

= Old Kent Road =

Old Kent Road is a major thoroughfare in South East London , England , passing through the London Borough of Southwark . It was originally part of an ancient trackway that was paved by the Romans and used by the Anglo @-@ Saxons who named it Wæcelinga Stræt (Watling Street) . It is now part of the A2 , a major road from London to Dover . The road was important in Roman times linking London to the coast at Richborough and Dover via Canterbury . It was a route for pilgrims in the Middle Ages as portrayed in Chaucer 's Canterbury Tales , when Old Kent Road was known as Kent Street . The route was used by soldiers returning from the Battle of Agincourt .

In the 16th century , St Thomas @-@ a @-@ Watering on Old Kent Road was a place where religious dissenters and those found guilty of treason were publicly hanged . The road was rural in nature and several coaching inns were built alongside it . In the 19th century it acquired the name Old Kent Road and several industrial premises were set up to close to the Surrey Canal and a major business , the Metropolitan Gas Works was developed . In the 20th century , older property was demolished for redevelopment and Burgess Park was created . The Old Kent Road Baths opened around 1905 had Turkish and Russian bath facilities . In the 21st century , several retail parks and premises typical of out @-@ of @-@ town development have been built beside it while public houses have been redeveloped for other purposes .

The road is celebrated in the music hall song " Knocked ' em in the Old Kent Road " , describing working @-@ class London life . It is the first property , and one of the two cheapest , on the London Monopoly board and the only one in South London .

= = Geography = =

The road begins at the Bricklayers ' Arms roundabout , where it meets the New Kent Road , Tower Bridge Road , and Great Dover Street . It runs southeast past Burgess Park , Christ Church , Peckham and the railway line from Peckham Rye to South Bermondsey .

Just east of the railway bridge , the road crosses the boundary between the London boroughs of Southwark and Lewisham , where the road ahead becomes New Cross Road . The road appears on a map to form a boundary between Walworth , and Peckham to the south and Bermondsey to the north although the Bermondsey boundary runs along Rolls Road .

= = History = =

Old Kent Road , one of the oldest roads in England , was part of a Celtic ancient trackway that was paved by the Romans and recorded as Inter III on the Antonine Itinerary . The Anglo @-@ Saxons named it " Wæcelinga Stræt " (Watling Street) . It joined Stane Street another ancient and Roman road at Southwark before crossing the Thames at London Bridge . The Inter III was one of the most important Roman roads in Britain , linking London with Canterbury and the Channel ports at Richborough (Rutupiae) ; Dover (Dubris) and Lympne (Lemanis) . Pilgrims , as documented in Chaucer 's Canterbury Tales , travelled along the road from London and Southwark on their way to Canterbury . In 1415 , the road was a scene of celebrations for soldiers returning from the Battle of Agincourt heading towards London . The Kentish Drovers public house opened in 1840 and was so named because the road was a thoroughfare for market traffic . The road was mainly rural in nature , surrounded by fields and windmills and the occasional tavern until the 19th century . John Rocque 's Map of London , published in 1746 , shows hedgerows along its course . The name Old Kent Road came into use at this time ; up to then the road from Borough High Street to the Bricklayers Arms junction was known as Kent Street , this section was renamed Tabard Street in the 1890s .

= = = St Thomas @-@ a @-@ Watering = = =

The bridge at St Thomas @-@ a @-@ Watering over the River Neckinger was at the junction with what is now Old Kent Road and Shorncliffe Road (previously Thomas Street) , and marked the

boundary of the Archbishop of Canterbury 's authority over the manors of Southwark and Walworth . It was the limit of the City of London 's authority in 1550 , having been ratified in several charters and marked by a boundary stone set into the wall of the old fire station that marked the first resting place for pilgrims while travelling to Canterbury . The nearby public house , the Thomas a Becket , at the corner of Albany Road is named after this . Henry V met soldiers returning from Agincourt at this location in 1415 . Charles II 's journey along the road on his way to reclaim the throne in May 1660 was described by contemporary writer and diarist John Evelyn as " a triumph of about 20 @ , @ 000 horse and foote , brandishing their swords and shouting with inexpressible joy " .

St Thomas @-@ a @-@ Watling became a place of execution for criminals whose bodies were left hanging from the gibbets on the principal route from the southeast to London . On 8 July 1539 , Griffith Clerke , Vicar of Wandsworth was hanged and quartered here along with his chaplain and two others , for not acknowledging the royal supremacy of Henry VIII . The Welsh Protestant martyr John Penry was also executed here on 6 April 1593 ; a small side street nearby is named after him . The Catholic martyrs John Jones and John Rigby were executed in 1598 and 1600 respectively .

= = = Rolls family = = =

In the early @-@ 18th century , the Rolls family of The Grange in nearby Bermondsey acquired a significant amount of land around Old Kent Road . It included residential development that is now Surrey Square and the Paragon , which were designed by Michael Searles in 1788 . The main road route gave rise to ribbon development because of the increasing urbanisation of the expanding metropolitan area . In the early @-@ 20th century , social housing was built on land previously held by the family who gave away their interests for public benefit including the library at Wells Way in Burgess Park , the girls grammar school at Bricklayers Arms (St Saviour 's and St Olave 's School) and the Peabody Estate (Dover Flats and Waleran Flats) . The last significant remnant of their involvement is the detached White House between the Peabody Estate buildings , built by Searles in the 1790s . The original railings and ironwork survive in the current development at No. 155 . The house was later occupied by Searles and became the management office of the Rolls family trust estates . The last of the male Rolls 's was the Hon Charles Stewart Rolls who was the pioneer motorist and aviator who formed the Rolls @-@ Royce partnership with Henry Royce .

= = = Industrial development = = =

The opening of the Surrey Canal in 1811 changed the character of the road from rural to industrial . Tanneries were established along it and a soap processing plant was built . Older properties occupied by the upper and middle classes were converted into flats for the emerging working class population . By the time Bricklayers Arms goods station opened in 1845 , the road was entirely built up and Old Kent Road had one of the highest population densities in Europe , with an average of 280 residents per acre . Sections along the road were commercial with various market stalls and sellers until the construction of the tramway in 1871 . Camberwell Public Library No. 1 , which later became the Livesey Museum for Children was designed by Sir George Livesey in 1890 . The road 's southern section remained residential throughout the 19th century . Nos. 864 , 866 and 880 ? 884 were constructed by John Lamb in 1815 , and feature Ammonite capitals , ornamental features resembling fossils , a feature also used in contemporary architecture in Brighton .

The Licensed Victuallers ' National Asylum (now Caroline Gardens) , an extensive almshouse estate off Old Kent Road at Asylum Road , opened in 1827 . Its first patron was Prince Augustus Frederick , Duke of Sussex who was followed by Prince Albert and Prince Edward .

The Metropolitan Gas Works , identifiable by its large gasometers , was founded in 1833 . It serviced an area of more than 13 square miles (34 km²) , including parts of Southwark , Croydon , Newington , Lambeth and Streatham . Expansion of the gas works in 1868 required the demolition of Christ Church , Camberwell which was built in 1838 and rebuilt on the opposite side of the road by Livesey . The gas works was managed by Livesey from 1840 until his death in 1908 . A statue of him was sited in the rear courtyard of Livesey Museum , opposite the works .

During the 19th and 20th century , the industrial and working class makeup of Old Kent Road made it a haven for organised crime and violence . The notorious Richardson Gang operated in the area , and boxing clubs became popular . Lennox Lewis ' manager Frank Maloney grew up in the area and recalled , " If you weren 't into crime , people thought you were a pansy " . Draining the Surrey Canal in 1971 uncovered a number of cracked and blown safes that had been thrown in the water .

= = = Public services = = =

Old Kent Road railway station at the southern end of the road opened in 1866 and closed in 1917 . The London City Fire Brigade opened a fire station on the road around 1868 . It was subsumed into the London Fire Brigade from its formation and in 1904 was replaced by a new station which was in turn replaced by another on the corner of Coopers Road . The station was demolished for redevelopment in 2014 and reopened the following year .

The Old Kent Road Baths were built in 1906 . According to Modern Sanitation , they were the only public baths in London with Turkish bath facilities at the time . The baths were designed to include two swimming pools , each measuring 75 feet (23 m) by 30 feet (9 @. @ 1 m) . In 1913 @-@ 4 , the baths were used by 188 @, @ 336 private bathers , 14 @, @ 687 of which used its Russian , Turkish , or special electric baths . The 1923 Municipal Year Book noted the " great success " of Turkish and Russian baths .

= = = Urban Redevelopment = = =

Unlike many places in London , the Old Kent Road area did not suffer significant bomb damage during World War II . In 1968 , a flyover opened at the northern end allowing access to New Kent Road which catered for the main flow of traffic . During the 1970s , run @-@ down Victorian properties on and around Old Kent Road were demolished to make way for new housing estates . Burgess Park was created as part of the County of London Plan in 1943 , which recommended new parkland in the area . Several tower blocks were built along the road , although some earlier 19th @-@ century buildings , such as Nos. 360 ? 386 , survived .

Public houses on Old Kent Road have been closing since the 1980s . At one point , there were 39 pubs . The Dun Cow at No. 279 opened in 1856 and was well known as a gin palace , and later became a champagne bar and featured DJs such as Steve Walsh and Robbie Vincent . The premises closed in 2004 to become a surgery . The World Turned Upside Down had been on the Old Kent Road since the 17th century , and may have been named after the discovery of Australia , Van Diemen 's Land , or Tierra del Fuego in South America . The pub became a music venue in the 20th century and is where Long John Baldrey gave his first live performance in 1958 . It closed in 2009 and is now a branch of Domino 's Pizza . The Duke of Kent was converted into a mosque in 1999 ; in 2011 the mosque was planned to move to the former site of the Old Kent Road swimming baths . The Livesey Museum for Children closed in 2008 owing to council budget cuts and is now used for short term accommodation .

Southwark Borough Council do not consider Old Kent Road to fit the characteristics of an urban town centre , and consequently large retail parks more in character with out @-@ of @-@ town schemes have been developed including a large Asda superstore , B & Q store , Halfords , Magnet and PC World .

= = Cultural references = =

Old Kent Road is the first property square on the British Monopoly board , priced at £ 60 and forming the brown set along with the similarly working class Whitechapel Road . It is the only square on the board in South London and south of the Thames .

The road makes several appearances in literature . In Charles Dickens ' David Copperfield , the titular character runs down the road trying to escape from London to Dover , though in the narrative the street is still partly rural in nature . After suffering an attack of amnesia , the main character of

George Orwell 's A Clergyman 's Daughter , Dorothy Hare , finds herself alone on Old Kent Road . In 1985 , the BBC arts series Arena included a documentary about the road .

The road is mentioned in the title of the music hall song " Knocked ' em in the Old Kent Road " . It was written in 1891 by Albert Chevalier , who was the lyricist and original performer ; the music was written by his brother Charles Ingle . The song was popularised by Shirley Temple 's performance in the 1939 film A Little Princess The street is mentioned multiple times in the Madness song " Calling Cards " , a song about running an illegitimate business " in a sorting office in the Old Kent Road " . It is featured in the chorus of the Levellers ' song " Cardboard Box City " , which criticises the slow action on helping the homeless in London , specifically Old Kent Road being infrequently visited by the wealthy due to its being south of the Thames .