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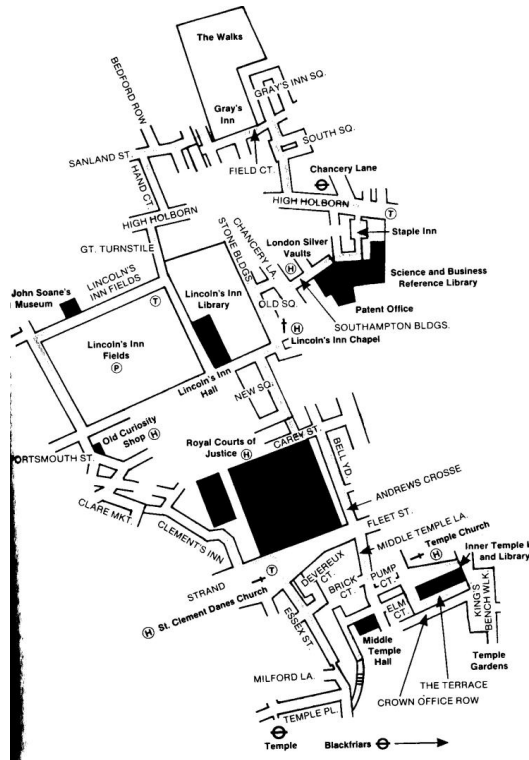
Explore London Group 6

The Inns of Court

Summary: This is a circular walk through the heart of legal London featuring the Capital's four ancient Inns of Court where barristers (i.e. advocates) first train and then practise. These four Inns are: Grays Inn, Lincoln's Inn, Middle Temple and Inner Temple. Apart from the inns and their old courts and quiet gardens, features of the walk include St Clement Danes church, the law courts in the Strand, Dickens's old curiosity Shop, Lincoln Inn Fields, Staple Inn, Chancery Lane and the London Silver Vaults.

Length: 2 miles (3.2 kilometres).

The four Inns of Court - Middle Temple, Inner Temple, Gray's Inn and Lincoln's Inn - are traditionally the bastions of the legal establishment in England. They date from late medieval times, and provided accommodation and education for students of law as well as members of the legal profession. Benchers (masters of the Bench) govern each Inn, and they have the power to call students to the



Bar* (that is, to admit those who have fulfilled the qualifications for Barristers-at-Law and who could then practice as advocates within the English courts). During the eighteenth century the educational aspect of the Inns of Court went into a decline, but revived again in the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century the Inns are more like clubs than hostels or schools, although they still control admission to the Bar.

The Inns of Chancery were related to the Inns of Court, involved in the education of legal students, but they were lesser establishments than the Inns of Court as they had no right to call students to the Bar. Their importance declined during the eighteenth century, and all but two vanished completely during the nineteenth century.

Originally the bar was the railing that enclosed the judge in a court. Legal practitioners had to argue their case 'before the bar', that is, before the judge. The term "the bar" came to mean all those qualified and authorised to conduct the trial of legal cases in court

The Inns are near the western boundary of the City of London; nearby are the Royal Courts of Justice (opened in 1882; previously sat in Westminster Hall), which were placed in the legal quarter of London for convenience. Each inn is a substantial complex with a great hall, chapel, libraries, sets of chambers for many hundreds of barristers, and gardens, and covers several acres. The layout is similar to that of an "Oxbridge" college. The "chambers" were originally used as residences as well as business premises by many of the barristers, but today, with a small number of exceptions, they serve as offices only.

Inner Temple

As with Middle Temple, the Inner Temple was part of the property of the Knights Templar which the English legal profession acquired in the late medieval period. The "inner" refers to that part of the Temple contained 'inside' Temple Bar, the Outer Temple was that part beyond Temple Bar, and was never occupied by the lawyers.

In the nineteenth century the Inner Temple Hall was very extensive building fronted with Portland stone, having been frequently burned, rebuilt, demolished and extended since the reign of Edward III. It fronted on to the Thames, and was a "favourite and delightful promenade of a summer's evening." According to Shakespeare, the Temple garden was the place where the badge of the White and the Red Rose originated - the distinctive symbol of the rival Houses of York and Lancaster during the fifteenth century Wars of the Roses.

Middle Temple Hall

The great sixteenth-century hall of Middle Temple is one of the finest halls in England. The medieval hall dated to c. 1320 but the hall pictured above was completed in the late sixteenth century. Until 1830 a large open fireplace stood in the centre of the hall.

The Inner and Middle Temples were originally the properties of the medieval Knights Templar (an order devoted to the protection of pilgrims in their journey to the Holy Land), as was Temple Church. When this order was suppressed in the early fourteenth century their Inner and Middle Temples passed to the Knights Hospitallers and from them to the legal fraternity for use as a hostel. The Middle and Inner Temple have remained bastions of the legal profession ever since.

Gray's Inn Hall, Chapel and Library

Gray's Inn occupies the site of the manor house of the ancient manor of Portpool which in 1515 became the residence of the noble family of Gray (thus becoming known as Gray's Inn, or Gray's house). In 1514 Henry VIII gave the Inn to students of law, and, as one of the Inns of Court, Gray's Inn has remained a part of the legal landscape of London ever since.

Lincoln's Inn Hall, Chapel, and Chancery Court

Lincoln's Inn is situated to the south of Holborn and on the west side of Chancery Lane, on the spot of the bishop of Chichester's house, as also part of Black Friar's. Henry Lacey, Earl of Lincoln, obtained the site about 1226 and he demolished the building then standing and built a stately mansion for his city residence into which it is said that sometime before his death in 1310 he introduced the study of law.

St Clement Danes.

The original Wren building was badly damaged by enemy action in 1941. It was rebuilt by the Royal Air Force in 1958 to become its spiritual heart.

The Royal Courts of Justice

The Royal Courts of Justice was opened by Queen Victoria in 1882 and became the permanent home of the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court consists of two courts: the High Court of Justice and the Court of Appeal. The High Court consists of three Divisions dealing mainly with civil disputes: the Chancery