

EST. 1321

LEADENHALL MARKET

LONDON



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 is now home to a number of boutique retailers, restaurants, cafes, wine bars and an award-winning pub.

Starting as the site of a manor, Leadenhall has survived changes in use, rebuilding, and even the Great Fire to become a popular destination for city residents, visitors and workers.

Leadenhall Fact:

The gold paint on the pillars (entrances and dotted throughout) is real, hand-applied gold leaf.

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M A R K E T

L O N D O N

The Romans

Leadenhall served an important role in the Roman settlement of Londinium, housing the basilica (courts) and forum (market). Established around 70AD, by 120AD Leadenhall was the largest market North of the Alps and occupied an area bigger than that of Trafalgar Square.

Leadenhall's Roman roots weren't fully understood until the early 1800s when workers discovered a section of Roman mosaic artwork about nine feet below street level, during extensive remodelling work.

Leadenhall Fact:

Visitors can see the original Roman mosaic artwork, depicting Bacchus riding a tiger with serpents, drinking cups and a cornucopia, in the British Museum, alongside one of the Roman Basilica arches which was discovered in the market's north-western foundations in the basement of the Nicholson & Griffin Barber Shop (1) in the market's Central Avenue.

Rome destroyed the buildings in 300 AD as a punishment for supporting Carausius (who declared himself the Emperor of Britain), but the Romans didn't actually leave until the early 5th century, when Britain became independent from Rome.

The 1300s

Originally, the market building was a lead-roofed manor house (hence the name), in London's Lime Street Ward. In 1309 the Manor of Leadenhall was listed as belonging to Sir Hugh Neville. By 1321, the area around Leadenhall manor had become known as a market place for poulterers. They were joined, in 1397, by cheesemongers.

Leadenhall Fact

This means that Cheese at Leadenhall (2) is the most 'old fashioned' retailer in the market!

1400 - 1500

In 1408, the former Lord Mayor Richard 'Dick' Whittington acquired the lease of the building, and then acquired the site in 1411. It quickly became one of the best places in London to buy meat, game, poultry and fish.

Leadenhall Fact

Whittington Avenue (3) is named after Dick Whittington

Redesigned by John Croxton in 1449, it was expanded into a large quadrangle with two stories, a small side chapel, and various storage rooms to prepare for food shortages or other types of "social unrest."

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By 1463, Leadenhall was such a major hub for commerce that it was here that the tronage for wool was determined. “Tronage” meant the tax that traders had to pay to have their goods weighed officially at the market, from a specially installed wooden beam, showing just how important wool was to London’s economy at the time, and how important Leadenhall was as a centre of commerce. In 1488, it was decided that leather will be sold exclusively from Leadenhall Market.

Leadenhall Fact

Fashion retailers like Reiss (4) would have only been able to source their leather from Leadenhall in the 15th century!

1600 - 1700

In 1622, a new invention called cutlery is made available exclusively from Leadenhall Market.

Leadenhall Fact

Our many eateries (5) would have had quite an advantage in the 17th Century, as tenants of the only place that cutlery was sold.

The great Fire of 1666 destroys much of the City of London, including parts of the Market. When it is rebuilt not long after, it becomes a covered structure for the first time and is divided into the Beef Market, the Green Yard and the Herb Market.

Leadenhall was always a busy place but its denizens still had time for fun. In 1766, the poulterers played cricket against the butchers for “a considerable sum of money and a fine whole lamb for supper”. No one recorded what the score was, but history does record that the poulterers won.

Leadenhall Fact

It is easy to imagine a game of cricket taking place down Lime Street Passage (6)

1800s

A celebrated character in Leadenhall during the 19th century was ‘Old Tom’, a little goose who rose to fame having escaped capture repeatedly over two market days during which 34,000 of his fellow geese were slaughtered. He became a great favourite in the market and was fed at the local inns.

After his death in 1835 at the age of 38, he was featured in the obituary section of a local newspaper, and he lay in state in the market before being buried there.

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Leadenhall Fact

Old Tom's burial spot is now the Lam, and you can also see two different representations of Old Tom on top of the old Midland Bank building, which is just near the Bank of England by Bank tube station.

In 1881 Leadenhall was redeveloped by Sir Horace Jones, who also designed the Smithfield Market, the Billingsgate Fish Market and even Tower Bridge; (although the bridge wasn't completed until eight years after his death). His designs replaced the earlier stone structure with wrought iron and glass – a structure which in 1972 is given Grade II* listed status.

Leadenhall Fact

The project cost an enormous £99,000 (nearly £12 million in today's money) to build, with its additional entrances costing another £148,000.

1900S - PRESENT

Extensively restored in 1991, Leadenhall Market offers a spectacular Victorian setting with the roof, cobbles and buildings preserved. By the mid-20th century the shops were also being used for general retailing and leisure and by the end of the century Leadenhall Market had evolved into one of the City's five principal shopping centres.

Leadenhall on Film

The scene where Harry Potter and Hagrid go shopping for wands (and where Hagrid buys Hedwig as a late birthday gift for Harry) is one of the most memorable scenes in the first Harry Potter film...and it all happened in front of Leadenhall Market, which stood in for Charing Cross Road. As they walk, Harry asks Hagrid "Can you find all this in London?" to which Hagrid replies "If you know where to go".

And not only was Leadenhall Market used to represent the one area of London which secretly leads magical folk to Diagon Alley (in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*), Potterheads should be able to immediately recognize the entrance to the Leaky Cauldron at [42 Bull's Head Passage \(8\)](#), as its blue door was used to film scenes in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* as well.

Leadenhall Fact

Not just limited to Harry Potter, Leadenhall Market has also been used as a filming location for a handful of other movies over the years, such as *Hereafter*, *Love Aaj Kal*, *The Imaginarium of Dr. Parnassus* and *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*, as well as for Erasure's 1991 music video "Love To Hate You."

Leadenhall in the Olympics

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When London hosted the Olympic Games in 2012, Leadenhall Market formed part of the route for the Marathon. Hundreds of runners from all over the world ran through the market on their loop around the city, entering at Whittington Avenue and leaving through [Lime Street \(9\)](#). They followed a very picturesque route through London; perhaps they were among the luckiest of the competitors that year.

In 2021 Leadenhall Market continues to provide a wide range of shopping and dining options to its visitors. Looking at the beautifully clean and vibrant Victorian buildings of today it's hard to imagine the noise and smells of a 19th century market, but if you look closely at the shop fronts you will see the wrought iron hooks where produce used to hang.