

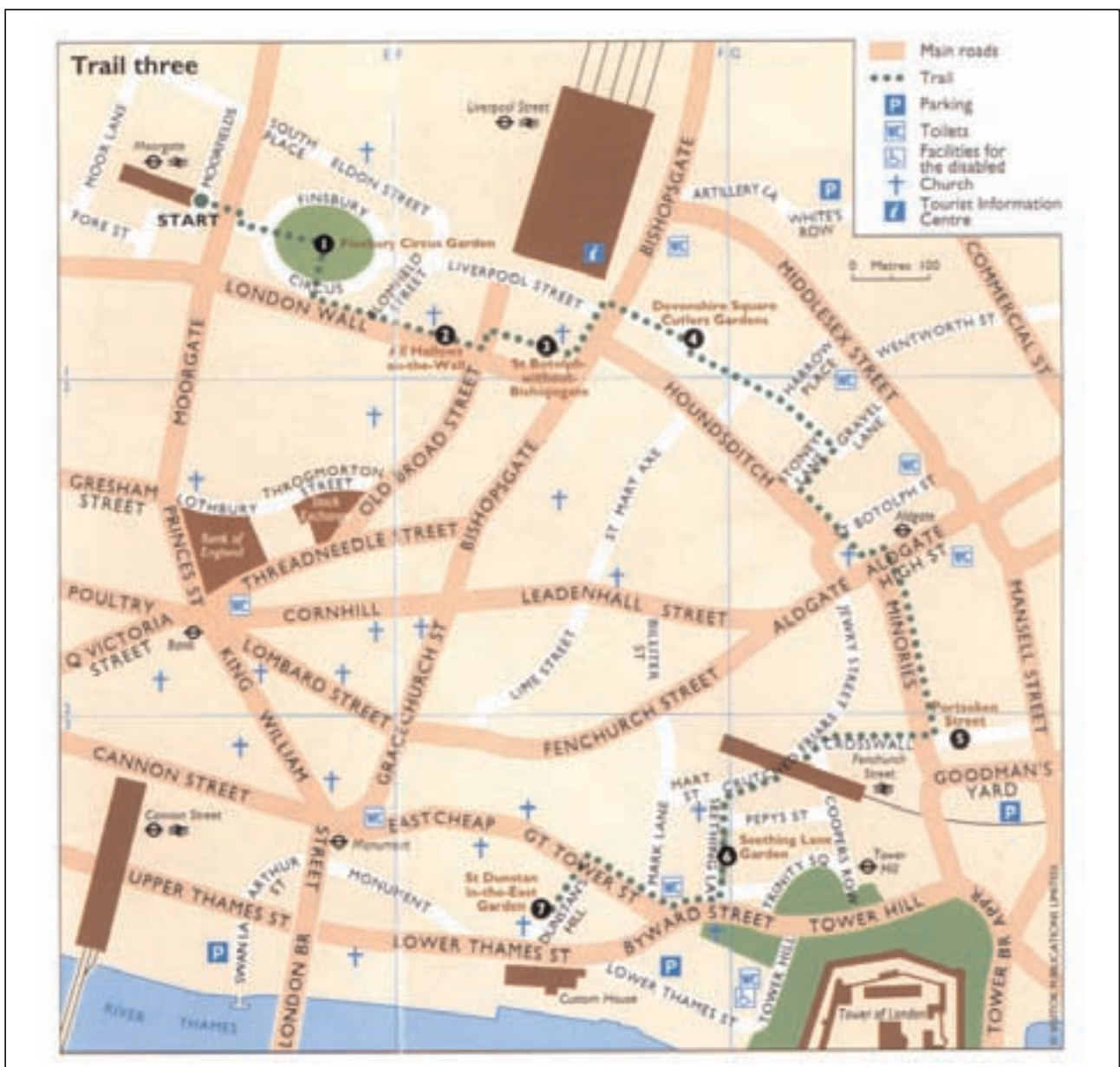
ON YOUR FEET

Walk 3: Finsbury Circus to St Dunstan in the East

Distance: 2.1km (approx 1.3 miles)

Start: Moorgate Underground Station

Finish: St Dunstan in the East





1. Finsbury Circus Garden (E1)

Just over the road from Moorgate station, the garden was formerly part of the Finsbury Manor Estate and today is the largest of the City's gardens with an area of 2,220 square metres.

Originally an open recreation ground, it was enclosed in 1812, when a bowling green was also installed. It is the home green for the City of London Bowling Club.

Despite its shallow soil depths, Finsbury Circus is also noted for its collections of fine plane trees, many over 200 years old. Another of its trees, *Sophora japonica*, the Pagoda Tree, is the only example to be found in the City.

2. All Hallows-on-the-Wall (F1)

Leaving Circus Place and turning left into London Wall, it is possible to enjoy the small garden of All Hallows-on-the-Wall. The next left leads into the recently refurbished Old Broad Street and right into St Botolph-without-Bishopsgate churchyard.

3. St Botolph-without-Bishopsgate (F1)

A church was first consecrated here in 1212 and the poet John Keats was christened in the present one. Its churchyard was laid out as a public garden after the passing of the Burial Act in 1855, and includes an interesting selection of well-established shrubs and trees. The fountain was added by the City of London in 1972.

Turning left into Bishopsgate and then right into Devonshire Row, the passage leads to Devonshire Square.

4. Devonshire Square (F1)

A mid-18th century residential development, the central area of the garden is planted with trees, flowers and shrubs separated by diagonal paths. Four young plane trees have also been planted here recently, continuing a City tradition.

Moving from the east end of the square and passing through the covered way into Cutlers Gardens (F1), there is a series of interlinked courtyards, gardens and open spaces. As well as a variety of trees and shrubs there are also very attractive fountains.

Exiting via the main gateway into Cutler Street and heading east, there are gardens around Aldgate underground station (G2).

Turning southwards and travelling along Minories and then taking a left turn brings the trail into Portsoken Street.

5. Portsoken Street (G3)

Just within the City boundary, the present garden is on the site of a former children's playground that was little used because the main road was difficult for children to cross. Another design by the Superintendent of Parks and Gardens, it includes a central fountain and (in common with many of the City's open spaces) good access for disabled visitors. The garden contains many interesting trees and shrubs including the Southern Beech, Northofagus, and a most unusual collection of spring bulbs.

Crossing back into Minories, the trail continues along Crosswall and Crutched Friars and then turns left into Seething Lane. In passing, smile politely to St Olave's on the corner ('the church of the ghastly grin') as mentioned by Charles Dickens.

6. Seething Lane Gardens (F3)

This garden is on the site of the former Navy Office and official residence of the Clerk of the Acts, one Samuel Pepys, who moved in on 17 July 1660 and is buried at St Olave's Church nearby. To mark his association with the site, the garden contains a sculptured head of Pepys, presented in 1983 by the late FE Cleary as a tribute to that great chronicler of 17th century life.

In 1972, Mr Gabriel Harrison (Chairman of the Amalgamated Property Investment Company) presented the garden to the Corporation, having purchased it from the Port of London Authority. The gift ensures the site will be preserved as an open space in perpetuity, in exchange for an annual rent of a nosegay of flowers, duly paid by the Corporation every December.

On the subject of flowers, a certain Sir Robert Knollys was given lease by the Corporation in 1381 to build a footbridge across Seething Lane, the payment for which would be one red rose a year. This has been collected nearly every June since then, the ceremony having been revived by the late Rev PB (Tubby) Clayton CH MCDD, Vicar of All Hallows-by-the-Tower and Founder Padre of TOC-H, the well known charitable organisation.

The ceremony is arranged each year by the Company of Watermen and Lightermen of the River Thames while red roses grow in profusion on either side of the gate into the garden. However, the footbridge in question has long since vanished although, fortunately, no one has demanded a rebate (it might prove rather difficult to supply).

Re-entering Seething Lane, the train turns right into Byward Street and continues along Great Tower Street then left into St Dunstan's Hill.

7. St Dunstan-in-the-East Garden (F3)

Halfway down the hill is one of the City's most attractive 'secret' gardens. The garden has been created in and around the ruin of one of Wren's most successful churches which, sadly, was destroyed by enemy action in 1941.

It was opened by the Lord Mayor in 1970, the City of London having acquired the ruin from the Church Authorities after the war. With a little help from the Parks and Gardens Department, nature has clothed the shell of the church to remind us that 'a thing of beauty is a joy forever' – however determined mankind may sometimes be in its attempts to arrange things otherwise.

