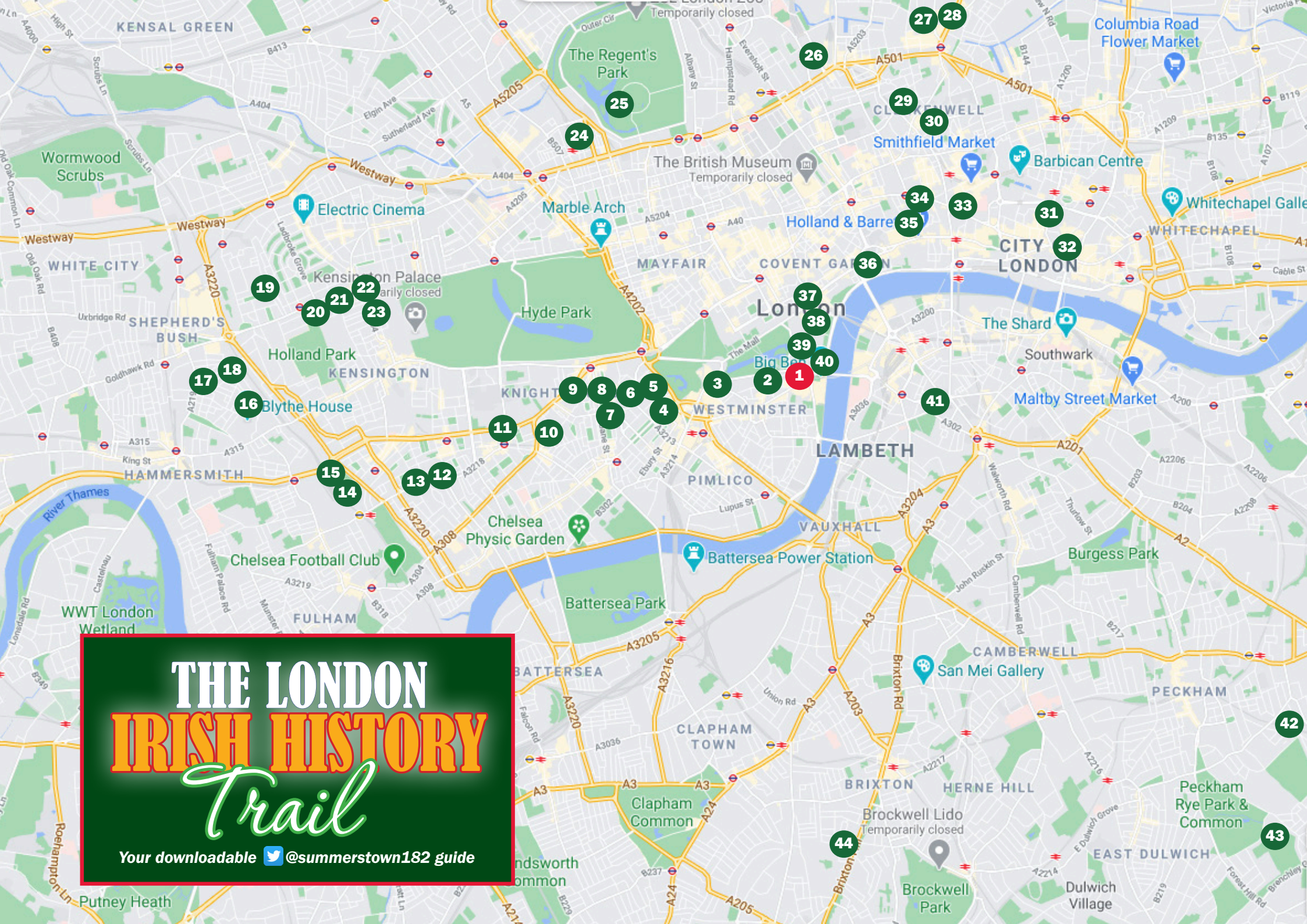


# THE LONDON IRISH HISTORY Trail

Your downloadable  @summerstown182 guide



**This map pinpoints key London locations relevant to 'modern' Irish history. Its by no means definitive, just a helpful guide and pointer, hopefully towards greater understanding. Its best done in sections and via a bicycle is definitely your best way round. You will ideally need a phone or a good map to work out how to get from one point to another and use the links to learn more, but rather than take up precious space giving directions, I'll leave you to work that one out! The short circuit begins and ends in Parliament Square (1-33). If you have the energy, you can follow an extended trail into south east London. Enjoy!**

**1 START PARLIAMENT SQUARE, WESTMINSTER** - Many of the statues here touched Ireland in some way. None more than [David Lloyd George](#), British PM through the Irish War of Independence who lead the treaty negotiations and in 1920 claimed 'We have murder by the throat'. [Winston Churchill](#) deployed the 'Black and Tans' and is considered accountable by many for the 'Burning of Cork' in December 1920. Peel and Palmerston are associated with the Irish Potato Famine. Gerry Adams proclaimed the released Balcombe Street Gang as 'Our Nelson Mandelas'. A recent statue to the suffragette Millicent Fawcett includes a plinth surrounded by other contributors to this cause including Sinn Fein activists [Eva Gore-Booth](#) and [Charlotte Despard](#).

**2** Between 1845-1849 one million Irish people died of starvation and disease caused by a series of potato blights. Over a ten year period the population dropped by three million as a result of the death toll and emigration. 70% of emigrants went to America, many on disease-ridden 'coffin ships' where 40% of them perished on the journey or shortly after arrival. Behind the Central Methodist Hall at 20 Queen Anne's Gate, a blue plaque indicates the home of Viscount Palmerston, one of a number of British politicians associated with the [Irish Potato Famine](#). 2,000 tenants on his Sligo estate emigrated to escape the famine in 1847. Conditions on the vessels he chartered have been compared to those used in the slave trade.

**3** Opposite the Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace is 7 Buckingham Gate, birthplace on 4 February 1868 of Constance Gore-Booth, [Countess Markievicz](#), one of the most famous names associated with the Irish revolutionary period. Born to an aristocratic family of Lissadell House, Sligo, she played a prominent part in the Easter Rising of 1916 and was only spared execution because of her sex. In 1918 she became the first woman elected to the British Parliament.

**4** Entering Belgravia, another prominent landowner in Ireland was the [Earl of Lucan](#), a playboy peer once considered for the role of James Bond. He famously disappeared from his family home at 46 Lower Belgrave Street on the night of 7 November 1974, the occasion of the murder of his children's nanny, Sandra Rivett. Lady Lucan who was also attacked and accused her husband, raised the alarm when she stumbled into the nearby Plumbers Arms pub. Lucan's family once owned over 60,000 acres in Co Mayo, and lived in a grand mansion on the edge of Castlebar where residents are still obliged to pay his estate ground rent.

**5** On 22 December 1974 a bomb was thrown from a Cortina onto the balcony of a flat at 17 Wilton Street, residence of Conservative leader [Edward Heath](#). He had been conducting a carol concert in Kent and arrived home ten minutes after the explosion. His housekeeper Mrs Crawford and her daughter were inside at the time and unhurt.

**6** 36 Eaton Place was the scene of the assassination of Field Marshal [Sir Henry Wilson](#), a hardline Unionist associated with pogroms in the newly created Northern Ireland. On 22 June 1922, after returning from unveiling the war memorial at Liverpool Street Station, he was shot dead on the steps of his home by two Irish First World War veterans. The incident was the spark which led to the start of the Irish Civil War. [Reginald Dunne](#) who had lost a leg at Ypres and Joseph O'Sullivan, were later hanged at Wandsworth Prison. Their bodies were exhumed and repatriated in 1967.

**7** [Irish Treaty talks](#) opened on 11 October 1921 and thousands of Irish emigrants packed Euston railway station in London to welcome the negotiators arriving by train from Holyhead. The Irish rented two houses for the talks. Most of the delegation and staff were based at 22 Hans Place. Michael Collins and most of his trusted circle were at Grosvenor House, 15 Cadogan Gardens, a beautiful red-brick building just north of Sloane Square. Here Collins was safely able to carry on his role of Director of Intelligence. Sloane Square takes its name from [Sir Hans Sloane](#), originally from Killyleagh, whose collections resulted in the formation of The British Museum.

**8** Continue north from here crossing Pont Street into Hans Place. On the right hand side on the corner is No22. [The Treaty](#), which was signed here in the early hours of 6 December 1921, brought an end to the Irish War of Independence and led to the creation of the Irish Free State and consolidated the partition of Ireland. Never comfortable with his part in the negotiations, Michael Collins prophesied that he had signed his own death warrant. On [22 August 1922](#) he was shot dead in Co Cork.

**9** The IRA/INLA Hunger Strike of 1981 in which ten prisoners starved themselves to death sparked a wave of atrocities in Britain over the following years including the Brighton bombing. Alongside Harrods department store, in Hans Crescent, a memorial tablet marks the site of an IRA car bomb which exploded on the afternoon of 17 December 1983 killing six people, [three police officers](#) and three civilians.

**10** An IRA unit known as the '[Balcombe Street Gang](#)' caused havoc on the streets of London in 1974-75. The bombing of 'Waltons Restaurant' at 121 Walton Street on 18 November 1975 was one of 40 incidents in a 14 month bombing campaign. It left 35 people dead and many more suffering horrific injuries. Thrown through the window at Waltons on the corner of Draycott Avenue from a passing car, the bomb containing ball bearings and bolts killed two diners.

**11** Near the Natural History Museum, at 5 Cromwell Place, South Kensington, a plaque marks the home of the Belfast-born painter [Sir John Lavery](#). He and his glamorous Chicago-born wife Hazel were friends of Michael Collins and he visited this location many times during the treaty negotiations. Portraits of Collins and Arthur Griffith were made at this time. Hazel's personification appeared for over 40 years on Irish banknotes.

**12** At 60 Coleherne Court a blue plaque marks the flat which was the home of [Lady Diana Spencer](#) from 1978-81. A plot to kill her and Prince Charles whilst they attended a Duran Duran

concert at the Dominion Theatre with a bomb planted in a toilet behind the royal box in 1983 failed due to the involvement of an [informant](#).

**13** Some way south west of here, moving towards West Kensington and Earl's Court are a number of addresses where [Michael Collins](#) lived with his sister Johanna (Hannie) during his decade in London. Studying, learning, mingling - not just with the Irish community but with artistic and literary circles in the establishment. Their lengthiest residence in one place was from 1908 to 1913 at 11 Coleherne Terrace on the Brompton Road, living above a bakery run by Albert Lawrence, now a Starbucks, on the corner of Coleherne Road. He had previously been Hannie's landlord in Minford Gardens and they only moved on when he retired. Between 1910 and 1914 Collins was heavily involved in 'The Geraldines' a hurling team who played a few miles further west in Perivale, off the Great West Road. He was also a member of the GAA London gaelic football team, playing alongside Sam Maguire.

**14** A memorial marks the site where 21 year old [PC Stephen Tibble](#), unarmed and off-duty was shot dead trying to apprehend an IRA gunman at the junction of Charleville and Glenstones Road on 26 February 1975. He was posthumously awarded the Queen's Police Medal. Other officers had noticed suspicious activity and challenged the suspect. The discovery of a bomb-factory in nearby 39 Fairholme Road was a crucial lead in the hunt for the Balcombe Street gang.

**15** [Gandhi](#) and [Marcus Garvey](#) were two individuals influenced by Michael Collins and events in revolutionary Ireland. Both lived in this area and are commemorated with blue plaques. 20 Baron's Court Road was Gandhi's home between 1888-91. Garvey whose name came from an Irish slave-owner lived at 53 Talgarth Road and died here in 1940.

**16** Crossing Cromwell Road, next to Olympia on a winding road heading towards Shepherd's Bush is the beautiful red brick [Post Office Savings Bank](#) at 23 Blythe Road, built between 1899 and 1903, employing 4,000 staff. The Bank relocated in 1963 and its now a storage facility for the Museums. Hannie worked there from 1900 and her brother and many Irish people joined her. Having passed his exams and applied for the job in Ireland, Michael Collins started work there as a boy clerk in July 1906. Their home at Minford Gardens was just ten minutes walk away.

**17** From 1914 until January 1916, when he returned to Ireland to become involved in the Easter Rising, [Michael Collins](#) lived at 5 Netherwood Road, West Kensington. Hannie continued living here until she retired from her job as a ledger clerk and went back to Ireland in the 1940s. It was a spacious flat above a dairy, including a bathroom which was a great luxury at the time. In 1997 the local MP unveiled a commemorative plaque on this location, which intriguingly gives little detail about what Collins did or who he was.

**18** In July 1906, 15 year old [Michael Collins](#) took a steamer from Cork Harbour to Whitechapel docks and moved into a small bedsit at 6 Minford Gardens, Shepherd's Bush where Hannie had kept a room for a number of years. They needed smehere bigger hence the move to Coleherne Terrace in 1908. Not too far down the road was the newly opened Carnegie Library on Shepherd's Bush Road which young Michael was encouraged to visit by his sister.

**19** On the other side of Holland Park Road, just before going to Netherwood Road, from 1913 to 1914, Collins and Hannie lived for a short time at 28 Princes Road, (now Princedale Road) Notting Hill. The tiny artisan cottage home with a view of Grenfell Tower at the end of the road is unchanged, but is now one of the wealthiest parts of London. Collins' favourite book was understood to be G K Chesterton's '[The Napoleon of Notting Hill](#)' written in 1904. He later discovered his treaty adversary Lord Birkenhead was also an admirer.

**20** On 23 October 1975 an IRA bomb intended to kill Conservative MP Hugh Fraser at 52 Camden Hill Square killed his neighbour, leading cancer specialist [Gordon Hamilton Fairley](#). He is remembered with a memorial in St Paul's Cathedral.

**21** [Moya Llewellyn-Davies](#) was born Mary O'Connor into an IRA family and kept a safe house for Collins in Dublin during the War of Independence. Moya and husband Crompton lived at 1 Camden Hill Gardens and introduced Collins to J M Barrie, creator of Peter Pan.

**22** They often went to the nearby [Coronet Theatre](#) at 103 Notting Hill Gate, London venue of the Manchester Repertory Company or the Court Theatre in Sloane Square.

**23** Police bomb disposal officer [Captain Roger Goad](#) died whilst attempting to disable a bomb which the Balcombe Street gang had fitted with an anti-handling device in the doorway of a shoe shop at 229 Kensington Church Street on 29 August 1975. A small tablet marks the site.

**24** Passing through Paddington, head north east towards Marylebone. The IRA unit responsible for so much carnage, including the Guildford and Woolwich pub bombings and the murder of Ross McWhirter were tailed by police on 6 December 1975. After a firefight they took cover in a flat at [22b Balcombe Street](#) holding a middle-aged couple hostage. The pair had been watching Kojak and thought the gunshots were from the TV. After a six day siege, followed live on all the news bulletins they gave themselves up. In the frantic search for them 'The Guildford Four', 'The Birmingham Six' and '[The Maguire Seven](#)' were falsely convicted and imprisoned for many years.

**25** On 20 July 1982 IRA bombs in [Hyde Park](#) and [Regent's Park](#) killed eleven military personnel and seven horses. Seven bandsmen of the Royal Green Jackets were killed by a bomb placed beneath the bandstand in Regent's Park.

**26** The [German Gynasium](#) at King's Cross was used by the 'Irish Republican Brotherhood' (IRB) for drilling and training purposes and The London Volunteers in readiness for the Easter Rising of April 1916. Michael Collins was a frequent visitor.

**27** 1 Richmond Crescent was the home of Tony Blair, British PM 1997-2005, one of the key movers in the Northern Ireland Peace Process and [Good Friday Agreement](#) of 1998. Blair has [Donegal roots](#) and his mother was born in Ballyshannon in 1922.

**28** [Islington](#) has long been home to a large population of Irish people. In November 1909 at Barnsbury Hall, HQ of the London IRB, Michael Collins was sworn in as a member by Sam Maguire. Its currently the Aria gift shop at 2b Barnsbury Street. By 1914 Collins had risen to become treasurer of the London and south-eastern area and as Irish nationalists prepared for conflict with the loyalist Ulster Volunteers, he was involved in organising the Howth gun-running. Hostilities in Ireland were averted in August 1914 by the start of the First World War.

**29** Turning south, the Mount Pleasant Post office in Clerkenwell was one of the largest sorting offices in the world. As Collins's chief intelligence officer in London, [Sam Maguire](#) working there, became the centre of the investigation into the assassination of Sir Henry Wilson. He was tipped off and fled to Dublin in December 1923 forfeiting his pension. His name lives on through the '[Sam Maguire Cup](#)' presented to the Gaelic Athletic Association in 1928 after his death.

**30** Beyond Exmouth Market, just behind the Metropolitan Archives was the scene of 'Britain's First Terrorist Bombing' on 13 December 1867. The '[Fenian Outrage](#)' in Corporation Row occurred when an IRB bomb attempting the release of one of their members from Clerkenwell Prison went off killing twelve people and injuring 100. Michael Barrett was convicted and has the dubious distinction of being the last person to ever be publicly executed in Britain.

**31** Head east towards the City, keeping north of the Barbican complex. The concrete towers and skyscrapers weren't around in 1910, but you get a sense of the financial world that so fascinated Michael Collins. Allowing him more time to devote to politics, in April he abandoned his studies and left the Post Office for stockbrokers [Horne and Company](#) on two floors between a ground floor shop and a detective agency at 23 Moorgate. He was placed in charge of the messengers.

**32** From 1914-16 Collins worked at 33 Lombard Street for an American bank, [Morgan Guarantee Trust of New York](#) (later JP Morgan). As the First World War took hold he hoped a transfer to the US would avoid him being conscripted into the British Army. His brother Patrick was already there and would become a captain in the Chicago police. On 14 January 1916 he terminated his employment, giving the company a week's notice saying that he would not wait for his call-up but intended to enlist right away. Moved by his patriotism, his bosses congratulated him and gave him an extra week's salary as a bonus which he subsequently donated to the IRB.

**33** The Old Bailey car bomb on 8 March 1973 was the first major incident of the IRA's bombing campaign in London in the 70s. It involved the [Price sisters](#), Dolours and Marian aged 22 and 19 who were notoriously photographed posing outside 10 Downing Street a year earlier. One person was killed and over 200 injured. The bombers were captured on a flight about to leave Heathrow and the sisters endured a hunger strike of over 200 days prolonged by force-feeding.

**34** Turn back west passing St Paul's and Holborn Viaduct, 'The Shamrock' public house at [56 Fetter Lane](#) off Fleet Street was one of the favourite pubs of the London Irish community and where Collins was famously introduced by Sam Maguire to [Peadar Kearney](#), composer of 'The Soldier's Song' the Irish national anthem.

**35** The legal quarter north of Waterloo Bridge has a key location widely visited by Collins. 115 Chancery Lane, now a restaurant, close to The Law Society was Sinn Fein's London HQ. Officially '[The Workmens Legal Friendly Society](#)' it was also known as 'The National Club' and was a branch of the Gaelic League where he is understood to have taken his first steps to try and learn Irish.

**36** Between 1908-1910, seeking a post in the Customs and Excise Service, Collins enrolled in night classes at [King's College London](#) on the Strand. Many of his exam papers, essays and notes are preserved in the UCD Archives in Dublin.

**37** The radical '[Bloody Sunday](#)' protests in Trafalgar Square on 13 November 1887 were partly a response to the coercion bills introduced to counter rural unrest in Ireland and the imprisonment of William O'Brien MP. Hundreds were injured as police and military attacked the protestors who included William Morris, John Burns, George Bernard Shaw, Annie Besant and Frank Kitz.

**38** Michael Collins left Horne and Company just after the outbreak of the First World War and worked as a clerk from September 1914 until May 1915 at the [Board of Trade](#) in Whitehall, on the greatly enhanced salary scale of £70-£150 per annum.

**39** On 7 February 1991 the IRA lauched an audacious rocket mortar attack from a parked lorry as the British Cabinet under PM John Major met in Downing Street to discuss the impending Gulf War. Two shells overshot their target, a third landed in the garden. There were no injuries and the attack precipitated the heavy fortification of this area. A year later the IRA's Baltic Exchange truck bombing killed three people, injured 91 and caused [£800million of damage](#) in the City of London.

**40** The Houses of Parliament were the scene of the car-bomb murder of [Airey Neave MP](#) on 30 March 1979 by the Irish National Liberation Army. He was Shadow Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and a close friend of Margaret Thatcher.

**41** Cross Westminster Bridge into South London heading towards the Imperial War Museum. Serving a two year sentence for 'sedition' in Brixton Prison, [Terence Macswiney](#), Lord Mayor of Cork, died after a 74 day hunger strike on 25 October 1920. In the following days, St George's Roman Catholic Cathedral was where his body was laid to rest and filed past by 30,000 people before following a funeral route to Euston Station and an emotional return to Ireland.

**42** [Charles Stewart Parnell](#) was the leading late 19th century political force for Irish Home Rule. The scene of his downfall was 112 Tressillian Road in Brockley, Parnell would be cited as correspondent when Captain O'Shea divorced his wife Katherine. In 1890 it was revealed as one of the love nests used by Parnell and Katherine 'Kitty' O'Shea. The ensuing scandal led to Home Rule disappearing from the agenda. His career ruined, he died five months after marrying her the following year. On 19 October 1891, in Dublin's Glasnevin cemetery, over half a million people gathered to witness the funeral of 'The Uncrowned King of Ireland'.

**43** Born in Lambeth in 1853, [Liam McCarthy](#) was a leading member of the London Irish community, active in promoting sport and culture and the formation of the London Gaelic Athletic Association. He had a cardboard box making business and was also a councillor in Peckham where his home was a popular meeting place for Irish migrants. He worked with Michael Collins in fundraising for the newly-formed Irish Volunteers. He died in 1928 and a headstone marking his grave in Camberwell Old Cemetery was only erected by local Dulwich Harps GAA club in 2006. The All-Ireland GAA hurling cup, played for every year at Croke Park in Dublin bears his name.

**44** Terence Macswiney's death from hunger strike in [Brixton Prison](#) was a defining moment of the Irish War of Independence, forcing global attention on the cause of Irish freedom. He influenced a host of international revolutionaries including Gandhi, Nehru and Ho Chi Minh. A recently painted stencilled 'plaque' commemorates this event in Lyham Road, behind the prison.