

16. london on film

From rom-coms to horror, fantasy to kitchen-sink drama, London has starred in many movies over the years. With an ambience that changes from one postcode to another – and often several times in between – the city is one of the greatest character actors in the business. It has played the bustling boho backdrop to Hugh Grant and Julia Roberts' improbable romance in *Notting Hill* and made a convincing wartorn Saigon in *Full Metal Jacket*. It has shown its seamier side in *The Long Good Friday* and *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*, yet put in convincing performances as a magical, child-friendly playground in *Mary Poppins* and the *Harry Potter* series. In honour of its Oscar-worthy career, this journey takes you to where some of the most iconic movies to be shot in the capital were made. The list of London film locations is endless, so think of this trip as a director's cut...



Start point: Putney Bridge tube

End point: Camden Town tube

Duration: 5 hours

- Come out of **Putney Bridge tube** and bear right around Station Approach onto Gonville Street. This emerges onto the north side of Putney Bridge opposite **All Saint's Church**, which appeared in 1976 horror film *The Omen*. It was from this church spire that a lightning rod, dislodged by a storm, falls down to impale Patrick Troughton's priest Father Brennan through the neck.

- Cross the road and turn left, then catch the northbound **14** or **22** from the **Putney Bridge Station/Gonville Street** stop. Get off the bus at the **Piccadilly Circus** stop and continue along Piccadilly to London's most famous roundabout. It was here that director John Landis filmed the final climactic scenes of his 1981 comedy-horror classic *An American Werewolf in London*. The chaotic ending, in which David Naughton's lycanthrope runs amok in Piccadilly Circus, was shot in two three-hour bursts. Landis – who had persuaded local police to allow filming by putting on a Met-only screening of his previous film *The Blues Brothers* at a nearby cinema – managed to achieve one of the iconic London movie moments despite only being allowed to stop traffic three times for a maximum of two minutes.

- From Piccadilly Circus, turn left into Regent Street. Cross the road and catch the eastbound **15** from the **Piccadilly Circus** stop. Once the bus has passed through Trafalgar Square and onto the Strand, look to the right for **The Savoy Hotel** – where Bob Hoskins has his final meeting with the Mafia before being abducted by Pierce Brosnan's IRA hitman in *The Long*

Good Friday. **Australia House**, on the right at the eastern end of Aldwych, stood in for the goblin-run Gringott's Bank in *Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone*, while **The Royal Courts of Justice** – on the left as the bus enters Fleet Street – is where barrister Mark Darcy helps hapless TV reporter Bridget Jones get a scoop in 2001's *Bridget Jones's Diary*.

- Get off the bus at the **Monument Station** stop, walk back along Cheapside and turn right up Gracechurch Street. **Leadenhall Market**, a short walk up the road on the right, stood in for Diagon Alley – the shopping street for witches and wizards – in all the *Harry Potter* films. The market also features prominently in *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus*, the last film that Australian actor Heath Ledger made before his death in 2008.

- Leave the market through its Gracechurch Street exit and turn left. Walk down to the **Fenchurch Street** stop and catch the southbound **35**, which heads over **London Bridge** – the bridge that Hugh Grant crosses as commuters flow the other way in 2002's *About A Boy* – towards Borough Market. Get off at the **Southwark Street** bus stop and walk back up the road, then turn left into Bedale Street. The flat over **The Globe** pub was Renée Zellweger's home in *Bridget Jones's Diary*; a location choice that caused many Londoners to wonder how a character who worked in a low-level publishing job could possibly afford an idyllic property in such a sought-after area. **Borough Market**, which lies behind The Globe, also makes an appearance in *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*, *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and *Wilde*.

- Come out of the market, turn right down Southwark Street and catch the westbound **RV1** from the **Hop**

Exchange stop. This bus passes along the southern end of **Blackfriars Bridge**, which Sally Hawkins cycles over in the opening sequence of Mike Leigh's 2008 film *Happy Go Lucky*, before passing the concrete buildings of the **Southbank Centre** on its way over Waterloo Bridge. It was on the concourse in front of these that Hugh Grant stutteringly confesses his love for Andie Macdowell – using the lyrics of the Partridge Family – in 1994's *Four Weddings And A Funeral*.

● Get off the bus at the **Covent Garden/Catherine Street** stop terminus and continue walking around Aldwych and along Fleet Street. Turn right into Inner Temple Gateway (the alley opposite Chancery Lane) and walk down to the circular **Temple Church**. This beautiful 12th-century building, known for its links to the Knights Templar and the lifelike medieval effigies it contains, was visited by Tom Hanks and Audrey Tatou on their whistle-stop tour of Europe's religious buildings in *The Da Vinci Code*.

● Return to Fleet Street, turn right and walk along for a few minutes. Turn right onto New Bridge Street (which leads down to Blackfriars Bridge) and catch the northbound **63** from the **Blackfriars Station/North Entrance** stop. Get off a few minutes later at **Snow Hill**, walk back down Farringdon Street and turn left into West Smithfield. **St Bartholomew the Great**, the church in the far corner of the square at the top, was where Hugh Grant's aborted wedding to Anna Chancellor was held in *Four Weddings And A Funeral*. It was also used as a location in 1991's *Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves* and 1998's *Shakespeare In Love*.

● Turn around, walk across the front of St Bartholomew's Hospital and down Giltspur Street. At the bottom, cross the road and turn right, then catch the westbound **8** from the **City Thameslink Station** stop. Get off the bus at the **Tottenham Court Road Station** stop right next to **Centre Point**. It is at the foot of this building that Cillian Murphy sets off a car alarm in Danny Boyle's 2002 horror film *28 Days Later*. The tube station here is where a late-night commuter is chased and killed by the werewolf in *American Werewolf in London*. Though the platform shots in the movie are of Tottenham Court Road, the actual chase sequence was filmed in the underground tunnels at nearby Charing Cross.

● Catch the westbound **7** from the same bus stop and take it all the way along **Oxford Street** – another famous London location that Cillian Murphy finds eerily deserted in *28 Days Later* – to Notting Hill. Look right as the bus goes along **Westbourne Park Road** and you will see the house shared by Hugh Grant and Rhys Ifans in 1999's *Notting Hill* at number 280. The house's famous blue door was auctioned off by its owner – the film's writer Richard Curtis – several years ago.

● Get off the bus at the **Ladbroke Grove Station** stop, walk back down Ladbroke Grove and turn left into Westbourne Park Road. Turn right down **Portobello Road**, venue for the Saturday market that was used for several shots in *Notting Hill*, and walk

down to number 142. This was the location of Grant's travel bookshop in the film.

● Walk all the way down Portobello Road, turn right down Pembridge Road and catch the eastbound **452** from the **Notting Hill Gate Station** stop. The bus passes the **Albert Memorial** – in which monkey man Christopher Lambert takes refuge after escaping the Natural History Museum in 1984's *Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord Of The Apes* – on the left; and, opposite, the Royal Albert Hall, which appears in the climax of both the 1934 and 1956 versions of Alfred Hitchcock's *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. Get off the bus at the **Lister Hospital** stop, just off the Chelsea Embankment, which offers a wonderful view of **Battersea Power Station** on the other side of the river. This iconic Art Deco building has been committed to celluloid several times – most notably as the façade of Victory Mansions in the John Hurt and Richard Burton version of 1984 and as Bosworth battlefield in Ian McKellen's 1995 reworking of Shakespeare's *Richard III*.

● Walk back up Chelsea Bridge Road, turn right onto Pimlico Road and catch the eastbound **211** from the **Chelsea Bridge Road** stop. The bus goes through Parliament Square and past **Big Ben** – which Chevy Chase and his family circle endlessly in 1985's *National Lampoon's European Vacation*, and which is blown up by alien spacecraft in the two 1996 films *Independence Day* and *Mars Attacks!* – before crossing **Westminster Bridge**, the first deserted London location encountered in *28 Days Later*.

● Get off the bus at the **Westminster Bridge/County Hall** stop, then cross the road and catch the northbound **148** from the identically named stop on the other side. Take the bus up to the **Marble Arch** stop, then cross Park Lane, walk up to the top and turn right onto Oxford Street. Cross at the traffic lights, turn right and then left into Portman Street. Catch the northbound **274** from the **Portman Street/Selfridges** stop and take it all the way up to Camden Town. On this final bus ride, you'll pass **London Zoo** on the right, which is where David Naughton wakes up naked in the wolf enclosure in *An American Werewolf in London* and Daniel Radcliffe liberates a boa constrictor in *Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone*. The entrance to the zoo also stood in for the main gates of Wimbledon in the eponymous 2004 film – the actual entrance to the tennis tournament was not deemed photogenic enough to be used in the movie. Look to the right just after the zoo, and you will see the path leading from **Gloucester Gate** into Regent's Park upon which Paul McGann and Richard E Grant say their goodbyes at the end of 1987's *Withnail And I*, leaving Grant to recite *Hamlet* to the wolves on the other side of the fence.

● The bus then continues down Parkway and into Camden Town. Get off at the **Camden High Street** stop and carry on walking down the road to the tube.