

Clerkenwell lies

on the east side of the River Fleet valley, just north of the ancient City of London. It takes its name from the



Clerks' Well, where medieval parish clerks from the City came to enact mystery plays.

Populated since the Roman times, the character of its modern streets and lanes is formed by its medieval monastic history.

To the south was the Priory of the Knights of St John and north of the Green was the nunnery of St Mary. When Henry VIII closed them down, their precincts became town houses for the aristocracy, and were later used by artisans and craftsmen, mainly watch, clock, and jewellery makers.

London's first piped water supply was brought into the area in the 17th century by Sir Hugh Myddelton and brewing and distilling developed as major industries, because of the area's fine water. In the 18th century, pleasure gardens and spas abounded here, but it was also a centre for criminal justice and prisons, and for radical politics and protest.

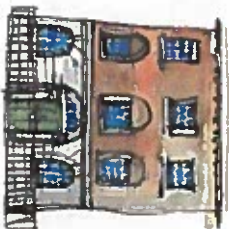
The literary tradition that started with Shakespeare, whose plays were rehearsed and licensed at St John's, and continued with Dr Johnson, Dickens and others, also found expression in the printing industry, for so long central to Clerkenwell life.

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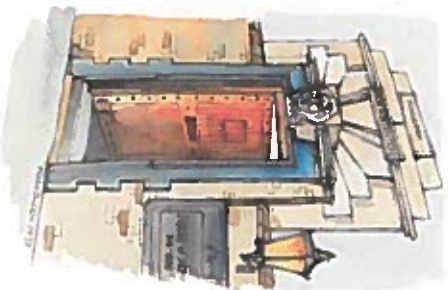
Since Tudor times Clerkenwell also had a reputation for low-life, gaming and its red light district, and in the 19th century notorious slums developed, which were later cleared.

Today, modern Clerkenwell is home to an increasing number of interesting places to eat and drink and has a vital night life. There are specialist shops as well as other thriving businesses and a growing residential



community.

If you would like to find out more about the history of Clerkenwell, a booklet can be purchased at many of the sites along the trail.



The establishment of the trail has been supported by the City Fringe Partnership with a grant from the Single

Regeneration Budget.

The trail is one of a number of projects across the northern edge of the City of London which promote and expand the cultural industries.

This is a part of a wider regeneration strategy that will create employment, support the local community, and harness the potential of business in the area.



PARTNERSHIP

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The Clerkenwell Historic Trail

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The Clerkenwell Historic Trail

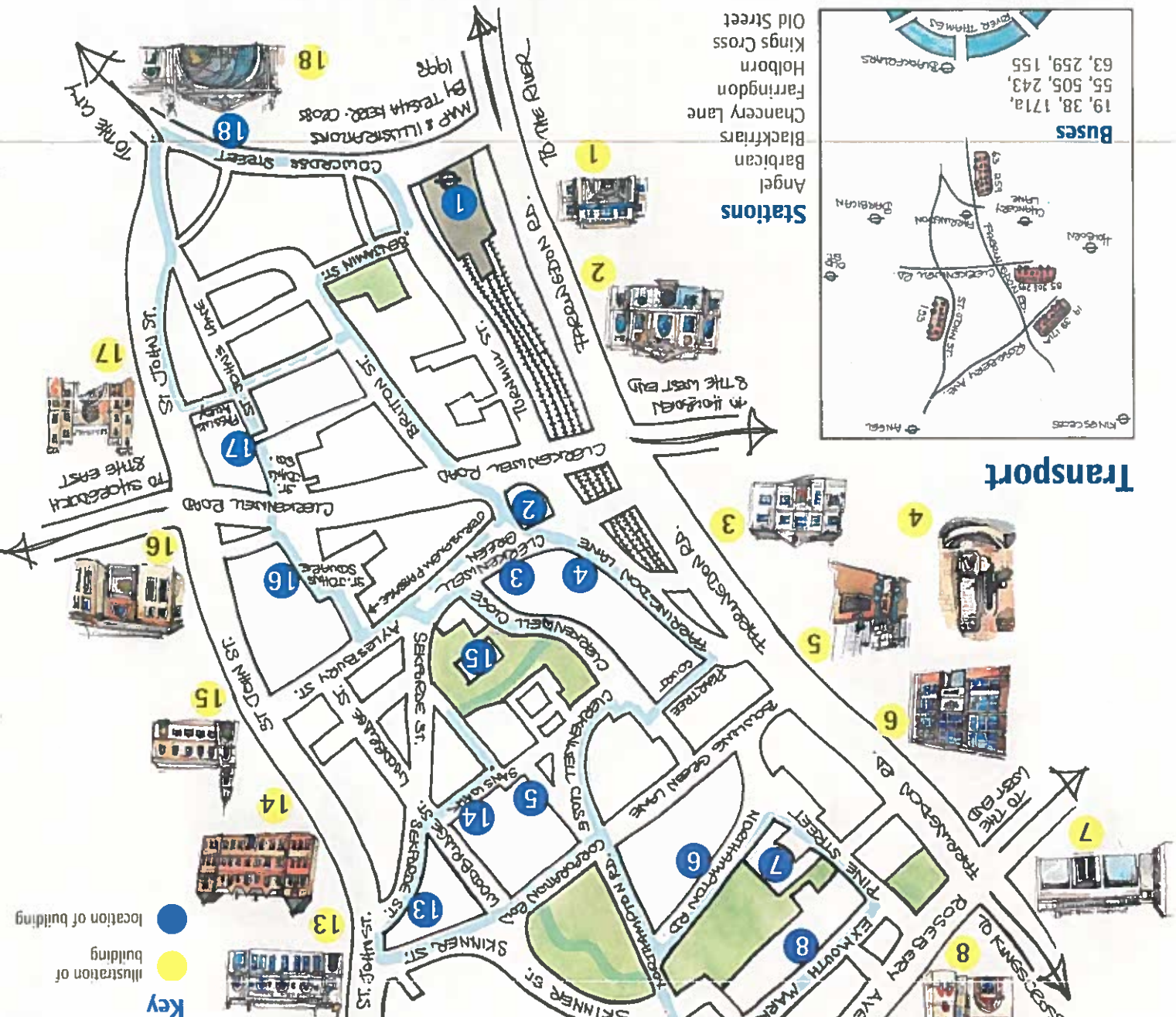
is about 2 miles long, marked out by paving bricks. It divides naturally into four areas, indicated by dotted lines, each of which provides a shorter stroll.

The two centre sections lie on the sites of the medieval Priory of St John and its northern neighbour, the nunnery of St Mary.

Farringdon Road lies above the Old Fleet River and St John Street was the ancient drivers' route down to Smithfield on Clerkenwell's southern border.

- Illustrations**
1. Farringdon Station
 2. Middlesex Sessions House
 3. Marx Memorial Library
 4. Clerks Well
 5. House of Detention
 6. London Metropolitan Archives
 7. Finsbury Health Centre
 8. Church of the Holy Redeemer
 9. Finsbury Town Hall
 10. Family Records Office
 11. Sadler's Wells Theatre
 12. City University
 13. Finsbury Bank for Savings
 14. Hugh Myddelton School
 15. St James's Church
 16. Grand Priory Church of the Order of St John
 17. St John's Gate
 18. Smithfield Market

- Key**
- illustration of building
 - location of building



For more information about Clerkenwell Historic Trail please contact Towards Historic Clerkenwell Association,

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To find out what's on, where to go and where to stay in the area contact Discover Islington Visitor Information Centre,

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www.real-london.com