into Britain and their flagship store at 216 Strand is still in business, its entrance adorned with a pair of carved Chinese figures reflecting the origin of tea drinking.



London is a city of Roman ruins and sci-fi skyscrapers, quirky museums and novel art spaces, ancient customs and living traditions.

BENTHAM'S MUMMY

University College London on Gower Street is home to a mummified philosopher. Jeremy Bentham spent his life critiquing Britain's legal system and in his will stipulated his body be dissected and the remains dressed and preserved in a glass case.



MEMBERS ONLY

Boodle's on St. James' Street is one of London's 50 or so private members' clubs. Founded in 1762, it operates a strict nomination and election process, with members then free to enjoy the elegantly-appointed rooms and the famous Orange Fool pudding!

BIGGEST BREWERY

In 1853, the Old Truman Brewery on Brick Lane was the world's biggest, producing an impressive 400,000 barrels. Although the beer stopped flowing in 1988, many of the old buildings are still standing and now house a bustling business and leisure quarter.



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Commercially frenetic, culturally diverse and historically engaging, London contains myriad curiosities to discover.