

# Medical meander



Time  
**90 minutes**  
 Start **Holborn tube**  
 Finish **Wellcome Collection**  
 Miles **3.1**



## 4 PARAMEDIC CENTRAL

Continue up Hunter Street and turn left on to Tavistock Place. Walk along to the junction with Herbrand

Street. Walk a few paces, and stop on the pavement opposite **London's first public ambulance station**. Most of London's Victorian hospitals and asylums had private horse-drawn ambulances, but in 1915

London County Council built the city's first public ambulance station here – initially to cope with the growing numbers of street accidents caused by the new-fangled motorcars.

## 5 TROPICAL DISEASES

Go down Herbrand Street, right into Bernard Street and along Russell Square. Turn left, then right into Montagu Place. Turn right into Malet Street, then left into Keppel Street, where you can admire the gilt insects

on the **London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine**, which was originally a hospital ship moored at Greenwich, treating sailors afflicted by nastiness from the farthest corners of the British Empire.

Turn right into Gower Street, right again into Byng Place. Walk round Tavistock Square and stop outside **BMA House**. Built by Edwin Lutyns in 1913, this overpowering building now houses the British Medical Association. Since 1856 the BMA has represented Britain's GPs.

## 6 WELLCOME HOME

Cross Upper Woburn Place, walk along Endsleigh Place, then up to the junction with Euston Road. Turn left, and on to the **Wellcome Collection**. When Henry Wellcome, an American-born pharmacist, died in 1936, he left a huge collection of artefacts, from a 2,000-year-old Peruvian mummy to Lord Nelson's razor. Wellcome's 'Museum of Man' is now also a centre for exhibitions and events exploring biomedicine across the world.

*Richard Barnett teaches at the Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine at UCL and gives guided versions of this walk – see [wellcomecollection.org](http://wellcomecollection.org). 'Medical London: City of Diseases, City of Cures', by Richard Barnett and edited by Mike Jay, will be published by Strange Attractor for the Wellcome Trust in October.*

Above: Bedford Square, from Gower Street; Inset: Gilt insect on the exterior of London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine; Below: Look out for the site of Charles Darwin's house on Gower Street

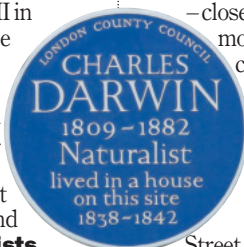
## Medical historian **Richard Barnett** runs his stethoscope along Bloomsbury's streets

### 1 ROYAL COLLEGE STREETS

Start at Holborn tube. Walk down Kingsway, turn left on to Sardinia Street, then along to Lincoln's Inn Fields, until you reach the **Royal College of Surgeons**.

In the eighteenth century, London's surgeons – still little more than barbers with bloodied knives – sought to acquire the social and intellectual clout of the university-educated physicians. The Company of Surgeons, founded in a house next to Newgate Prison in 1745, gained a royal charter from George III in 1800, and celebrated by moving to the up-and-coming Lincoln's Inn Fields. Walk north through Lincoln's Inn Fields, which is also home to Sir John Soane's Museum, and leave via Newman's Row and walk up Red Lion Street. Turn left on to Princeton Street and walk along to Red Lion Square and the **Royal College of Anaesthetists**.

Established in 1988, this is one of London's younger medical institutions. But anaesthesia in the city can be traced back to 1846, when James Robinson, a dentist with a practice on Gower Street, began to experiment with ether – 'a Yankee dodge for making men insensible' – as Robert Liston, the first London surgeon to use Robinson's services, fondly termed it.

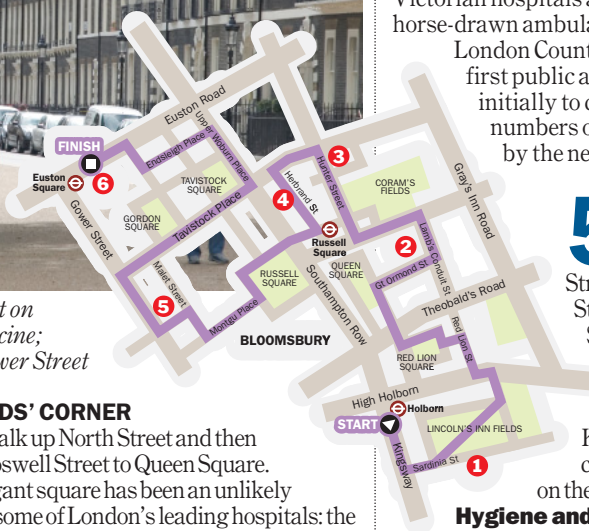


### 2 KIDS' CORNER

Walk up North Street and then Boswell Street to Queen Square. This elegant square has been an unlikely home to some of London's leading hospitals: the **National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery**, founded in 1867; the **Ospedale Italiano**, opened in 1884 (and closed after World War II); and, around the corner, the famous **Hospital for Sick Children**, founded in 1852. Walk along Great Ormond Street. Turn left on to Lamb's Conduit Street, and walk up to **Coram's Fields playground**. If you are accompanied by a child, you may go in; if not, you're forbidden entry. Thomas Coram, an orphan who found fortune as a sea captain, opened his Foundling Hospital – closer to a boarding school than a modern hospital – in 1741, offering the care and education he hadn't received to generations of abandoned children.

### 3 EQUALITY LANDMARK

Walk west along Guildford Street. Turn on to Grenville Street, and walk through Brunswick Square to Hunter Street; stop at the junction with Handel Street. Until the 1860s, women were not admitted to the medical profession. Three – Elizabeth Garratt Anderson, Sophia Jex-Blake and Elizabeth Blackwell – had the necessary education, but when the establishment still wouldn't accept them they opened the **London School of Medicine for Women** on this spot, in 1874.



**EAT AND DRINK HERE** Feeling peckish during your medical mile constitutional? Get your prescription of real ale or a single malt at **The Lamb**, 94 Lamb's Conduit Street, WC1 (020 7405 0713).