

# LGBTI HERITAGE WALK OF WHITEHALL

## *Trafalgar's Queer*

- In a 60 minute walk from Trafalgar Square to Aldwych you'll have a conversation with Oscar Wilde, meet a transsexual Olympian, discover a lesbian ménage a trois in Covent Garden, find a transgender traffic light, walk over Virginia Woolf, and learn about Princess Seraphina who was less of a princess and more of a queen.
- It takes about an hour and was devised and written by Andy Kirby.

Directions - The walk starts at the statue of King Charles I at the south side of Trafalgar Square.

## Stop 1 - Charing Cross

This was the site of the Charing Cross, one of the Eleanor Crosses commemorating Edward I's first wife. The replica is outside Charing Cross Station. Distances from London are measured here, where stood the pillory where many gay men were locked, mocked and punished. The picture is of a similar incident in Cheapside. On 25 September 2009 Ian Baynham died following a homophobic attack in the square. Joel Alexander, 20, and Ruby Thomas, 19, were imprisoned for it.



Directions - Walk to the front of the National Gallery on the north side of Trafalgar Square directly in front of you.

## Stop 2 – National Gallery & Portrait Gallery

At the top of these steps in the entrance to the National Gallery are Boris Anrep's marble mosaics laid between 1928 and 1952. Two lesbian icons are the film star Greta Garbo as Melpomene, Muse of Tragedy and Bloomsbury writer Virginia Woolf wielding an elegant pen as Clio, Muse of History. To the right of this building is the National Portrait Gallery with pictures and photographs of Martina Navratilova, K D Lang, Virginia again, Alan Turing, Harvey Milk and Joe Orton.





Directions - Look down over the square. The SW plinth to your left is to General Sir Charles Napier, in 1845 he sent Captain later Sir Robert Burton to investigate the homosexual brothels in Karāchi; his explicit study resulted in their destruction; and that of Burton's promising career.

Trafalgar Square held the 1971 Festival of Light rally with Cliff Richards and Mary Whitehouse. The following year 2,000 people took part in the Gay Liberation Front's first Gay Pride march from here to Hyde Park. Since 2004 Pride has ended with a rally here. On 19 June 2016 in time for the 2016 LGBTI Pride the green pedestrian "go" setting on some 40 traffic lights here were masked with a range of LGBTI symbols. Here is Rory Svensson who designed them.



## Stop 3 - Trafalgar Square



Leave the square at the top right corner with St Martin's Church on your left. Go down Duncannon Street until you reach Adelaide Street

## Stop 4 – Adelaide Street - Oscar Wilde Statue



A Conversation with Oscar Wilde is a monument to the playwright and author Oscar Wilde. The controversial statue was unveiled in 2008, after years of discussions and campaigns for a public memorial to him in London. Derek Jarman had suggested a statue and after Jarman's death in 1994, the Committee for A Statue for Oscar Wilde was formed, with Jeremy Isaacs, Judi Dench, and Ian McKellen involved.

The queer artist Maggi Hambling explained that "The idea is that he is rising, talking, laughing, smoking from this sarcophagus and the passer-by, should he or she choose to, can sit on the sarcophagus and have a conversation with him." The cigarette is often stolen.



Go up  
Adelaide  
Street and  
cross the  
road.



From the 1930s and into the 1960s, No. 2 Brydges Place was a private members drinking and dining club called The Festival Club run by Ted Rodgers Bennett. Here also was one of the 'old-fashioned' cast-iron urinals; a noted site of sexual opportunity at London's heart. It was demolished in 1953, as part of the LCC and Met's 'modernisation' of the cityscape. This narrow alley is evocative of much of old London, and many such passages are still to be found in the City, often with pubs hidden within them. At one point it narrows to 15 inches – the narrowest lane in London.

## Stop 5 – Brydges Place

Directions - Follow William IV Street to the far end. On your right the big white building is Charing Cross Police Station, formerly Charing Cross Hospital.

Now a police station this is where Doctor Lennox Brewster carried out some of the first sex change operations in the nineteen-thirties. One, athlete Mary Edith Louise Weston, transitioned in April 1935 to become Mark Edward Louis Weston. Previously she had competed in the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics in shot putt and javelin. He became a physiotherapist, had three children, and died in Plymouth in 1978. Most of these cases were probably intersex as plastic surgery was at an early stage of development and hormone treatment unknown.

## Stop 6 - Charing Cross Hospital

Go up Agar Street, right into Chandos Place until it enters Bedford Street. Look for a lane behind the church between King and Henrietta Streets.

## **Stop 7 – Edith Craig, Christabel Marshall, Clare Atwood and 31 Bedford Street**



Edith (Edy) Craig, a suffragist and theatre director, had shared a home with writer and translator Christopher St John (Christabel Marshall) since 1899. They lived in a flat here at 31 Bedford St from 1906, as well as at Priest's House, Smallhythe, next door to Craig's mother, the famous Victorian actress Ellen Terry.

In 1916 the artist Tony (Clare) Atwood joined the household. This was on Edy's condition that: 'If Chris does not like your being here, and feels you are interfering with our friendship, out you go!' Their lesbian ménage à trois continued very happily for the rest of the three women's lives, supported by their friends from the theatre and literary worlds.





**Directions** – Walk down to the bottom of the street and cross the Strand.

## Stop 8 – Durham House Street



Durham Yard (now Durham House Street) was home to a molly house/brothel owned by Jenny Greensleeves in the 1720s. At Jenny's 'Nursery', or molly house, men would perform mock birth ceremonies, or 'lyings-in'. During these events, one of the mollies would pretend to be a woman going into labour. They would be attended by a midwife, called Mrs Susanna, and they would make faces, scream out and eventually 'give birth' to a wooden doll. The doll was then handed around to those present – the 'Gossips' (godmothers), and they would celebrate with a meal and ale.

Directions - Walk down Adam Street into John Adam Street. Turn right, then on your left and on your left is a tunnel called Lower Robert Street

## Stop 9 - Adelphi Arches



These are the remains of the Adelphi, 24 palatial houses that soared from the river to the Strand from the 1770s until the 1930s. The trial of middle-class war-hero, sportsman and public schoolmaster Frank Champain for importuning a policeman at midnight in toilets here in 1927 had a dramatic effect on police activity after Mr Champain was spectacularly acquitted on appeal. His witnesses including a doctor who testified as to his weak bladder and the school matron who confirmed the cream in his pocket was for a skin complaint, not a sexual lubricant. The police were so cowed by the evidence of entrapment that arrests fell for some years thereafter.

Go back to Strand, continue to Aldwych and look north opposite Somerset House

## Stop 10 – Montreal Place



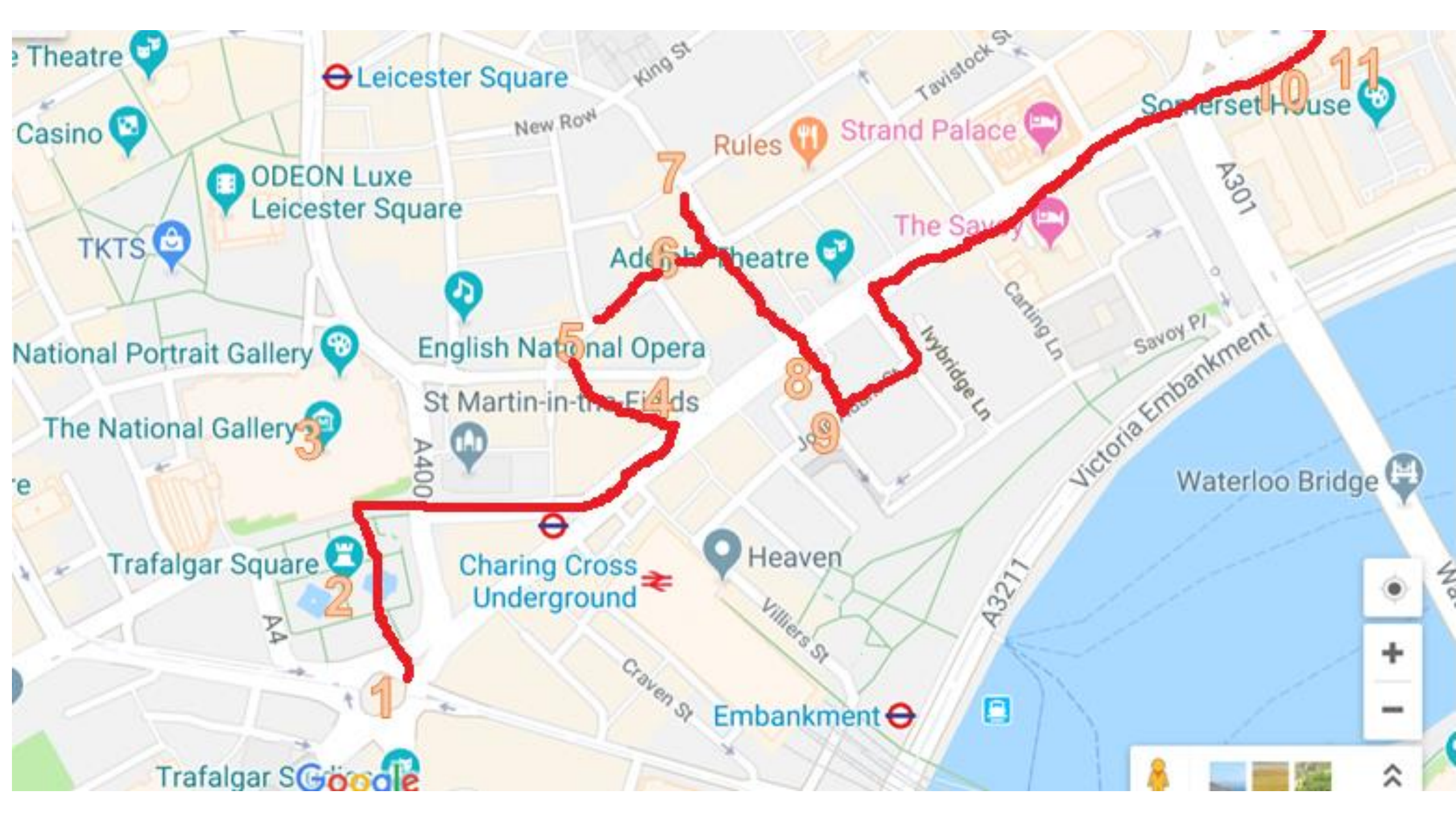
The lodgings of 11 Eagle Court, which is now Montreal Place, opposite Somerset House, was the home of John Cooper, also known as Princess Seraphina. She was a popular London cross-dresser. Cooper's friends referred him as 'her' or 'her royal highness'. He was described as indistinguishable from a woman, often wearing a white gown and scarlet cloak and fluttering a fan. She appeared at the Ridotto al Fresco or outdoor masquerade and ball held on 21 June 1732 to relaunch the Vauxhall Gardens under new management. Later that year, Seraphina attempted to prosecute Tom Gordon for stealing her clothes. Gordon was acquitted because it emerged that Seraphina had offered to exchange sex for the clothes. Neither were prosecuted for attempted sodomy.



Continue down Strand to Surrey Street and look for Strand Underground Station.

## **Stop 11 – Royal Strand Theatre**

The Royal Strand Theatre stood on the site of Strand Station. It was the site of the arrest of Ernest Boulton and Frederick Park, known as Fanny and Stella in 1870 who had partied in a private box and even used the ladies facilities. They were dressed in women's clothes and often promenaded through the West End. They were charged with 'conspiring and inciting persons to commit an unnatural offence', but were acquitted due to a lack of evidence. The Royal Strand Theatre was demolished in 1905. Stella even ensnared Lord Arthur Pelham-Clinton, son of the Duke of Newcastle and godson of Prime Minister William Gladstone.



Theatre  
Casino

Leicester Square

ODEON Luxe  
Leicester Square

TKTS

Rules  
Strand Palace

Somerset House

National Portrait Gallery

English National Opera

Adelphi Theatre

The Savoy

The National Gallery

St Martin-in-the-Fields

Victoria Embankment

Waterloo Bridge

Trafalgar Square

Charing Cross  
Underground

Heaven

Trafalgar Square  
Google

Embankment

- 1 Charing Cross
- 2 Trafalgar Square – Pride
- 3 National Gallery – Virginia Woolf, Greta Garbo
- 4 Adelaide Street – Oscar Wilde
- 5 Bryges Place
- 6 Charing Cross Hospital – Mary/Mark Weston
- 7 31 Bedford Street – Edith Craig
- 8 Durham House Street – molly house
- 9 Adelphi Arches – Frank Champain
- 10 Montreal Place – Procness Serapbhina
- 11 Royal Strand Theatre – Fanny and Stella