

WESTMINSTER 'FIRSTS' CYCLE RIDE

Discoveries, creations and inventions in the southern part of Westminster

This six mile ride includes, alongside many other 'firsts', the first public building in the world to be entirely lit by electricity; the London home of Benjamin Franklin, 'The First American' and inventor of the lightning rod; the site of the world's first demonstration of Television; the incredible institution in which Magnesium, Calcium, Potassium, Sodium, Strontium, Barium, Boron, Chlorine, Iodine and Argon were discovered; the place where the first traffic lights in the world were installed; and the building from which Dracula first emerged!



This circular route can be started at any point. Suggested **START** point is the bottom of Northumberland Avenue, near the Thames, which has Barclay's Bike Stands and is close to Embankment tube station, and Charing Cross Rail Station and tube station.

A ONLY REMAINING HOUSE OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN THE FIRST AMERICAN AND INVENTOR OF THE LIGHTNING ROD, 36 Craven Street

Benjamin Franklin (1706 - 1790), born in Boston, Massachusetts, lived here for nearly sixteen years from 1757 to 1775. He was a printer, a publisher, a writer, a politician and a scientist and left an outstanding legacy of scientific and political achievement. His experiments with electricity included using a kite to gather some electric charge from a storm cloud. This led to his invention of the lightning rod,

"upright Rods of Iron, made sharp as a Needle and gilt to prevent Rusting, and from the Foot of those Rods a Wire down the outside of the Building into the Ground;...Would not these pointed Rods probably draw the Electrical Fire silently out of a Cloud before it came nigh enough to strike, and thereby secure us from that most sudden and terrible Mischief!"

His efforts to persuade the UK parliament to repeal the unpopular Stamp Act imposed on the colonies made him a national hero in America. As a key founder of the United States, he is the only statesman to have signed all four documents that created a new nation: The Declaration of Independence (1776), the Treaty of Alliance with France (1778), the Treaty of Paris establishing peace with Britain (1783) and The Constitution (1787). He earned the title of 'The First American' for his untiring and early campaigning for colonial unity, as a spokesman in London for several colonies, and then as the first US Ambassador to France.

This house, built circa 1730, is architecturally significant. It holds a Grade I listing and retains a majority of original features (central staircase; lathing; 18th century paneling; stoves; windows; fittings; beams; brick, etc) 'unimproved' over time.

Benjamin Franklin was one of the first adopters (maybe the inventor) of Bifocal glasses. As it happens, also in this street, by appointment you can visit the British Optical Association Museum (or Museyeum).

B FIRST ENGLISH-LANGUAGE WRITER TO BE AWARDED THE NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE 43 Villiers St
Rudyard Kipling (1865 – 1936), author of The Jungle Book, Kim, started his career as a writer here from 1889-1891. In 1907 he became the first English-language writer to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. He remains its youngest recipient.

The partly biographical book he wrote here, 'The Light that Failed' included:

"Meantime, I had found me quarters in Villiers Street, Strand, which forty-six years ago was primitive and passionate in its habits and population. My rooms were small, not over-clean or well-kept, but from my desk I could look out of my window through the fanlight of Gatti's Music-Hall entrance, across the street, almost on to its stage. The Charing Cross trains rumbled through my dreams on one side, the boom of the Strand on the other, while, before my windows, Father Thames under the Shot Tower walked up and down with his traffic."



C SIR RICHARD ARKWRIGHT, THE CREATOR OF THE MODERN FACTORY SYSTEM, 9 Adam Street
Sir Richard Arkwright (1732 – 1792), a self-made man, was a leading entrepreneur of the Industrial Revolution. Power, machinery, semi-skilled labour and a new raw material, cotton, were brought together at his mill in Cromford for the mass-production of yarn. Arkwright's skills of organisation made him, a century before Henry Ford, THE CREATOR OF THE MODERN FACTORY SYSTEM.

D POSSIBLY THE FIRST, SAVOY COURT MAY BE THE ONLY STREET IN BRITAIN WHERE YOU CYCLE/DRIVE ON THE RIGHT Savoy Court

For over 100 years the approach to the Savoy Hotel has been on the right, allowing passengers to be dropped at the Theatre, then guests to be picked up from the Hotel, with an easier entrance and exit for coaches and now cars.



E THE SAVOY THEATRE, FIRST PUBLIC BUILDING IN THE WORLD TO BE ENTIRELY LIT BY ELECTRICITY Sir Joseph Swan, inventor of the incandescent light bulb, supplied about 1,200 Swan incandescent lamps for this theatre which opened in 1881. The lights were powered by a 120 horsepower generator on nearby open land. Richard D'Oyly Carte explained why he had introduced electric light:

"The greatest drawbacks to the enjoyment of the theatrical performances are, undoubtedly, the foul air and heat which pervade all theatres. As everyone knows, each gas-burner consumes as much oxygen as many people, and causes great heat beside. The incandescent lamps consume no oxygen, and cause no perceptible heat."

F LYCEUM THEATRE, FIRST MOMENTS OF DRACULA

Between 1879 and 1898, Bram Stoker was a business manager for the Lyceum Theatre, where he supplemented his income by writing a large number of sensational novels, his most famous being the vampire tale Dracula published in May 1897. Actor-manager Henry Irving is believed to be Stoker's real-life inspiration for Dracula's dramatic sweeping gestures and gentlemanly mannerisms.

G FIRST PUBLIC PERFORMANCE OF THE NATIONAL ANTHEM 1745, THEATRE ROYAL Drury Lane

In September 1745 the 'Young Pretender' to the British Throne, Prince Charles Edward Stuart, defeated the army of King George II at Prestonpans, near Edinburgh. In a fit of patriotic fervour after news of Prestonpans had reached London, the leader of the band at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, arranged 'God Save The King' for performance after a play. It was a tremendous success and was repeated nightly. This practice soon spread to other theatres, and the custom of greeting monarchs with the song as he or she entered a place of public entertainment was thus established. The words and tune are anonymous, and may date back to the seventeenth century.

H DR SAMUEL JOHNSON FIRST MET JAMES BOSWELL IN 1763 8 Russell Street Greater London Council blue plaque. In this house, occupied by Thomas Davies, bookseller, Dr Samuel Johnson first met James Boswell in 1763. The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D. (1791) is a biography of Dr. Samuel Johnson written by James Boswell. It is regarded as an important stage in the development of the modern genre of biography; many have claimed it as the greatest biography written in English.

Dr Johnson, was an English writer who made lasting contributions to English literature as a poet, essayist, moralist, literary critic, biographer, editor and lexicographer. Johnson was a devout Anglican and committed Tory, and has been described as "arguably the most distinguished man of letters in English history"

I FIRST USE OF LIMELIGHT IN THE THEATRE 1837 Royal Opera House, Bow Street

In 1817, bare flame gaslight had replaced the former candles and oil lamps that lighted the Covent Garden stage. This was an improvement, but in 1837 Macready employed limelight in the theatre for the first time, during a performance of a pantomime, Peeping Tom of Coventry. Limelight used a block of quicklime heated by an oxygen and hydrogen flame. This allowed the use of spotlights to highlight performers on the stage and led to the term 'being in the limelight'.

J BRITAIN'S FIRST BICYCLE, IN HOBBY HORSE FORM, MANUFACTURED HERE 1819 69-75 Long Acre Westminster Green Plaque



Denis Johnson was a London coachmaker, born around 1760. He was married to Mary Newman in St Anne's Church, Soho in 1792 and they had 2 daughters. Denis Johnson worked out of 75 Long Acre for about 15 years from 1818. Coachmaking was a main industry in this part of Covent Garden. About this time the 2-wheel velocipede was introduced by the German nobleman, Karl Von Drais and Johnson obtained one of these wooden machines and, seeing the potential it had, set about improving it. His professional skills as a coachmaker enabled him to make an elegant machine which he patented and called the 'pedestrian curricle'. Otherwise known as the 'hobby horse', it became Britain's first bicycle and Regency dandies made them very popular. The craze only lasted about three years and Johnson continued as a coachmaker until he died on Christmas Day 1833. The family business continued to trade here until 1867.

K FIRST GIG BY THE SEX PISTOLS 1975 St Martin's College of Art, Charing Cross Road

This building was St Martin's College of Art, where then Sex Pistols bassist Glen Matlock (subsequently replaced by Sid Vicious) was a student. The other band members were Johnny Rotten, Steve Jones, and Paul Cook. Despite existing for only 2 ½ years and only releasing one album (Never Mind the Bollocks, Here's the Sex Pistols) and four singles, the band is considered one of the most influential of all time. That wasn't apparent at this first gig however. Supporting another band, the Sex Pistols played for only 20 minutes before the plug was pulled on them, before they'd even started to play their own music!

L WORLD'S FIRST DEMONSTRATION OF TELEVISION 1926 Blue London County Council Plaque at Bar Italia 22 Frith Street,

John Logie Baird (1888-1946) was the first person in the world to demonstrate a working television system. On January 26th, 1926, a viable television system was demonstrated using mechanical picture scanning with electronic amplification at the transmitter and at the receiver. It could be sent by radio or over ordinary telephone lines.

M BIRTHPLACE OF BEATLEMANIA LONDON PALLADIUM, Gt Marlborough Street

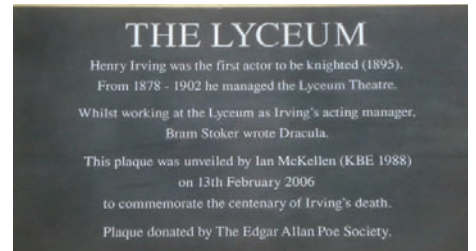
On October 13th 1963 The Beatles, who had been growing in popularity through the year with three hit singles (Please Please Me, From Me to You, and She Loves You), performed in 'Sunday Night at the London Palladium', the UK's top variety show. Televised live and seen by some 15m people. McCartney's attempt to announce the finale song, Twist And Shout, was drowned out by the screaming audience and that week the Daily Mirror first used the term 'Beatlemania' in print.

N FIRST ONE WAY STREET IN LONDON, THE ROYAL INSTITUTION OF GREAT BRITAIN, Albermarle St

The Royal Institution was founded in 1799 by the leading scientists of the day with the purpose of

"diffusing the knowledge, and facilitating the general introduction, of useful mechanical inventions and improvements; and for teaching, by courses of philosophical lectures and experiments, the application of science to the common purposes of life."

In the early years of the 19th Century the lectures attracted large audiences to the lecture theatre which could hold up to 1000. Many arrived by carriage and the Royal Institution provided specific instructions to coach drivers about the direction on Albermarle Street they





should use to drop off and collect their passengers, and paid for constables to enforce this.

MAGNESIUM, CALCIUM, POTASSIUM, SODIUM, STRONTIUM, BARIUM, BORON, CHLORINE, IODINE AND ARGON WERE FIRST IDENTIFIED HERE, AND MICHAEL FARADAY INVENTED THE ELECTRIC MOTOR DYNAMO, DESIGNED THE BUNSEN BURNER AND DISCOVERED ELECTRO-MAGNETIC INDUCTION HERE

Royal Institution researcher (and acclaimed lecturer) Humphry Davy discovered nine chemical elements here, with Lord Rayleigh discovering a tenth, Argon.

Davy's assistant, Michael Faraday (1791 – 1867), discovered electro-magnetic rotations, the principle behind the electric motor. In the early 1820s he also liquefied gases and in 1825 he discovered what was later called benzene. His discovery of electro-magnetic induction in 1831 commenced a remarkable decade of work. Amongst other things, he rewrote the theory of electrochemistry (coining many words still in use today such as electrode and ion) and established his laws of electrolysis. In 1836 he built the Faraday cage, which showed that measurements of electric charge depended on the electrical state of the observer. This observation led Faraday to develop his theory that electricity was the result of varying magnetic forces between particles rather than a fluid as previously supposed.

Faraday's 1850s laboratory remains in situ here as the Faraday Museum.

Q FIRST RED PHONE BOXES 1926 (THE PROTOTYPE AND A PRODUCTION ONE) Piccadilly, outside Royal Academy courtyard entrance
The red telephone box was the result of a competition in 1924, won by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, to design a kiosk that would be acceptable to the London Metropolitan Boroughs which had hitherto resisted the Post Office's effort to erect K1 kiosks on their streets. The original wooden prototypes of the entries were later put into public service at under-cover sites around London. That of Scott's design is the only one known to survive and is still where it was placed all those years ago, in the left entrance arch to the Royal Academy. It was brought into service as the Kiosk No.2 or K2 from 1926 in and around London while the K1 continued to be erected elsewhere.

P THE DISCOVERER OF GRAVITY, CALCULUS AND INVENTOR OF THE REFLECTING TELESCOPE LIVED HERE blue plaque, 86/87 Jermyn Street

Sir Isaac Newton, 1642 - 1727, lived here from 1696 to 1709 while he was Warden then Master of the Royal Mint. Newton is most commonly known for his conception of the law of universal gravitation, but his other discoveries and inventions in mathematics (e.g. the binomial theorem, differential and integral calculus), optics, mechanics, and astronomy place him at the very forefront of all scientists. His study and understanding of light, the invention of the reflecting telescope (1668), and his revelation in his Principia of the mathematical ordering of the universe are all represented on his monument in Westminster Abbey.

Q ADA LOVELACE, WORLDS FIRST COMPUTER PROGRAMMER St James's Square
Augusta Ada King, Countess of Lovelace (1815 – 1852), born Augusta Ada Byron, the only legitimate child to the poet Lord Byron and his wife Anne Isabella Byron, and now commonly known as Ada Lovelace, was an English mathematician and writer chiefly known for her work on Charles Babbage's early mechanical general-purpose computer, the Analytical Engine. Her notes on the engine include what is recognised as the first algorithm intended to be processed by a machine; because of this, she is often considered the world's first computer programmer.

R FIRST WOMAN TO SIT IN PARLIAMENT 1919 blue plaque, St James's Square
Nancy, Viscountess Astor (1879 – 1964) was the first woman to take a seat in Parliament, but not the first woman to be elected to Parliament - that accolade falls to the Countess Markievicz (1868-1927) of Anglo-Irish origin, married to a Polish Count. As a member of Sinn Féin she stood for election for a seat in Dublin whilst in Holloway Prison for playing a part in the Easter Rising of 1916. She was successfully elected but did not take her seat. Nancy Astor was elected as MP for Plymouth Sutton in 1919, replacing her husband who had been made a peer. She held her seat for the Conservative party until she retired in 1945.

S FIRST STREET IN LONDON TO BE LIT BY GAS 1807 City of Westminster Green Plaque, 100 Pall Mall
Frederick Winsor, 1763-1830, gave the world's first demonstration of street lighting by coal gas from a retort located here, June 1807

T FIRST MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS Grey plaque outside Methodist Central Hall, Tothill Street
To the glory of God and in prayer for peace on Earth this tablet commemorates the first meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations in the Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, Jan.10 - Feb.14 1946.
Established to replace the flawed League of Nations, which failed to prevent World War 2, the United Nations stated aims include promoting and facilitating cooperation in international law, international security, economic development, social progress, human rights, civil rights, civil liberties, political freedoms, democracy and the achievement of lasting world peace. The first meeting took place with 51 nations represented. There are now over 190.

U WORLD'S FIRST TRAFFIC LIGHTS 1868 12 Bridge Street
John Peake Knight, 1828 - 86, inventor of the world's first traffic lights which were erected here, 9th Dec. 1868.
In 1866, a year in which 1102 people were killed and 1334 injured on roads in London, John Peake Knight proposed a signalling system based on railway signals. This was not the traffic light we know now, but was a revolving gas-powered lantern with a red and a green light. Knight's invention was similar to the railway signals of the time. However, the lights exploded during use in 1869 and were removed by 1870.

END



ROUTE DIRECTIONS

As London is constantly changing, check road signs and adapt route as necessary.



L Left SO Straight on X Cross Roads LHS Left Hand Side
R Right T T Junction TL Traffic Lights RHS Right Hand Side

Suggested **START** point is the bottom of Northumberland Avenue, near the Thames, which has Barclay's Bike Stands and is close to Embankment tube station, and Charing Cross Rail Station and tube station.

Cycle **up** Northumberland Avenue away from the Thames

3rd R into Northumberland Street

Follow road R through arch

1st R into Craven Street

Look on **LHS** for

A BENJAMIN FRANKLIN MUSEUM AND PLAQUE 36 Craven St

Continue along Craven Street

L at T into Northumberland Avenue

1st L into Embankment Place, under the railway lines

Follow **L** up Villiers Street

Look on **RHS** for a blue plaque

B FIRST ENGLISH-LANGUAGE WRITER TO BE AWARDED THE NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE 43 Villiers Street

Continue up Villiers Street

R into John Adam Street and cycle to end

At **T** look for blue plaque

C ARKWRIGHT, THE CREATOR OF THE MODERN FACTORY SYSTEM 9 Adam Street

L out of John Adam Street into Adam Street

Stop at **T** and walk across the Strand. Remount and take

1st R at **TL** into the right hand side of Savoy Court

D POSSIBLY THE FIRST, SAVOY COURT MAY BE THE ONLY STREET IN BRITAIN WHERE YOU CYCLE/DRIVE ON THE RIGHT

Look **R** for the Savoy Theatre

E THE SAVOY THEATRE - FIRST PUBLIC BUILDING IN THE WORLD TO BE ENTIRELY LIT BY ELECTRICITY

R out of Savoy Court

Through **TL** then immediately **L** onto pavement cut-through

(watch for pedestrians) into Wellington Street

On **LHS** stop by the Lyceum Theatre (showing The Lion King)

F FIRST MOMENTS OF DRACULA Lyceum Theatre

Continue up Wellington Street

2nd R into Tavistock Street

L at X into Drury Lane

Look on **RHS** for Theatre Royal

G FIRST PUBLIC PERFORMANCE OF THE NATIONAL ANTHEM 1745 Theatre Royal Drury Lane

L at T into Russell Street

SO at X into Russell Street continuation

Look on **LHS** for plaque

H DR SAMUEL JOHNSON FIRST MET JAMES BOSWELL IN 1763 8 Russell Street

Turn around

L at X into Bow Street

Look on **LHS** for Royal Opera House

I FIRST USE OF LIMELIGHT IN THE THEATRE 1837 ROH, Bow Street

Continue up Bow Street

1st R into cycle lane on Long Acre.

Look on **RHS** just before end of road for a green plaque

J BRITAIN'S FIRST BICYCLE, IN HOBBY HORSE FORM, MANUFACTURED HERE 1819 69-75 Long Acre

Turn around and cycle back along Long Acre

R at T onto Endell Street

SO at RAB

1st L into Shelton Street

Left at T into Upper St Martin's Lane (one way, take RH lane)

Bear R at TL (to right of Pret a Manger) to Cranbourn Street (one way, take RH lane)

R at TL into Charing Cross Road

SO at TL

Look on **LHS** for Foyles Bookshop and stop outside the building just before it., previously St Martin's College of Art, location of the

K FIRST GIG BY THE SEX PISTOLS 1975

St Martin's College of Art, Charing Cross Road

Take **1st L** past Foyles into Manette Street

L at T into Greek Street

Dismount by 1st R (No Entry) and walk cycle along Bateman Street

L at X into Frith Street (remount)

Look on **LSH** for Bar Italia.

L WORLD'S FIRST DEMONSTRATION OF TELEVISION 1926

Blue London County Council Plaque at Bar Italia

22 Frith Street

Walking your cycle, **R at X** into Old Compton Street (No Entry)

R at X (remount) into Dean Street and continue up until you hit 'No Entry' markings

L, at No Entry, into Carlisle Street.

Dismount at end and walk through alley

L at end of alley on Sheraton Street

R at T onto Wardour Street

2nd L into Noel Street which becomes Gt Marlborough Street

M BIRTHPLACE OF BEATLEMANIA London Palladium

ROUTE DIRECTIONS cont.

MAP 2



SO at TL into Maddox St
 L at 2nd X into New Bond St (one way street)
 Take a centre lane approaching TL
 SO at TL into RH lane
 SO to pavement cycle path (don't follow road to left)
 Past statue of Churchill and Roosevelt on a bench
 SO into Old Bond St
 1st R into Stafford St
 R at X into Albermarle St
 Look on RHS for a grand building with lots of pillars,
N THE ROYAL INSTITUTION OF GREAT BRITAIN Albermarle St
 R at T onto Grafton Street
 Continue R into Old Bond Street
 L at TL onto Piccadilly
 Look for Fortnum and Mason's on RHS and stop just before on
 LHS, outside Royal Academy courtyard entrance. Look behind the
 gates to the Royal Academy for phone boxes
**O FIRST RED PHONE BOXES 1926 (THE PROTOTYPE AND A
 PRODUCTION ONE)** Piccadilly
 Walk your cycle across Piccadilly and into Duke Street St James's
 (alongside F&M) then walk L at X into Jermyn Street (No Entry)
 Look on RHS, between Pink & Hackett for a blue plaque
**P THE DISCOVER OF GRAVITY, CALCULUS AND INVENTOR
 OF THE REFLECTING TELESCOPE LIVED HERE** 86/87 Jermyn St
 Cycle back along Jermyn Street,
 L at X into Duke Street St James's
 L at T into King Street
 L at T into St James's Square
**Q ADA LOVELACE, WORLDS FIRST COMPUTER
 PROGRAMMER** St James's Square
 Follow around square, and just past second corner look on LHS for
 a blue plaque
R FIRST WOMAN TO SIT IN PARLIAMENT 1919
 Continue around square taking 2nd L (straight on out of square) in
 the RH lane. Turn R into Pall Mall
 Stop on L just past the 1st road on L (Carlton Gdns)
S FIRST STREET IN LONDON TO BE LIT BY GAS 1807
 City of Westminster Green Plaque
 100 Pall Mall
 Continue along Pall Mall
 1st L into Marlborough Rd
 1st L (just before the road) into the Mall cycle lane beside The
 Mall
 1st R into Horse Guards Rd
 L and immediately R at T into Storey's Gate

1st R into Matthew Parker Street and follow around to L
 L at T onto Tothill Street
 Look on LHS for a metal plaque
T FIRST MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS
 Grey plaque outside Methodist Central Hall
 Tothill Street
 L into Storey's Gate
 R at T into Great George Street
 SO at TL into Parliament Sq (Nervous cyclists may prefer to walk
 across)
 Take the second lane
 SO to Bridge Street.
 As soon as you've exited Parliament Square look for a safe place on
 left to stop.
 At the corner of Parliament Square and Bridge Street on the arch
 by the Houses of Parliament shop is a green plaque
U WORLD'S FIRST TRAFFIC LIGHTS 1868
 12 Bridge Street
 Continue along Bridge St
 1st L into Victoria Embankment
 L at TL into Northumberland Avenue

END

Route researched and created by Charlie Holland for Cycle Confident
www.cycleconfident.com