

(Ebook pdf) London's Hidden Corners, Lanes Squares

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Graeme Chesters

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Graeme Chesters : London's Hidden Corners, Lanes Squares before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised London's Hidden Corners, Lanes Squares:

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The inspiration for this book was the advice of the great Dr Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), something of an expert on London, to his friend and biographer James Boswell on the occasion of his trip to London in the 18th century, to 'survey its innumerable little lanes and courts'. In the 21st century these are less numerous than in Johnson's time, so we've extended his brief to include alleys, squares and yards, along with a number of mews, roads, streets and gardens. London's Hidden Corners, Lanes Squares takes you off the beaten track to seek out places that often fail to register on the radar of visitors and also most residents. Entries range from ancient history-soaked alleys and lanes in the City – where you half expect to bump into one of Charles Dickens's characters or even the author himself – to smart, pastel-painted mews in Chelsea built to house horses and carriages (now home to multi-millionaires); and from unexpected oases of Georgian elegance in traffic-plagued central London to tranquil Kensington squares, where you can hear birdsong and almost smell the scent of money on the breeze. Samuel Johnson also said, 'It is not in the showy evolutions of buildings, but in the multiplicity of human habitations which are crowded together, that the wonderful immensity of London consists.' Every corner featured in this book has a story to tell, from those who lived there (actresses, bishops, painters, politicians, philosophers, writers... even ghosts of former residents!), significant historical

events (from duels and demonstrations to plots and executions) and bizarre surviving landmarks such as a brick kiln, a sewer gaslamp and a Parisian pissoir. Although this book isn't intended as a walking guide, most of the places featured are close to one another in central London – notably in the hubs of Westminster and the City, where you can easily stroll between them – and all are near public transport links and easy to reach. I hope you enjoy discovering London's Hidden Corners, Lanes Squares as much as we did, and if you happen across more secret gems on your travels, we would love to hear about them.

About the Author