Walking along Peckham’s busy streets, it’s hard to imagine that this bustling south London neighbourhood, where people have come from all over the world to make their home, was once just a tiny village of a few hundred people surrounded by farmland. Peckham has a long history. Over the years, the old streets around Rye Lane, Peckham High Street and Peckham Hill Street have seen many changes. Industries, communities, waterways, places of worship, cafés, pubs, housing estates, shops and places of entertainment have come and gone.

It’s still a bustling and ever changing place—the narrow road, the traffic lights, the pavement bursts with shoppers and commuters, and roads, once jammed with horses and carts, now pulse with cars, buses, lorries and cyclists. Yet, despite all the changes, even a short walk around Peckham can reveal clues as to what it was like here in days gone by.

The outline on this map has been designed for families to enjoy together, as an adventure. It takes in some of Peckham’s oldest and finest buildings, hidden treasures and celebrated landmarks. On the map there are things to look out for and a few teasers for you to answer along the way. The walk should take a minimum of 30-40 minutes but you’re advised to make time to allow for diversions as Peckham is full of interesting nooks and corners, cafes, market stalls and shops selling goods from across the globe. So enjoy this colourful corner of London but take great care crossing the road. And do share with us photos of any gems you discover! @PeckhamHeritage #Peckham

As you leave the station turn left past the restaurant on Rye Lane and then cross over using the crossing. Turn right up Rye Lane and continue on under one railway arch.

**The Bussey Building (133 Rye Lane)**

Hidden away behind Rye Lane’s shop fronts and railway arches is one of Peckham’s greatest assets – The Bussey Building. In Victorian times this was the site of George Bussey’s sports factory where men, women and children made the cricket bats and roller skates made in Britain at that time were produced. The factory closed sometime after World War 2 and the building went into decline but in recent years this impressive five-storey building has been given a new lease of life. It now houses many artists’ studios, cafes, theatres, fashion groups, galleries and workshops.

It’s hard to miss the murals and graffiti on the courtyard walls. They are examples of street art. Artists have sprayed or painted large, very detailed pictures, directly onto the outside walls of the building.

As you pass by this shop look out for the blue flowers in the tiles by the entrance. This shop used to be a branch of Sainsbury’s and the mosaic you can see in the shop doorway would have covered the entire floor of the original store.

To Peckham

Welcome to Peckham

The Peckham History Trail begins on Rye Lane, less than a minute’s walk away from Peckham Rye Station. Where Rye Lane meets Blenheim Grove is a zebra crossing. Directly opposite it is a narrow covered alleyway that leads to our first stop on the trail, the Bussey Building.

Turn right back on Rye Lane, walk under the railway arch and past the crossing. Turn right up Rye Lane and continue on under one railway arch.

**Rye Lane Chapel (I80 Rye Lane)**

This large white building, the Rye Lane Chapel, was originally built close to Peckham Rye Station, but was moved to this spot in 1863 to make way for the railway. A plaque on the right of building will tell you what happened here (on the right of 17th January 1943).

Turn round and cross over Peckham High Street at the crossing and then look back over the street to the buildings on your right.

**The Junction Drovers (71-79 Peckham High Street)**

Until the 19th century this junction was a stopping off point for ‘drovers’ or stockmen who herded sheep and cows through Peckham from the county of Kent to Smithfield Market. This pub has ‘crossed the road’! Until the 1960s a pub of the same name was next to the Jones & Higgins building.

The junction of Rye Lane, Peckham Hill Street and Peckham High Street dates back to the 1700s, when Peckham was a rural community. The street was exciting, but behind them, some of the buildings date back to this time. The tallest one (no. 56) is listed, which means it is protected from being pulled down.

You might decide to take a short detour along Peckham High Street to Wilson’s cycle shop (no. 32). Wilson’s has been trading in Peckham since 1870 and is one of Peckham’s oldest businesses.

**The Hope and the House (105 Peckham High Street)**

This is another of Peckham’s oldest pubs. Pie and mash and jellied eel and stewed peas have been served in this restaurant since 1927. Look inside and note the marble tabletops and tiled walls. If you are here, you will be helping to keep alive the tradition of eating pie and mash, the staple food of working class Londoners since the 1700s.

Just past Manze’s, the turning on the left which leads out onto Peckham Square.

**Peckham Square**

In 1826 the Peckham branch of the Grand Surrey Canal was built, linking the village of Peckham directly with the River Thames. Coal, tiles, bricks, timber and other goods were carried along the canal by flat-bottomed boats known as barges. In 1972, when London’s docks were moved downriver to Tilbury, the canal was filled in and the Surrey Canal Walk and this modern square were built on the available land.

**Peckham Library (122 Peckham Hill Street)**

The last stop on our walk is one of Peckham’s landmark buildings – the Peckham Library. In 2000 this 18th-century building was bought by an art charity that has gone on to create a £1 million exhibition — was awarded the Stirling Prize, British architecture’s highest accolade. Most importantly, it is well-used and much loved by local people.

The library offers great views of the local area, and on the 4th floor there is a sculpture of the head of Dr Harold Moody, who came from Jamaica in 1904 to study medicine. After being denied jobs in hospitals because of racial prejudice, in 1913 he set up his own clinic. In 1931 he formed the League of Coloured Peoples which campaigned for race equality and civil rights. Dr Harold Moody was named in the 2017 100 Great Black Britons list.

Find out more: Southwark Heritage — Cumming Museum, Art Collection and Local History Library and Archive www.heritage.southwark.gov.uk/about

**Southwark Gateway**

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