

WALKING TOUR

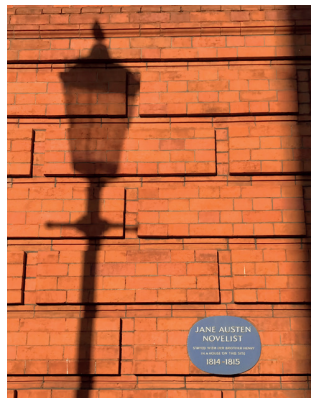
LITERARY CHELSEA

⌚ Time to walk
Approx 50. mins

There's no arguing the appeal of Chelsea to the literary set. With gardens to stroll through, views to dream to and a unique air of risqué yet respectable, it really is a playground for creative minds, both in real life, and in the stories set in this exclusive neighbourhood.

Begin by casting your gaze up at the magnificent six-storey property of **1 64 Sloane Street**. It was here that Jane Austen moved in with her brother, and literary agent, Henry in 1811. After a few years – in which *Sense and Sensibility* was penned

and published – she packed up her writing desk and moved just around the corner to the garden square of **23 Hans Place** in 1814. Continue your stroll down the stunning red-brick terrace of **2 Cadogan Square** with the private garden to your right. Turn at its South East Corner and you'll soon find yourself at the foot of number 75, former home of "The Edwardian David Bowie" and author of *The Old Wives' Tale* and *Anna of the Five Towns*, Arnold Bennett (1867-1931). From here, you'll pass more of the same centuries-old architecture on your way to



3 4 Anderson Street, where Karl Marx lived in 1849 with his wife and children. But it wasn't long, as this famous revolutionary was evicted for not paying his rent and moved to the German Hotel in Leicester Square then Dean Street, Soho. Back in Chelsea, it's time to tempt yourself with the King's Road as you take a few minutes sauntering down its glitzy, store-lined street. After just two blocks, you'll find the brightly-coloured cul-de-sac of **4 Bywater Street**, where John Le Carré's fictional spy, George Smiley, lived at number 9.

After taking in this pastel paradise, cross back over King's Road to the end of **5 Smith Street**, where number 50 saw P.L. Travers create and negotiate the film rights of the world's best-known nanny, Mary Poppins, between 1946 and 1962. From Disney to *Dracula*, the three-

minute walk to Bram Stoker's house leads you past iconic Victorian lamp posts and balconies to **6 18 St Leonard's Terrace**, where his white-painted, lead-canopied, Grade II listed property is impossible to miss.

Turn back on yourself now, then left at the first corner of **7 Tedworth Square**. Follow it round and you'll soon arrive at number 23, the five-storey corner home where Mark Twain, nom de plume of American writer Samuel L. Clemens, lived between 1866 and 1867. Your journey continues to **8 34 Tite Street**, where author and playwright, Oscar Wilde, lived with his wife Constance from 1884 until his tragic arrest in 1895. It was here that he wrote his most famous works, including *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Next, head back up to Royal Hospital Road then left towards the river.

Oscar Wilde was a resident of Tite Street. Photograph by Napoleon Sarony.



You'll soon arrive at **9 4 Cheyne Walk**, the first of our addresses on this famously literary street. Despite living there for just 19 days before her death in 1880, this is still considered the London home of Mary Anne Evans, under the male pseudonym of George Eliot. Just five doors down at **10 number 14**, the prolific writer, philosopher and pacifist, Bertrand Russell lived here in 1902. Next door to him (but before his time) was the poet and artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who lived at **11 16 Cheyne Walk** from 1862-1882. Those twenty years saw a number of cohabitants join him, including the novelists Algernon Charles Swinburne and George Meredith, not to mention a menagerie of unusual pets, including peacocks and wombats, of whom he was particularly fond.

Visiting in the spring or summer? Take a moment's rest in the Embankment Gardens to enjoy the greenery and river views before you carry on to the junction with Lawrence Street. Here you'll find

12 Carlyle Mansions, known locally as The Writers' Block, where several famous wordsmiths have called home. Henry James, T.S. Eliot, literary critic John Day Hayward, Ian Fleming, Somerset Maugham and Lionel Davidson were just a few of those names.

London doing its wet, cold and moody thing? Warm up with a drink at No. Fifty Cheyne before continuing up to **13 24 Cheyne Row**. This was once the address of the most famous writer of the time, Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), who lived there with his wife Jane from 1834. Carlyle's House is now a National Trust Museum, preserved exactly as they would have lived in the Victorian age. From here, continue to the cycle path a little further up and wander down it to find **14 16 Lawrence Street**. From 1750-1762, this end-of-terrace property was home to Tobias Smollett, novelist and poet who was best known for *The Adventures of Roderick Random* and *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*.

The final stop on our tour takes you back to the bustle of Kings Road and onward to **15 13 Mallord Street**. This Grade II listed townhouse was bought by AA Milne in 1919 and it was there that he lived with his wife Daphne, the real Christopher Robin and the most famous teddy bear in the world, for more than 20 years.

Rossetti reading proofs of *Ballads and Sonnets* at 16 Cheyne Walk, by Henry Treffry Dunn (1882)



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