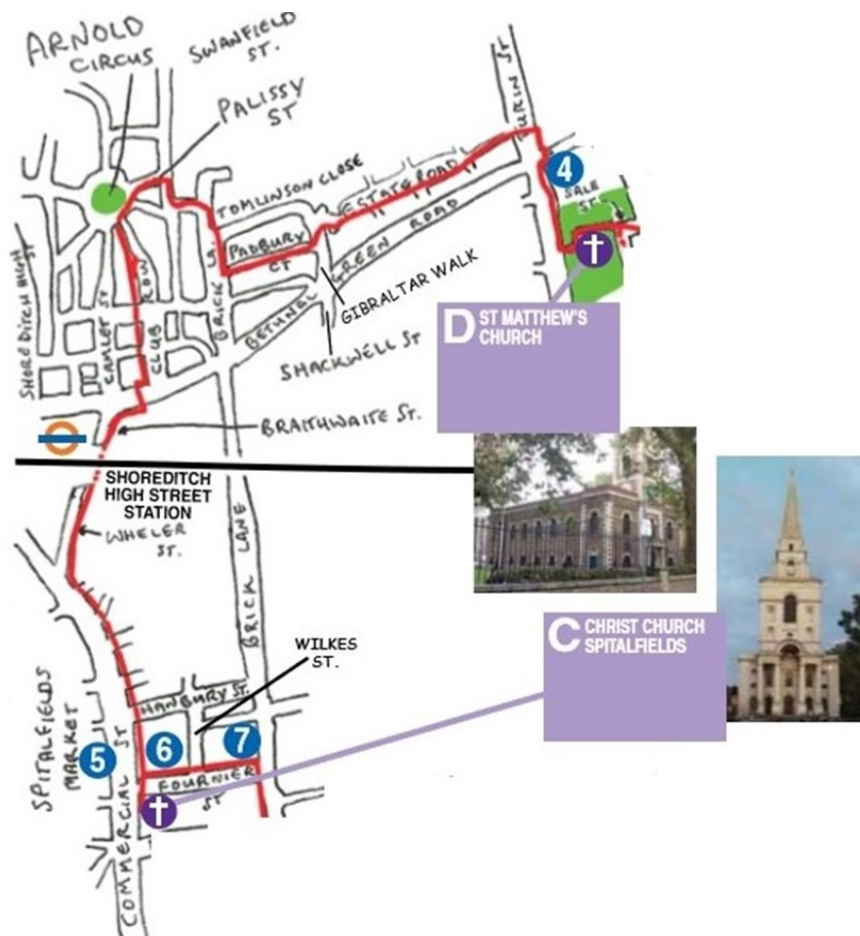


# UNLOCK

## STAY AT HOME LONDON WALK 2020

### Stage 2— Challenged by Change St Matthew's Church to Spitalfields



The 2020 Walk in Tower Hamlets is postponed until **24th April 2021**. Please bring your 2020 map and support us then. For 2020 we are providing this 'armchair' version of the walk, in seven sections. We hope that you will enjoy it and then donate to Unlock just as you would have done if you have been out walking the London Streets for us this year, if not more so! See page 5 for details. Unlock needs the funding that you provide more than ever. When the COVID 19 emergency is over the poorest communities will have been hit the hardest and those are the places where Unlock's work will be needed more than ever! We are relying on you to make that possible.

**Unlocking** Real life stories of urban people

**Revealing** Good News of the down to earth Christ

**Releasing** life changing skills and confidence

## WALK THIS WAY



On leaving the church, turn right and walk along Matthew's Row noting the impressive wall art on the side of the building to your right just before the end of the street.

Cross over Bethnal Green Road using the zebra crossing and immediately enter Turin Street. Keep to the left side of

the pavement and then turn left onto the road that takes you through a large Local Authority estate with still a reasonable proportion of the homes occupied by council tenants. At the end of the estate cross Gibraltar Walk and enter a narrow, cobbled road called Padbury Court with Victorian redbrick buildings to your left and a brick wall enclosing the back gardens of a low rise block of council flats.

The road you will end up on is the very northern tip of the famous Brick Lane. Turn right and continue past modern council estate housing as the road turns left and joins Swanfield Street where the street scape has changed yet again. The buildings you are facing are fine, tall, blocks of late Victorian flats. A short right and then you turn left into Palissy Street where you have entered a whole estate of these fine buildings and in front of you is an extraordinary circular garden enclosed by black railings. The mature trees shade a beautiful raised mound, finely dressed with flower beds and lawns and with grand stairs that lead to a central platform with a small bandstand.



This is Arnold Circus, one of the major Local Authority estates built on land that had once



contained some of the worst slums in Victorian London. The Circus is at the centre of the Boundary Estate which replaced what was called the Old Nichol – a slum of considerable notoriety with 5,700 people crammed into a tiny area, and where crime was widespread - the violent death rate was 40 per 1,000 while the rate for rest of London at the time was around 10 per 1,000.

It was, unsurprisingly, a local churchman who made the difference here. Reverend Osborne Jay, didn't get many people from the slum coming into his church. This was not news to him as the levels of poverty and depravity were endemic. The census of the East End in 1886 found that 92% of the population did not attend a service of *any* religious denomination.



REV. OSBORNE JAY.



Firstly, he decided to work on the streets, and was seen as a cheerful and charismatic presence who even managed to raise £25,000 to build a new church, social club, gym and lodging house in Old Nichol Street.

In 1890 he persuaded the newly formed London County Council (LCC) to clear the slum and build new flats. The whole area was completely demolished between 1890-1894 and the new estate became what has been argued as the first council estate ever built;

and the mound created as a central point of the circus was actually made of rubble from the demolished slum buildings. Amazingly, the new dwellings provided new, spacious and comfortable housing for 6,000 people in the same area that had once very badly housed 5,700 people. (As with so many regeneration projects, right up to this day, very few (if any) of the very poor who had previously lived on the Old Nichol could afford the rents of the newly recreated estate and were displaced into other overcrowded areas.)

Once a haven of social housing it is now a very expensive place to live.

We will turn south down Club Row now and enter the northern edge of Spitalfields with its more industrial landscape. Old

warehouses and workshops are now fashionable dwellings and specialist shops and cafes. More graffiti and street art

can be seen on walls here and we are heading for the taller buildings on the fringe of the City as well as much busier roads and pavements.







We will cross over the busy Bethnal Green Road with high railway arches in front of us and turn right towards the Box Park (a set of container boxes stacked on a long row and containing shops, food outlets and cafes etc). We turn left just before this and walk down Braithwaite Street which will take us through a large railway arch and onto Wheeler Street whose highly decorated graffiti walls conceal the fact that, as well as having gone under railway lines, you are now crossing over ones too.

The semi-industrial feel of the streets continues until you emerge onto Commercial Street and turn left. We are heading towards Spitalfields Market which will soon be visible across the road and you can tell you are in the heart of a very trendy, well off area with lots of (expensive) fashionable bars and eateries, shops and boutiques.



As you cross over Hanbury Street you will see the Market buildings to your right. Markets

have been held on this site since the thirteenth century, but the current buildings were built and expanded in the late Victorian and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The market sold fresh produce to the peoples of east London and the city until 1991, when it was relocated to Leyton, further east. It took them till 2005 to renovate and regenerate the market buildings in Spitalfields that now house a wide range of artists and specialist retailers selling antiques, clothes, food, drink and so on; a far cry from the produce it sold for its first 800 years!



Before you cross Fournier Street to the Church take note of the Ten Bells pub. The current building was erected in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century (but the pub's origin is much older) and has very fine 19<sup>th</sup> century tiles in the main bar.

Before entering the grounds of Christ Church, Spitalfields you might also note the low stone structure on the edge of the pavement to your right. It was originally a public

toilet, but the railings now enclose an art business and small event space called Venue 82.

Christ Church is a very large, very grand Hawksmoor designed church which, although having benefitted from the wealth of the Huguenots who lived and worked in the area in the eighteenth century, was not





constructed from funds raised by them. It was commissioned under the Fifty New Churches Act of 1711 by which the new High Church Tory Government chose to celebrate its victory. Other churches on our walk were affected by this Act, too.

We can thank the Huguenots for the Richard Bridge organ, which was installed in 1735 and is one the finest instruments of its kind built before 1840. (Christchurch is said to have been built on such a grand scale as to frighten the poor into the church! This may not be entirely true, but it was certainly built to attract Huguenots away from their dissident chapels and into the state church).

Despite being an architectural masterpiece and a very desirable venue for everything from weddings to corporate receptions, Christ Church has a vibrant and active Christian congregation that worships here and is still very deeply involved the local community.

**On the following pages you will find the factsheet for Christchurch, a reflection, a Bible reading, an Unlock story, a prayer and an activity.**



#### **PLEASE DONATE TO SUPPORT UNLOCK'S WORK**

- Online via Virgin Giving : [http://www.unlock-urban.org.uk/support\\_donations.php](http://www.unlock-urban.org.uk/support_donations.php)
- By Bank Transfer to Account No: 65031179; sort code: 08-92-50; quoting ref: walk
- By cheque to 'Unlock', mailed to: Unlock, Handsworth Old Rectory, 402B Handsworth Road, Sheffield, S13 9BZ

*Due to COVID 19 the Unlock Office will be running on extremely minimal staffing over the summer of 2020.*

Donations via Virgin Giving and Bank Transfer save Unlock money and time, and get the funds into our account much faster. Cheques will take considerably longer to process in the current circumstances.

*For this year only*, we will not be able to acknowledge individual donations (donations via Virgin Giving will be acknowledged automatically) , as we will have neither the staff nor the necessary details to do so.

**Please be assured that we are more grateful than we can possibly say for your generous and faithful support.**



## CCSPITS CHRIST CHURCH SPITALFIELDS

### DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

Spitalfields lies just outside the eastern edge of the City of London. It takes its name from the hospital and priory of St Mary's Spittel, founded in 1197 and the field next to the priory where a market started in the 13th century. From the time of the Huguenots in the late 17th century, Spitalfields has seen a number of waves of immigration including Jews in the late 19th century and Bangladeshis in the later 20th century. The building at the other end of Fournier Street, which is now a mosque, is the only building to have been Christian, Jewish and Muslim. The area saw prosperity with the Huguenots in the 18th century, particularly from silk weaving, but declined in the 19th century. The last decade or so has seen considerable investment in the area which has resulted in diversity between fine restored Georgian buildings, alongside homelessness and addiction, and with much in between.

### BACKGROUND AND ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH

Christ Church was completed in 1729, one of 12 churches to be built out of 50 by an Act of Parliament following the Great Fire of London. It was designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor, a student of Sir Christopher Wren who built St Paul's Cathedral. It is an Anglican church. We also have a church hall called Hanbury Hall, two streets away on Hanbury Street. This used to be a Huguenot chapel and dates from around the same time as the church but became part of the church parish in the later part of the 19th century.

### WORK & WITNESS OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Christ Church is an evangelical Anglican Church with connection to Holy Trinity Brompton. We have a Book of Common Prayer service twice a month at 8:30. Every week we have a family-orientated service at 10:30 with sung worship led by a band, with Scripture reading, prayer and a substantive sermon. Children & youth go to their own groups and there is an hour of mingling over coffee afterwards. We also have a 5pm service, similar in format, but which is more for students, 20s & 30s with hospitality both before and after the service.

Additionally to services, we run midweek groups of 10-15 people which build community amongst members of the church and also smaller 'Pulse' groups of 3-4 people where friendship and accountability is built. There are Student Hangouts every Sunday after the 5pm service. We have an in depth look at the Bible every couple of months in 'Word'. We have socials such as Men's Curry Night and Women's Breakfast. We also go away for a week as a church to Holy Trinity Brompton's Focus every year where we camp together in a community pitch and worship and learn from God.

The church runs a weekly night shelter on Mondays during autumn and winter in Hanbury Hall and maintains links with Spitalfields Crypt Trust which used to run in the church crypt a few decades ago. We run Alpha two or three times a year in Hanbury Hall.

Ways in which walkers could help:

- Things to praise God for: a vibrant area which attracts people, including the church nave itself which is visited by 150-200 people a day.
- Things to pray for: spiritual vitality in the church congregation leading to outreach and social action ministries.
- Financial needs: resources to run these ministries and to look after the building that draws people.

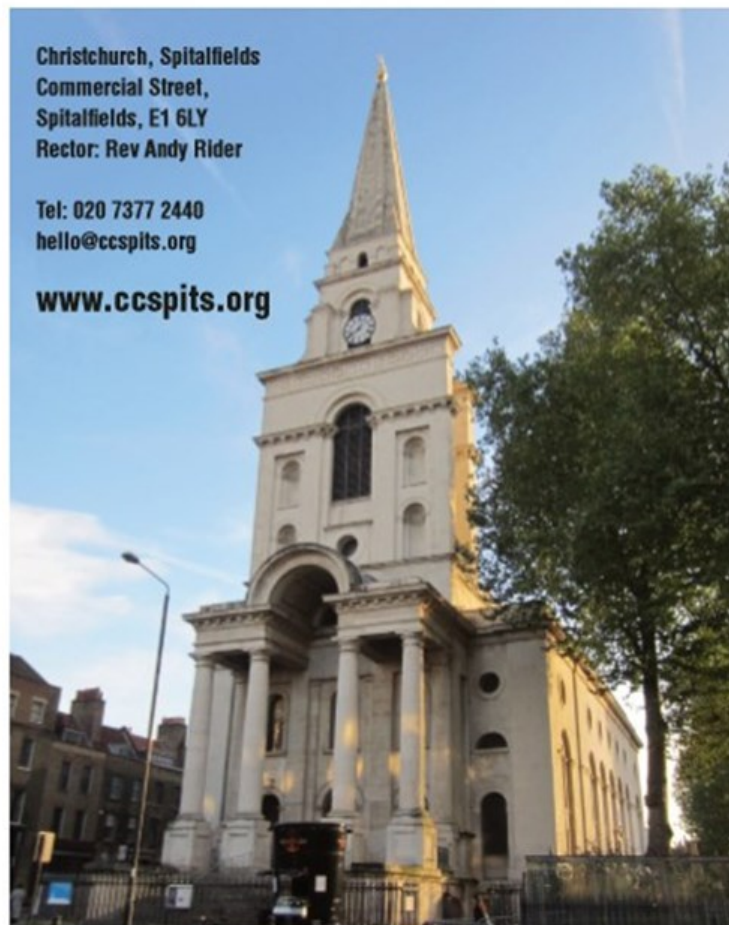
### CAFE IN THE CRYPT DISCOUNT FOR UNLOCK WALKERS

There is a 30% discount in the Cafe in the Crypt when you present the Unlock Map.

**Christchurch, Spitalfields**  
**Commercial Street,**  
**Spitalfields, E1 6LY**  
**Rector: Rev Andy Rider**

Tel: 020 7377 2440  
 hello@ccspits.org

**[www.ccspits.org](http://www.ccspits.org)**



## **Reflection – The challenge of change and Arnold Circus the dilemma of Unaffordable Housing**

The path we have walked today is filled with stories of what was there before and stories of how things changed for one purpose and then were changed again. Poor areas are destroyed in order to produce new, better places, but the very poor do not always benefit. The ordinary working-class people are offered the chance for new and better homes at rents they can afford and then things change, and families are replaced with individuals and couples and only the better-off can afford to live there.

Similarly, old sweatshops become fashionable restaurants, run down, multi-occupancy houses are transformed into valuable, historical homes for artists and bankers and so on; and none of this is simple. The restaurant may have wealthy customers, but the lowest kitchen staff may still be some of the poorest people in society and the head chef in that same kitchen may have started as an impoverished kitchen porter.

However, we have to take heart when we are faced with such dramatic changes in relatively short spaces of time. Remember that change offers possibilities. Things can be transformed for the good of the weak and the poor, too. People are changing things for the better all the time and your church is probably involved in some of those changes. Finding out what you can do to help might be your next step.

Offering hope and working with others to help bring about change are things that Christians are all called to do. The work of Unlock is centred on bringing hope and understanding to people who are on the margins. They do this by unlocking the Bible and opening its potential to people who may never have encountered God's love before.

So, change comes in the physical world around us, in our communities and in individual people's hearts.

It comes through opening our hearts to those who are not able to benefit from the changes around them. It comes through seeking God's help and praying together.

Ian Smith—Unlock London Walk Team

# Unlock Stories:

## Coming out of the Kitchen (Hull):

“I remember an event about the Exodus and I didn’t want to be involved. I wanted to stay in the kitchen instead cos I thought that was my place. Andy dragged me out though and told me it was time for me to get out of the kitchen! He asked me if I’d ever had an experience of moving or escaping from somewhere. I told my story of how I moved from Hessle Road to Preston Road when I was 7 and how it felt like entering the Promised Land.

I’d never seen hot running water before or so much green space, or had an indoor loo! One memory of my sister is very clear; of her perched on a lorry with tea cosy on her knee and a kitten sitting in it. She was only little and she had a big beam on her face. We ended up keeping the kitten.

It felt good and bad to tell this part of my story. It was something I hadn’t thought of much. A forgotten memory. There was happiness in it but also some pain. It was the first time I realised that the Bible had anything to do with my life. Another woman talked about the time she left her husband. It was a healing thing for both of us.”





## Isaiah 1:17

Learn to do right. See that justice is done - help those who are oppressed, give orphans their rights, and defend widows.

**PRAY FOR** those Christians who want to live in the East End but can't afford to do so. Pray for Christian Housing Associations like Mission Housing who are helping them to do so. And pray for Christians in your own town facing similar difficulties, that they might be helped through local agencies and Housing Associations, too.

*Christ our Saviour, you walked among us, shared meals with the poor and disreputable and cured the people rejected and reviled by your society and its leaders. Walk with us through our cities of change and steer our hand to the work we need to do. Open our hearts and our ears, to the pain and the pleading of those that change has left behind.*

## ACTIVITY

**Make yourself a local housing sketch map using words and pictures.**

- Where is the poorest housing in you area?
- Who lives there?
- Where is the newest housing?
- And who has been displaced by it?
- Use the map to shape your prayers and maybe even some actions!



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