Helping your children choose books they will love

I ♥ reading

Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

opening extract from

London Adventure Walks for Families

written by

Becky Jones and Clare Lewis

published by

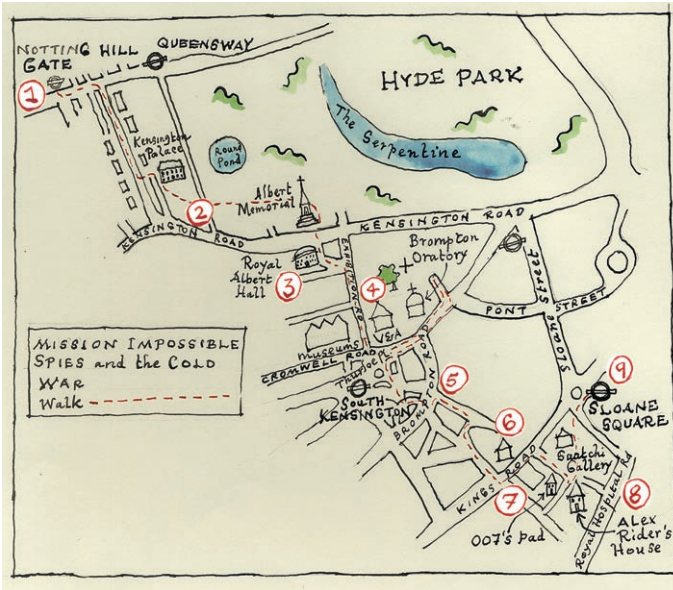
Frances Lincoln

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

3. Mission Impossible: Spies and the cold war



The Adventure

During the Cold War – the period of stand-off between the United States and the Soviet Union and their respective allies that lasted from 1945 until 1989 – a war of spies and spying was played out on the streets of London. Kensington, with its central location, winding streets, public buildings and many foreign embassies, was at the heart of clandestine activity. Find out where the real spies did their dead letter drops, track down the key embassies, see where the famous Cambridge Five spy ring used to meet, and discover where fictional spy heroes James Bond and Alex Rider live. On the way take this opportunity to brush up spy skills, give

yourself a code name, learn real secret agent jargon and write your own secret message.



How far? 6.4 km/4 miles
Start Notting Hill Gate tube
Finish Sloane Square tube

Walk the Walk

1. Come out of the tube station on the south side, following the signs for Notting Hill Gate and Kensington Church Street. Turn left and keep going up Notting Hill Gate until you reach the third turning on the right. Walk through the rather grand gates into Kensington Palace Gardens. This half-mile-long tree-lined avenue is one of the most exclusive addresses in London. The large detached houses are in the grounds of Kensington Palace and are part of the Crown Estate – notice the gas street lamps. In your role as secret agent make a note of the embassies and ambassadorial residences: see how many countries you can identify from the flags you see. This street saw wartime action as the location of the 'London Cage', a prisoner of war camp run by MI9, who gleaned information from enemy prisoners during World War II. Walk most of the length of the road but before reaching the end take the turning on the left into Kensington Gardens alongside Kensington Palace, where Queen Victoria was born and lived until she moved into Buckingham Palace on her accession to the throne. The Palace is open to the public and worth a visit.

2. Stride out across the park towards the Round Pond, leaving the front entrance of the Palace behind you. Look out for the spire of the Albert Memorial on the horizon further ahead on the right and make a beeline for it. A memorial to Prince Albert, it celebrates the Prince's passions and Victorian achievements. The figures at the top represent manufacture, commerce, agriculture and engineering. The Parnassus frieze

FLAGS YOU MIGHT SEE



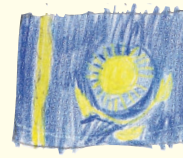
Russia



Slovak Republic



Czechoslovakia



Kazakhstan



India



Japan

at its base depicts artists. The marble statues at each corner symbolize Africa, Asia, Europe and America. During the two world wars German bombers used it as a landmark.

3. Cross Kensington Gore just opposite the Royal Albert Hall, one of the very few round (strictly speaking oval) buildings in London. Walk round the back of it and down some steps

towards the Royal College of Music. Cross Prince Consort Road and turn left. Turn right into Exhibition Road and walk towards the Cromwell Road, past Imperial College and the Science Museum. As you are walking, imagine you are fourteen-year-old agent Alex Rider parachuting in on a mission to save the world and crashing through the roof of the Museum, as Alex did – and without serious injury! – at the end of the film *Stormbreaker*. Pop into the Museum for a pit stop and check out the cool spy stuff in the shop.

4. Turn left at the Cromwell Road and walk past the Victoria and Albert Museum to the Brompton Oratory, the second-largest Catholic church in London after Westminster Cathedral. This is the location of a KGB 'dead letter box' where, during the Cold War, espionage communications were dropped off to be collected without direct contact. The exact place the agents used was the gap behind the pillars to the left of the *pietà* statue of the Virgin Mary holding the dead Christ, tucked in a side chapel on the right-hand side just as you enter the church. Coming out of the church, turn left then left again down Cottage Place, through a car park, to the Holy Trinity Church. In the flower bed on the left is a large tree shading a statue of St Francis of Assisi, where agents used to hide microfilms. Walk back to the Brompton Road, towards the Oratory.



5. Cross over Thurloe Place at the lights and turn right – past the embassy of Kazakhstan – and then left into Thurloe Square. Turn right at the end, then left, crossing Pelham Street into Pelham Place. Then turn left into Pelham Crescent.

6. Turn left and cross the Fulham Road at the lights by the Michelin building (the Conran shop), then turn right down Sloane Avenue. Turn right down Petyward and then left into Elystan Street. Cross over Whiteheads Grove and Cale Street and continue along Markham Street until you hit the King's Road.

7. Cross straight over and turn left. Smith Street will soon be on your right. Stop here and look across the King's Road to see where the Cambridge Five – a ring of British men recruited into MI5 or MI6 at Cambridge University who became KGB moles and gave secrets to the Soviet Union – used to meet. Now a building society, it was then a pub called the Markham

Spy Jargon

Acorn a spy
Birdwatcher a spy
Cobbler a spy who creates false papers
Ears only material too secret to put in writing
Eyes only documents that may be read but not discussed
Honey trap an attractive person who entices someone into revealing secrets
Letterbox a go-between
Mole a spy working within an enemy intelligence agency
Pavement artist a spy who gathers intelligence on foot
Pocket litter receipts, coins, bus tickets, etc., that spies keep in their pockets to add authenticity to their false identity



Arms. The group comprised Kim Philby (cryptonym: Stanley); Donald Maclean (cryptonym: Homer), Guy Burgess (cryptonym: Hicks), Anthony Blunt (cryptonym: Johnson), who worked for the Queen (!) and John Cairncross (cryptonym: Liszt).

Keep going, passing Wellington Square, made famous as James Bond's suitably glamorous fictitious residence. Continue to Royal Avenue, then turn right. Ahead is the Royal Hospital, home of the British Army veterans known as Chelsea Pensioners.

8. Turn left into St Leonard's Terrace, the street used in *Stormbreaker* as the Chelsea home of Alex Rider. Walk to the end and turn left up Cheltenham Terrace back to the King's Road.

9. Turn right past the old Chelsea Barracks (now shops and the Saatchi Gallery), up to Sloane Square and the tube station.

Eat me, drink me

There's a good café at the Science Museum. Or you can picnic in the Royal Hospital grounds.

Useful information

- Kensington Palace State Apartments 0844 482 7799 www.hrp.org.uk
- Science Museum 0870 870 4868 www.sciencemuseum.org.uk
- Victoria and Albert Museum 020 7942 2000 www.vam.ac.uk
- Brompton Oratory 020 7808 0900 www.bromptonoratory.com

Further afield

- The Imperial War Museum in Southwark, a museum about the history of twentieth-century war, has lots of interesting information about spies and spying. It also looks after Churchill's secret bunker and the Cabinet War Rooms at Whitehall. 020 7416 5000 www.iwm.org.uk
- You can see the Enigma machine at Bletchley Park, home of the World War II code cracking team in Milton Keynes. 01908 640 404 www.bletchleypark.org.uk
- The Kelvedon Hatch Secret Nuclear Bunker in Essex 012277 364883 www.secretnuclearbunker.com

Books to read

- Alex Rider series by Anthony Horowitz
- James Bond series by Ian Fleming

Did you know?

- In 1978 a journalist and Bulgarian dissident, Georgi Markov, was fatally stabbed with an umbrella impregnated with a lethal toxin, ricin, as he waited at a bus stop on Waterloo Bridge.
- On 23 November 2006 a Russian ex-KGB agent, Alexander Litvinenko, died after being mysteriously poisoned.
- During World War II people convicted of treason were executed by firing squad at the Tower of London.
- The MI6 headquarters at Vauxhall has a 'Faraday Cage' (a fine wire mesh) built into its framework making it impenetrable to electromagnetic information.