

STRANDlines is a community-building project about lives on the Strand, past, present and creative. By means of an interactive community website, [www.strandlines.net](http://www.strandlines.net), and regular weekly workshops, STRANDlines has provided forums for local people to learn about the Strand and share their stories, memories and creativity.

The Rags & Riches Walking Tour combines the experiences of people who have lived, slept and worked on the streets in and around the Strand area with the history of its buildings, parks and palaces. It tells of bricks and buildings; churches and palaces; cold steps and hard places. It talks of newcomers and long-term residents for whom the Strand has been a home. Above all it tells of a living history, combining the past and the present and the way that lives and time are intertwined.

This leaflet accompanies the digital tour on the STRANDlines website. Each stop on the route combines personal experiences with historical information to create a walk that links the past and the present.

STRANDlines team members are based at King's College London: the Centre for Life Writing Research, Department of Geography, Centre for e-Research, and Archives. The project has been generously supported by JISC. This walk has been compiled with the cooperation of The Connection at St Martin-in-the-Fields, a charity that works to help homeless people who live and sleep in and around the Strand area.

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[www.strandlines.net](http://www.strandlines.net)

#### **Start**

On the front steps of St Martin-in-the-Fields Church, Trafalgar Square, London, WC2N 4JJ

#### **Finish**

The route is circular, and returns to St Martin-in-the-Fields Church

#### **Time**

To complete the route will take about an hour.

#### **Getting there**

St Martin-in-the-Fields is on the east side of Trafalgar Square; it is north of Charing Cross tube station (Northern and Bakerloo Lines). Covent Garden tube station (Piccadilly Line) is also nearby.

#### **The Digital Tour**

There are audio recordings, written stories, and visual materials that accompany many of the stops on this leaflet; all of these can be found on the STRANDlines website.

#### **Authors**

The Rags & Riches Walking Tour was researched and written by homeless guides based in the Strand area. Their research was assisted and supported by Professor David Green and Dr Hope Wolf from King's College London, and Chris Andrew from The Connection.

#### **Local History**

Find more about the history of the Strand and its communities by visiting the STRANDlines website, or by visiting King's College Archives or Westminster City Archives.



# RAGS & Riches

## A Walking Tour of the Strand area

KING'S  
College  
LONDON

STRANDlines



**The Connection**  
at St Martin-in-the-Fields

helping homeless people  
seven days a week



**1** Homeless people have taken refuge in the area around the **Connection at St Martin's** throughout the 20th century. St Martin's, 'the church of the ever open door', gave shelter to First World War soldiers. In the 1990s, homeless residents slept under tables set out for St Martin's market.

**2** Bricks tell the story of high status residents who lived in the houses along Buckingham Street. Listen to a master bricklayer's story.

**3** The position of **York Watergate** in **Embankment Gardens** shows how far the Thames has shifted since the mid 19th century. Homeless people come to the gardens to find a secluded place to sleep. The Monday night chocolate run takes place near by.

**4** The **Adelphi Arches** date from the 18th century and ever since have provided shelter for the homeless. On the floor of the tunnel you can find graffiti embedded in concrete written by someone who used to sleep there.

**5** Next to the grand **Savoy Hotel**, on **Carting Lane**, also known as 'Farting Lane', you can find a lamp that never goes out - supposedly kept alight by methane from the sewers.

**6** **The Savoy Chapel**, or the Queen's Chapel of the Savoy, founded in 1512, is a remnant of Henry VII's hospital for the homeless. It stands on the site of the Savoy Palace, burnt down in the Peasants Revolt of 1381.

**7** **Somerset House** is one of the Strand's former royal palaces, used as a place of residence by monarchs and aristocrats in the 16th and 17th centuries. The Registrar General's office, and other government departments, were based there in the 19th century.

**8** Opposite **King's College** is **St Mary le Strand** church, erected in 1711 following a Parliamentary commission to build 50 new churches in London and its surrounding areas. Until recently its grounds were used by the Simon Community to provide food and drink for the homeless.

**9** Homeless people in the area sometimes shelter outside **Drury Lane Theatre** at night. The theatre is supposedly haunted by the ghost of Charles II, who seeks out Nell Gwyn, England's most famous prostitute.

**10** **Covent Garden** is a bustling market place, lively with street performances. For some, it also offers a place to sleep at night.

**11** **St Paul's** church was designed in the 17th century by Inigo Jones, the Duke of Bedford's architect. Some famous people lie buried in its churchyard, including Thomas Arne, composer of Rule Britannia. The surrounding streets were laid out in a grid iron plan at the same time.

**12** **New Row** is described as having the feel of an English village. For those who live on the streets, it can offer some peace and quiet away from the bustle of busy night life in the area. Nearby is the enchanting Goodwin's Court.