The ride starts at the junction of London Bridge and Duke Street Hill by the stone Southwark Needle.

**The White Hart, White Hart Yard**

Written when Dickens was 24, The Pickwick Papers became his first major success as readers took to Sam Weller, the astute cockney taken by the unworldly Pickwick as his personal servant on his travels. Pickwick found Weller at the White Hart coaching inn ‘burnishing a pair of painted tops (boots), the personal property of a farmer who was refreshing himself with a slight lunch of two or three pounds of beef and Blood and two or two of porter, after the fatigues of the Borough Market’.

Looking from the yard you can see Borough Market which features In Pickwick Papers, when, following a riotous party, Ben Allen ‘knocked double knocks at the door of the Borough Market Office and took short naps on the step alternately, until daybreak, under the firm impression that he lived there and had forgotten his key’. Just by this, now 16 Borough High Street, was the site of St Thomas’ Hospital, where the first complete English Bible was printed in 1537.

**Guy’s Hospital**

Bob Sawyer was a medical student (Pickwick Papers) and Mrs Gamp’s husband died (Martin Chuzzlewit) at this teaching hospital, which was endowed by wealthy printer and publisher Thomas Guy (1645-1724) and built in 1721-24. The poet, John Keats (1795-1821) trained as a surgeon-apothecary at Guy’s from 1815 – 16 and the bronze statue, by Stuart Williamson, celebrates his life.

**The George Inn**

The National Trust owned, Grade 1 listed building is the last of the coaching inns that peppered this area. The George is mentioned by Dickens in Little Dorrit.

**Tabard Inn, Talbot Yard**

Geoffrey Chaucer (1343 – 1400) set The Tabard Inn as the starting point for ‘The Canterbury Tales’. The pilgrims first meet here on their journey to Canterbury.

**Marshalsea Prison Wall**

Dating from the 14th century to its closure in 1842, Marshalsea was, like other prisons, privately run for profit. Until the Bankruptcy Act of 1869 abolished debtors’ prisons, men and women in England were routinely imprisoned for debt. Their families were left to depend on charity, so the prisoners would often have their families with them, though they could come and go during the day. Dickens’ father was imprisoned here in 1824 for his bad debts, and joined by his wife and three younger children, while twelve-year-old Charles left school and lodged nearby, taking a job in a factory. Little Dorrit, in Dickens’ book of the same name, was born in Marshalsea.

**St George the Martyr Church**

This is where Little Dorrit was christened. One night she returned to the prison too late and was locked out for the night so she slept in the vestry of the church with the register for a pillow. It was here she was married to Arthur Clennam. The bottom right-hand corner of the modern stained glass window at the east-end of the church has a representation of Little Dorrit wearing a poke hat.

After Little Dorrit Park is Quilp Street, named after Daniel Quilp, the grotesque villain from ‘The Old Curiosity Shop’ with a “ghastly smile which, appearing to be the mere result of habit and to have no connection with any mirthful or complacent feeling... gave him the aspect of a panting dog”. Around the corner, Mint Street had a workhouse from 1729, which held up to 300 inmates when Dickens lived nearby, and the area was a notorious slum. Weller Street is named after Sam Weller in the Pickwick Papers.

**Lant Street**

Twelve-year-old Charles Dickens took lodgings in Lant Street during 1824 to be near his family in prison, and worked in a nearby factory. The street is also one of main locations of the plot of Sarah Waters’ Fingersmith.

The ride continues to Pickwick Street, Copperfield Street and past the Charles Dickens Pub to

**Dog and Pot Sculpture**

“My usual way home was over Blackfriars Bridge and down that turning in the Blackfriars Road which has Rowland Hill’s chapel on one side, and the likeness of a golden dog licking a golden pot over a shop door on the other.”

The current sign, made from Elm, was created by carpenter and artist Michael Painter for the bicentenary of Dickens’ birth in 2012. The original sign is in the borough’s Cuming Museum
The actor-manager James Burbage built London’s first purpose-built theatre, The Theatre, in Shoreditch in 1576. In the 1580s Shakespeare joined the resident company. Following a dispute about renewal of the land lease, the company dismantled the timbers of the Theatre and rebuilt it in Southwark, as the Globe, opening in 1599. The new theatre was near the first theatre on Bankside, the Rose, which was built in 1587. Plays included Marlowe’s Doctor Faustus, Jew of Malta and Tamburlaine the Great, Kyd’s Spanish Tragedy and Shakespeare’s Henry VI part I and Titus Andronicus. Following the arrival of the Globe, the Rose fell out of use and by 1606 had been abandoned as a theatre.

Shakespeare lived in Southwark for around five years and was a shareholder in the Globe, where many of his plays were presented.

In 1613, during a performance of Henry VIII, the thatched roof caught fire and the theatre rapidly burned to the ground, luckily without loss of life. The theatre was quickly rebuilt, this time with a tiled roof. Along with all other theatres, the Globe was closed by the Puritan administration in 1642 and demolished in 1644.

American actor, director and producer Sam Wanamaker had the idea to recreate the Globe after visiting London in 1949. Although he was in 1993, construction of the new theatre had started, a short distance from the original site, and in 1997 it was completed. Other than concessions to comply with modern day fire regulations such as additional exits, illuminated signage, fire retardant materials and some modern backstage machinery, the Globe is as accurate a reconstruction of the 1599 Globe as was possible.

William Shakespeare is commemorated by a window and statue in the South Aisle. The window was designed by Christopher Webb, replacing one destroyed during the war, and was unveiled on the anniversary of Shakespeare’s death in April 1954.

Beneath it is a recumbent alabaster figure of Shakespeare, carved by Henry McCarthy in 1912, set against a background of seventeenth-century Southwark in relief, showing the Globe Theatre, Winchester Palace and the tower of St Saviour’s. Shakespeare’s brother Edmund was buried in St Saviour’s in 1607, and although the position of Edmund’s grave is unknown, he is commemorated by an inscribed stone in the paving of the Choir.

Opposite the Shakespeare window is a window commemorating Chaucer.

Dickens opened ‘Our Mutual Friend’, with Gaffer Hexham and Daughter Lizzie making a living from finding corpses floating in the river.

It was on the steps of the previous London Bridge to this one that, in Dicken’s Oliver Twist, Noah Claypole was able to hide and overhear the conversation that eventually led to the death of Nancy at the hands of Bill Sikes. Claypole had been following Nancy, who meets Rose Maylie and Mr Brownlow on the bridge but won’t speak there. “Not here,” said Nancy hurriedly; “I am afraid to speak to you here. Come away - out of the public road - down the steps yonder!”.

Sikes meets his bitter end at Jacob’s Island, which is very different now to how it was in Dickens’ era:

“rooms so small, so filthy, so confined, that the air would seem too tainted even for the dirt and squalor which they shelter; wooden chambers thrusting themselves out above the mud, and threatening to fall into it—some have done; dirt-besmeared walls and decaying foundations; every repulsive lineament of poverty, every loathsome indication of filth, rot, and garbage; all these ornament the banks of Folly Ditch.

In Jacob’s Island, the warehouses are roofless and empty; the walls are crumbling down; the windows are windows no more; the doors are failing into the streets; the chimneys are blackened, but they yield no smoke. Thirty or forty years ago, before losses and chancery suits came upon it, it was a thriving place; but now it is a desolate island indeed. The houses have no owners; they are broken open, and entered upon by those who have the courage; and there they live, and there they die. They must have powerful motives for a secret residence, or be reduced to a desolate condition indeed, who seek a refuge in Jacob’s Island.”

Many blocks of flats around here are named after Dickens’ Characters, including Dombey, Copperfield, Nickleby, Tapley, Wade, Pickwick, Weller, Haredale, Tupman, Rudge, Micawber, and Wrayburn.

“...a boat of dirty and disreputable appearance, with two figures in it, floated on the Thames, between Southwark bridge which is of iron, and London Bridge which is of stone, as an autumn evening was closing in. The figures in this boat were those of a strong man with ragged grizzled hair and a sun-browned face, and a dark girl of nineteen or twenty, sufficiently like him to be recognizable as his daughter. The girl rowed, pulling a pair of sculls very easily; the man, with the rudder-lines slack in his hands, kept an eager look out.”

from Our Mutual Friend, Charles Dickens
Start 

**Junction of London Bridge and Duke Street Hill by the stone Southwark Needle.**

Cycle away from London Bridge under the railway bridge into Borough High Street, past St Thomas’ Street on into 2nd narrow alley - White Hart Yard. Continue to back of White Hart Yard, through pedestrian gap in barrier and follow road to right, then to left. Stop on LHS by steps to archway of old building and take bikes up steps (mobility option to leave bikes there and return to Borough High Street as you came) to see Guy’s Hospital – Keat’s statue in cove on lawn on rhs of path. Continue on path out of the quadrangle on the other side and L onto St Thomas’ Street. Stop on LHS blue plaque commemorating Keats. L at T junction into Park Street, L into Redcross Way, past Church of the Most Precious Blood Roman Catholic. Continue under railway bridge, stop on rhs:

**Shakespeare’s Globe**

Back up New Globe Walk L into Park Street STOP before railway bridge on LHS for:

**The Rose** blue plaque

Continue under railway bridge, stop on rhs:

**The Globe**

Continue along Park Street L at T into Bank end R under railway into Clink Street R into Winchester Square L into Winchester Walk L into Montague Close

**Southwark Cathedral**

Continue down to river

**Boats on the River**

Continue along Montague Close to steps leading up to London Bridge

**Nancy’s Steps**

Continue under bridge into Tooley Street and L at T, still Tooley St. SO at TL (junction with Tower Bridge Road) Continue SO into Jamaica Road L into Mill Street (SEE INSET MAP)

**Jacob’s Island and Folly Ditch**

R onto Bermondsey Wall. Admire river view R onto George Row R onto Wolseley Street Many Blocks of Flats around here are named after Dickens’ characters, inc. Dombey, Copperfield, Nickleby, Tapley, Wade, Pickwick, Weller, Haredale, Tupman, Rudge, Micawber, Wrayburn. L onto Dockhead R onto Jamaica Road Bear R at TL into Tooley Street Bus Lane Continue along Tooley Street becomes Duke Street Hill to London Bridge

**End**

Route researched and created by Charlie Holland for Cycle Confident

Leaflet design by Loco Design