We’ll be walking over London Bridge, stopping for coffee at Pret, then up King William St to the Royal Exchange at Bank. We’ll then walk down Lombard St to Leadenhall Market followed by lunch at the Crosse Keys (formerly HSBC’s HQ) at **12oc**. They can only hold the table for 10 minutes so we must be on time.

After lunch we’ll walk back to Bank and get the Waterloo & City line to Waterloo and spend some time at the Southbank Winter Festival.

The **Royal Exchange** in London was founded in the 16th century by the merchant Thomas Gresham to act as a centre of commerce for the City of London. The site was provided by the City of London Corporation and the Worshipful Company of Mercers, who still jointly own the freehold. The original design was inspired by a bourse Gresham had seen in Antwerp, Belgium, and was Britain's first specialist commercial building.

The Royal Exchange was officially opened on 23 January 1571 by Queen Elizabeth I who awarded the building its royal title. During the 17th century, stockbrokers were not allowed in the Royal Exchange because of their rude manners; hence they had to operate from other establishments in the vicinity, such as Jonathan's Coffee-House. In June 1844, a statue of Arthur Wellesley, the first duke of Wellington, was unveiled outside the building. The bronze used to cast this had come from enemy cannon captured during Wellington's continental campaigns.

It has twice been destroyed by fire and rebuilt. The present building was designed by William Tite in the 1840s. The site was notably occupied by the Lloyd's insurance market for nearly 150 years. Today the Royal Exchange contains offices, luxury shops and a restaurant.

**Lombard Street** was originally the site of London’s goldsmiths. The first goldsmiths were Jewish, but after they were expelled from England by Edward I they were replaced by Lombards or Longobards from Italy, the first of whom were the Corsini family.

The goldsmiths and banking trades brought wealth and finery to Lombard Street and by the mid 16th century it was considered the finest street in London, a view endorsed a 100 years later by Pepys. As many Londoners were illiterate, businesses used signs to advertise their whereabouts from the earliest times, and as early as 1375, Simon Leggi, son of a Lord Mayor of London, was trading at *The Raven Tavern*. In 1560 Thomas Muschamp, a goldsmith to Queen Elizabeth, was trading at the sign of *The Ring and Ruby*. Around the same time, the *Grasshopper* made its first appearance outside number 68, being the representation of the family crest of the occupier Sir Thomas Gresham.

By the time of King Charles II the signs presented such a nuisance and danger to the public (several cases were reported where the weight of the signs caused the entire front of the premises to collapse into the street) and a law was passed preventing the signs from overhanging the street and their use died out. In 1902 it was decided to resurrect as many of the old signs as possible as a way of commemorating the coronation of King Edward VII. Of the 23 signs, we can still see;

The Cat & Fiddle – The Commercial Bank of Scotland

The Grasshopper – Martins Bank, taken over by Barclays

Kings Head & Sun (formerly Queens Head) – Royal Insurance Company

Lombard Dt also links 2 churches, Nicholas Hawksmoor’s St Mary Woolnoth and Robert Hooke’s Dutch-inspired St Edmund, King & Martyr, both built after the Great Fire. There are as many pubs in the City as there are Churches.

The present **George and Vulture** was built in 1748. There has been an inn on the site since 1268. It was said to be a meeting place of the notorious Hell-Fire Club and is mentioned at least 20 times in The Pickwick Papers by Charles Dickens, who frequently drank there himself.

**Jamaica Wine House** was originally London’s first coffee house, which opened in 1652 and counted Samuel Pepys among its earliest patrons. It is known locally as “the Jampot”.

**Leadenhall Market** dates back to the 14th century and is situated in what was the centre of Roman London. Originally a meat, poultry and game market, it now features a variety of vendors as well as commercial shops, restaurants, cafes and pubs.

​In the early 1300s the Manor of Leadenhall is listed as belonging to Sir Hugh Neville. Within a few years the area around the manor became a popular meeting place for poulterers, and then cheesemongers. Lord Mayor Richard 'Dick' Whittington gave Leadenhall to the City in 1411 and Lord Mayor Simon Eyre replaced the manor hall with a public granary, school and chapel in 1440, as a gift to the citizens of London. It was enlarged to provide a site for selling poultry, grain, eggs, butter, cheese, herbs and other foodstuffs. Over the next 200 years Leadenhall Market was a centre of commerce and further markets were added for wool, leather and cutlery.

​There was only a small amount of damage from the Great Fire, but it was rebuilt and became a covered structure and was divided into the Beef Market, the Green Yard and the Herb Market. In 1881 the City's architect Sir Horace Jones, who was also the architect of Billingsgate and Smithfield Markets, redesigned it to the current structure we see today.

During the 18th century 'Old Tom' was a celebrated character in Leadenhall. He was a gander who managed to escape his fate of being slaughtered along with 34,000 other geese. He became a great favourite in the market, even being fed at the local inns. After his death in 1835 at the age of 38, he lay in state in the market and was buried on site. More recently, the market was used to represent the area of London leading to the popular wizarding pub The Leaky Cauldron and magical shopping street Diagon Alley in the first Harry Potter film.