



FANTASTICAL FLEET

An immersive self-guided journey into the world of the buried River Fleet, and its co-mingling with the great River Thames.
Follow the map and listen to audio stories on route.

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for Totally Thames 2020.
For further information visit:
www.becleach.co.uk
www.thamesfestivaltrust.org



1. STARTING POINT: BLACKFRIARS STATION

Listen to **TRACK 1: FLEET RIVER**

As you exit Blackfriars Station you are standing on land that was once a river; the River Fleet

Turn left after you exit the station
Walk up onto Blackfriars Bridge

2. BLACKFRIARS BRIDGE and the RIVER THAMES

Listen to **TRACK 2: RIVER MEDITATION**

To listen to this meditation you will need to find a place where you can comfortably sit for 10-15 minutes with a good view of the River Thames and a drink of water.

Underneath Blackfriars Bridge is a drain where the sewer that now encases the River Fleet flows into the River Thames, at low tide on a rainy day you can sometimes still see the Fleet meet the Thames

After you have finished the meditation walk back towards Blackfriars Station and cross to the other side of the road.

3. BRIDEWELL PALACE

Bridewell Palace, once home to Henry VIII, stood on the site of the Crown Plaza hotel and Unilever House. The road between them, Watergate, was the entrance to the palace from the River Fleet.

Continue up New Bridge Street to Bride Lane, turn onto Bride Lane to enter Bridewell, a maze of small streets surrounding St Bride's church.

4. Bridewell

Listen to **TRACK 3: EARTH DREAMING**

Explore the maze of streets around St Bride's and find a quiet place to listen to track 3. Earth Dreaming is a story about the Irish Goddess Brigid or Bride after whom the area is named.

If you open visit St Bride's Church, then exit Bridewell onto Fleet Street

5. FLEET STREET

A Roman road, named after the river which ran between Fleet Street and Ludgate, Fleet Street became home to some of the first printing presses in the UK, and was home to most British Newspapers until the 1980's.

Walk right down Fleet Street until you meet Farringdon Road, Turn Left up Farringdon Road and walk up towards Holborn Viaduct.

6. HOLBORN VIADUCT

You can't miss Holborn Viaduct with its red enamel and dragons. This has long been the site of a bridge over the River Fleet. If you feel able to take the steps up on to the bridge and look up and down the Valley of the River Fleet, notice the difference in land height on either side where the River once ran.

Exit Holborn Viaduct back onto the east side of Farringdon Road and head back down the road towards the River Thames.

7. TURNAGAIN LANE

As you continue down the road keep an eye on the street names as many of them make reference to the River Fleet and the trade activity that happened here (STONECUTTER, SEACOAL). My favourite is TURNAGAIN LANE, where carts would exchange their shipping loads by the river. It is still a cul-de-sac but now the other end of the street is blocked.

8. FLEET PRISON

The grounds of the infamous Fleet Prison on the corner of Farringdon Street and Old Seacoal Lane, was once an island in the middle of the Fleet holding one of London's most infamous prisons from 1197 to 1846.

Continue down Farringdon Street to Ludgate Circus and turn left up to walk up Ludgate Hill, continue to St Martin's within Ludgate Church.

9. LUDGATE

On the side of St Martin's within Ludgate you will see a plaque showing where Ludgate, one of the original gates of the City of London stood.

Listen to **TRACK 4: LLUD and LLEFY'S**

This is the story of one of London's ancient kings from the Mabinogion; the earliest prose stories to be recorded in Britain, which were compiled in Welsh from the oral tradition.

Continue up Ludgate Hill to St Paul's Cathedral.

10. ST PAUL'S

St Paul's Cathedral was built on the site of a Roman temple to the Goddess Diana, a goddess of hunting and the moon. Look back down the hill towards the valley of the Fleet and imagine the influence the moon must once have had on this tidal river landscape.

Continue back down Ludgate Hill towards Fleet Street.

11. BLACKFRIARS

If you have time you might wish to explore the streets on your left, this area was once home to Blackfriars Abbey. The streets are a maze of remnants of the priory, an apothecary hall, and many old pubs should you want to continue your adventure.

