

**Did you know** this was the first Police Station in London? London's first professional police force was founded in 1749 by the author Henry Fielding, starting with just eight men in total. They were known as the Bow Street Runners and they were similar to the unofficial *thief stalkers* who solved petty crime. What made the Bow Street Runners similar to our police force is that they were paid by the Magistrates Court which was funded by funds from the central government. The Magistrates Court is situated right next door to the Bow Street Police Station. Both the buildings have been closed for almost two years. Rumours are currently circulating that the buildings may become a hotel!



**As you walk down on the right you will notice a Police Station.**

Just past the Magistrates Court, on the right you will see a glass bridge. This bridge is known as *The Bridge of Aspiration*. The bridge connects the Royal Opera House to the Royal Ballet School.



**Did you know,** *The Bridge of Aspiration* was coined because once the ballet dancers graduate, and they have the talent, they aspire to be employed as professional ballet dancers by the Royal Opera House?

If you glance behind you, you will also notice a set of five red telephone boxes. These are the K2 telephone boxes.

**Did you know,** the K2 was the original model for the famous red telephone box? Most other telephone boxes are in fact replicas of the K2.



- 1) Somerset House  
150 Strand, Charing Cross, London
- 2) Design Council  
34 Bow Street, London
- 3) Royal Opera House  
Bow Street, London
- 4) Hospital Club  
24 Endell Street, London
- 5) Seven Days Seven Dials (10 – 23 July 2010)  
18 Shorts Gardens, Seven Dials, London
- 6) English National Opera  
33 Saint Martin's Lane, London
- 7) National Portrait Gallery  
St Martin's Place, London
- a) Leicester Square Station
- b) Covent Garden Station

**A Walk Around the West End Cultural Quarter**  
step by step



**The Alternative Whistle-stop West End Culture Quarter Tour**

for Seven Days in Seven Dials

## The Alternative, Whistle-stop, West End Culture Quarter Tour

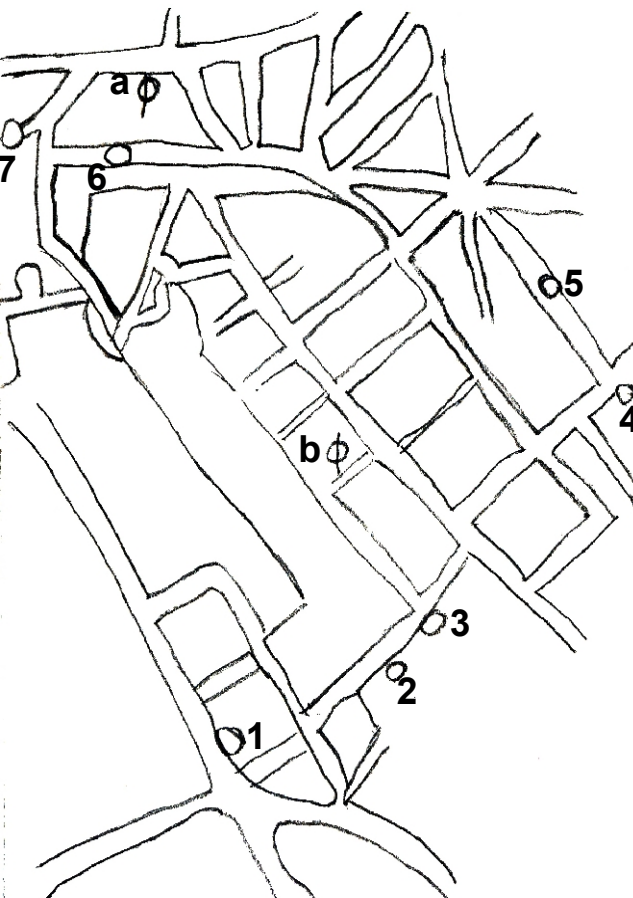
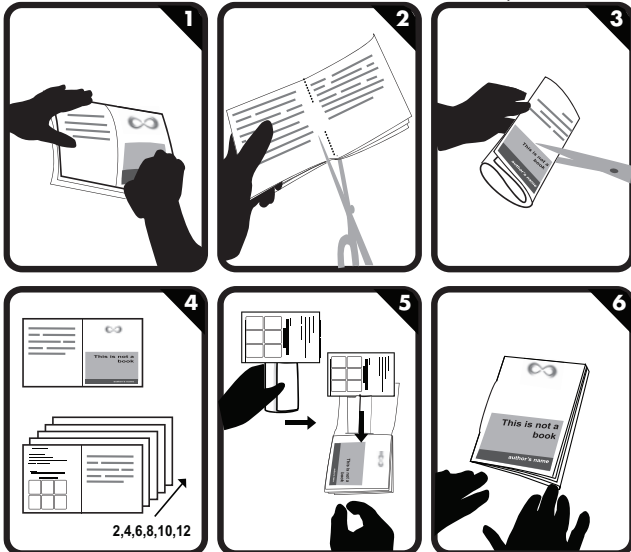
### Seven Days in Seven Dials

For seven days, forty people explored the village of Seven Dials armed with psychogeography techniques, technology and a quest for adventure, they looked up, down and sideways.

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## Covent Garden

**Welcome to The Alternative, Whistle-stop, West End Culture Quarter Tour.**

The tour lasts around forty five minutes. It begins at Somerset House and ends at the National Portrait Gallery.

Somerset House is a neoclassical building situated between the Strand and the River Thames built in 1796.

**Did you know** that Somerset House used to belong to Princess Elizabeth in 1558? Four hundred and fifty two years later it is a home dedicated to arts and learning. Its courtyard turns into an open air ice rink in the winter and transforms into a fountain display and a stage for the annual summer series music event which has had artists such as Amy Winehouse, Bat for Lashes and Lily Allen perform. It is also an occasional film set for the likes of *The Duchess* and *Sherlock Holmes*.



[artistsandmakers.com/](http://artistsandmakers.com/)

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The ENO creates more new productions than any other opera company in the UK?



Upper St. Martins Lane is home to the English National Opera (ENO) which was originally called Sadler's Wells Opera. Based in Sadler's Wells, it started in 1931. In 1967 it moved to the Coliseum which is now its permanent home.

**Did you know,**

For the avid bookworm, Cecil Court, to the right of St. Martins Lane, hosts a multitude of rare and specialist bookshops.



**Turn into Shorts Gardens and walk towards the Seven Dials monument. Take Monmouth Street to the left and cross the road to Upper St. Martins Lane.**

**At the end of St. Martins Lane, follow the road right round towards Charing Cross Road. Directly in front, you will see the National Portrait Gallery.**



The National Portrait Gallery was founded in 1856 but had no permanent home until the late 1800s when the present site was gained through a donation by Mr W H Alexander. An extension was funded in 1928 by late Lord Duveen. The collection contains over four thousand portraits of famous British men and women. It also hosts the BP Portrait Awards and commissions new portraits for its collections.

**This concludes our tour of the West End Culture Quarter.**

**Did you know** that the building used to be a flower market? Prior to The Transport Museum as it is known today, the first Museum of Transport opened in an old bus garage in Clapham, South London. In March 1980 the museum relocated to its final home in Covent Garden. The space was previously used as a flower market but once it was closed it was thought to be an ideal location, as the building itself, with its cast iron and glass architecture, was similar to Victorian railway stations.



The Transport Museum houses collections of vehicles, posters, signs, uniforms, photos, maps and drawings. Their mission is to conserve London's transport heritage; "London Transport Museum offers an understanding of the Capital's past development and engages them in the debate about its future". (London Transport Museum website)

**Continue walking up Wellington Street to see the London Transport Museum.**



**From Somerset House exit under the three arches. Take a left to the traffic lights, turn right and cross the road to the Lyceum Theatre.**

Walking up on the right side of Wellington Street you will see Christopher's American bar and grill and have a good view of the Lyceum Theatre opposite you.

Here, you can truly appreciate the unique and truly individual architecture of the surrounding area.

Christopher's American bar and grill claim to create the best Martinis in London Town.

**Did you know** that during the 1800s, the building used to be a paper mache factory? In the 1900s it was also London's first fully Licensed Casino and a brothel was located on the top floor.



**Did you know**, the statue, *Young Dancer*, was created by Enzo Plazzotta who was an Italian born British sculptor. Ballet was one of Plazzotta's favourite topics which gives a reason as to why he chose to do this piece and is well placed close to the Royal Opera House and the Royal Ballet School. At the end of Bow Street, to your right, the elaborate building you will see is in fact the Freemasons Hall which is open to the public.

Directly opposite, you will notice a young ballerina statue which is located just in front of these phone boxes.

### **Cross the road to Endell Street and follow down towards Shorts Gardens.**

On Endell Street, The Cross Keys Pub, is a reasonably priced and perfectly located public house. You may also notice the tree slanted at a perfect 45 degree angle.

### **Walk towards the end of Endell Street just before the turning for Shorts Gardens.**

You will now see The Hospital Club on the right hand side corner. The Hospital Club is an exclusive members-only club that tries to establish relationships between artists and businesses. They also organise many large scale events for companies such as; MAC make-up, Blackberry and Sky TV. The Hospital Club was co-founded by Paul Allen in 2004, the co-founder of Microsoft.



**Did you know**, it was also heavily supported by Dave Stewart of the Eurythmics?



The Design Council is located directly opposite the Royal Opera House. It is interesting to note the difference in architecture. Whilst we have the classical and handsome building of the Royal Opera House, we are met with the stark modern building, which in comparison appears displaced. The Design Council was founded by Hugh Dalton in 1944 and was known as the Council of Industrial Design.



### **Follow Bow Street towards the Design Council. Stop on the corner of the Design Council.**

Here you will be able to view the Royal Opera House and the beautiful architecture of the Paul Hamlyn Hall. The Bow street entrance of the Royal Opera House is also located here.

**Did you know** that the hall is dedicated to the late publisher who established the biggest grant-making foundation in Britain? He also generously donated £10 million – the biggest donation in the history of the Royal Opera House. The generous donation was made after a scandal surrounded the previous benefactor Alberto Vilar. Vilar, a wealthy investor and philanthropist was arrested in 1999 in New York City as he was suspected of fraud. Consequently he withdrew the rest of his donation and the Royal Opera House was left with no funding. It was Paul Hamlyn who rescued the project and subsequently the hall was dedicated to him.