FOR more than thirty years I have been a dealer in the second-hand—second-hand anything, from books to cigarette cards. I have travelled to most street markets in and around London many hundreds of times, and I was myself for many years a seller of second-hand books from a barrow in a street market in Bermondsey. I have lived these past forty years in a colourful street market, Westmoreland Road, Walworth.

In the sixteen years I have been writing for The Saturday Book many hundreds of visitors to London have called on me and asked what they should see after they've seen the usual sights, from Big Ben to the Tower of London. To them I have always suggested that the street markets will provide all the colour and all the colourful characters they'd ever want to meet. So now it's occurred to me that a general guide to London street markets would prove helpful and amusing to all my Saturday Book readers.

The first thing I beg you to remember is that street traders are not fools; they are good business men and women. Don't expect to get a first folio signed by Shakespeare for 1s. 6d. Don't expect to get Ming for a dollar. The best bargain you will get in London street markets is genuine entertainment; and that 'for free'. In London street markets there is the best pantomime of life—and a pretty tough life it is. Pulling my
barrow-load of books from Walworth to Bermondsey, getting there at
nine in the morning in a sweat, standing there in all weathers till half
past two—well, it pretty nearly killed me. I know what a tough life it
be, and I also know that for the most part market traders are extremely
hard-working folks and extremely honest folks. Of course, there are
bargains to be had in some markets: no one knows everything, and even
experts can make mistakes; but it don't often happen. Be prepared to
pay a fair price for what you buy.

There are eighty or so street markets in and close to London. More
than twenty-five thousand Londoners make their livings as street traders,
and some of the most genuine of Cockneys can be found behind bars.
It's rather a curious thing, but over long years I've found that the most
colourful of street traders are fishmongers . . . and next to them sellers of
old clothes. The music of markets is irresistible, and the cries of the sellers
as they call out their wonderful bargains always hold me spellbound.

I've put at the top of my list the Caledonian Market in Bermondsey,
because for the visitor it's by far the most colourful, and everything is
sold there. But hold tight to your purse strings; they have a wonderful
way in Bermondsey of parting you from your money. Petticoat Lane is a
more famous market, but it comes farther down my list because it's at
its best on Sunday mornings, and not everyone is inclined to get up and
make an hour's journey on a Sunday. But if you do promise you a feast of odd characters, endless fun, and fascinating vocal music. There is
no place quite like it; but be warned: you could lose your watch at one
end of it and buy it back at the other end—if you've any money by the
time you reach the other end. Many of the folks in this area of London
are very rich folks, and the car they go out in on Mondays is much finer
than your own.

I've walked along East Street Market, Walworth, at least three times a
week for the past forty years. It's one of the markets that has never lacked
colour. Its traders are particularly honest and the goods for sale are
excellent value; this cannot be said for every street market in London.

I am greatly indebted to a book called The Street Markets of London by
Mary Benedetta. It was published in 1936 and is now rare. It's the finest
book ever on the markets of London, but, alas, it's now entirely out-of-
date. Many of the markets no longer exist, and others have changed their
names or their character.

The list that follows is probably the fullest and most up-to-date that
will be compiled for some time. If you visited all these markets in a couple
of months you'd wear out at least two pairs of shoes. But you'd have
seen London and its folk better than any guide or any travel agency
could present them to you. The very few markets that are not listed here
are really not worth your time or trouble since they would be a repetition
of those in the list.

Bear in mind that it's a waste of time to go to many of these markets on
a Monday. That's the day the sellers go out in their cars and smoke their
excellent cigars. On the whole the best two days to visit markets are
Fridays and Saturdays. But there are some exceptions. I've found over
thirty years that East Street and Lower Marsh markets are brisk and lively
on Thursday mornings, though quite dead by two on that day.

You don't have to be a visitor to London in order to get a great deal
of pleasure in visiting these markets. Hundreds of thousands of Londoners
don't know a third of them. As one market dies out in a small street—
perhaps it's pulled down for rebuilding slums—then a fresh one opens
nearby. And good luck to them all. The street-market traders are the
salt of London.

I suggest that you make the point of starting every journey from
opposite Big Ben on the corner of the Embankment, because there are
many bus-stops, an Underground station, and (if you are rich) it's a very
good place to obtain a taxi. By one of these methods you can reach all
the markets listed. I have put them in order of interest, not in order of
neighbourhood or nearness to the big clock. The best and the most
colourful are the one's shown in Edwin Smith's pictures.

RUPERT STREET, off Shaftesbury Avenue, with the Globe Theatre on one
corner. A tightly packed street market, busy and breezy, full of life. You
go through it to get to Berwick Market, but it's worth a visit in its own
right as a superb specimen of a London food and fruit market.

NORTH END ROAD, Walham Green. Go by Underground to Walham
Green, and it's close by. A working-class market, mainly food, but very
good value. Has many odd characters amongst its traders. Best day for a
visit is Saturdays between one and four. No market on Sundays.

HAMMERSMITH MARKET, off King Street, Hammersmith. Can be reached
by Underground. A neat and busy market, rather on the lines of Rupert
Street, but the street cries are at times most odd. It's rather a middle-class market, but it has much colour. At its best on Saturday afternoons.

LOWMARSH, Lambeth. This market is just across Westminster Bridge and you can walk there in less than ten minutes. It has strangely assorted wares and a weird variety of stall-holders. It's very working-class, and at its best between twelve-thirty and two-thirty. Tightly packed every day. Go on Fridays and Saturdays.

THE NEW CUT, Lambeth. Starts beside the corner of the Old Vic. It is really a continuation of Lower Marsh. A sad market, with many gaps, for it's a dying market. However, many of the stall-holders are true Cockneys.

CHOURMERT ROAD, Peckham. This can be reached on a Number 12 bus from Big Ben, and is very lively on Saturdays. You go down Rye Lane and get off at the Railway Bridge. The market is but a few steps forward from the bridge. It's very much a working-class market, and sells pretty well everything. There is also close-by a strange covered-in market that's worth a visit. Extremely honest traders, and a very nice collection of Cockney stall-holders.

EXMOUTH MARKET, Finsbury. After visiting Farringdon Market continue up the road over Clerkenwell Road, and on the right you'll find Exmouth Street and a typical London street market, mainly food and household goods, but full of colour. It's in the borough of Finsbury, where you'll find other and smaller markets dotted around.

WESTMORELAND ROAD, Walworth. Four turnings past East Street Market, still along the Walworth Road, you'll find this market, with a pub on the corner. I've lived in this road for more than forty years. It sells everything, but these days it is mainly devoted to food and fruit. You will find the traders to be genuine Cockneys with a lingo all of their own. It's at its liveliest from noon till about two on Saturday. If you visit this market you are welcome to call on me at No. 152 and have a chat and a cup of tea on any Thursday. Thursday is my At-Home Day. Market open every day, but best day is undoubtedly Saturday. Dead on Mondays, as it opens Sundays as well.

EAST STREET, in Walworth. This is open every day except Mondays, but best days are Thursday mornings and Saturday afternoons. A genuine working-class market, ten minutes away from my home, and for forty years I've used this market. The colour and the street cries and the general assembly make this one of the most attractive markets in London. Number 12 bus from Big Ben, down the Walworth Road. Third stop is East Street, known locally as The Lane. Early closing Thursday at one.
THE CALEDONIAN, in Bermondsey. Open Tuesdays and Fridays. The best day is Friday and the best time is between eleven and two. A bus to the Elephant and Castle, then another bus down Tower Bridge Road. A wonderful assortment of all manner of goods for sale, but don’t expect to get Astounding Bargains. The sellers are mainly experts. Still, as I’ve said, even experts make mistakes. Has the best assembly of antiques to be found in any market in London.

BERWICK MARKET, off Shaftesbury Avenue. Number 12 bus to Piccadilly (going in the opposite way to East Street). Get off at Piccadilly Circus and walk for three minutes up Shaftesbury Avenue; second turning on the left is Rupert Street. Walk through the busy food and fruit market. At the top is a narrow alley which leads direct to Berwick Market. Sells everything. Has odd sellers of odd things. Best time to visit it is weekdays between noon and one-thirty.
FARRINGDON STREET. Nearest station Farringdon Street. A bus down Holborn reaches this street. It is noted for its bookstalls, open every day, but at its best around noon. It is not a big market, and if you are not interested in books then it's not worth your time. In that case you will be better served with the next market in the same area, which is Leather Lane. Whereas Farringdon Street is open every day, I've never seen a market of any consequence in Leather Lane on a Saturday.

DOUGLAS WAY, in Deptford. Nearest station, New Cross. Bus to the Elephant and Castle; then change on to a New Cross bus. It's a turning out of High Street, Deptford. It's at its best around noon on Saturdays—very colourful, with stalls selling just about everything from old clothes to odd gloves, from watches to ivory. It also sells flowers, fruit, and food. Many odd characters amongst both stall-holders and clients. A real working-class neighbourhood, nearly as good as East Street, Walworth.
PORTOBELLO ROAD, Notting Hill Gate. Go by Tube. It’s open every day, but best between eleven and four on Saturdays. Entertaining characters, odd stalls selling everything from food to costly antiques. But, having been there on many occasions, I can assure you there are few if any bargains. Most of the stall-holders are experts and a good many of them display their wares at Caledonian Market on Fridays, so why see the same stuff on Saturdays? Still, it is one of the sights of London, with a great many coloured people in the crowds. Be careful here, for I’ve known of folks who had their pockets picked down the Portobello Road.

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DAWES STREET, Walworth. A curious small market: Sunday mornings only. Oddments of all sorts and sizes. Bikes of every age and make are something of a feature. (See my latest book, *The Last Bassoon*, for a fuller report on this and East Street markets.)

HIGH STREET, Battersea. Open every day, but best day Saturday. Mainly food with some odd stalls here and there. Battersea is a long way from Big Ben, but don't forget Battersea Park when in this area. Nice place to rest your tired feet in.

LEATHER LANE, Holborn. This is a market from Monday to Friday mainly for the use of city workers. It can be reached by Underground to Chancery Lane and then a short walk down the narrow turning beside Gamage. It's alive around noon and almost dead by two. Many bargains, and very good value, but not very colourful folks either behind or in front of the barrows. Sells everything, especially everything in metal, food, and household goods. A few antique stalls. No market on Saturdays or Sundays.

BRIXTON MARKET. Can be reached by bus from Big Ben. It's the heart of the coloured section of London, and when you walk this market you almost can think you are in Jamaica or Africa. Mainly it sells food and household goods. It also sells old clothes, and I've seen a stall there packed with second-hand gloves, thousands of them, mostly odd. Best day is Saturday and best time around two to five. No market on Sundays.

CLUB ROW, Bethnal Green. A curious Sunday-morning market mostly selling livestock, pets, birds, etc. I think this is a sad little place, perhaps because I love animals. Off Bethnal Green Road. Go by Underground.

LEWISHAM HIGH STREET. Open every day... but I think it's best Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings.

MILE END ROAD, Stepney. Go by Tube. The market takes place on what is called 'The Wastes', and only on Saturdays. It's almost like the Flea Market of Paris, with its odd junk stalls and odd characters. At its best around eleven. It will take about an hour to get there. It has nothing very rare or valuable. Caledonian Market has it all, only better, but it
must have its place in my list as a genuine open-air street market that is full of colour.

**Warwick Way**, off Vauxhall Bridge Road. A bus down Victoria Street and then a short walk. A small but gay market; many stall-holders are genuine 'cards'. Open every day, but Saturday afternoon is a good time. No market on Sundays.

**Strutton Ground**, off Victoria Street. A short walk from Big Ben. Small and compact market, open every day: best time around one o'clock any day. Sells almost everything, but Berwick Market has it beaten for colour and that's why it's farther down the list. No market on Sundays.

**Ridley Road**, off Hackney High Street. A very long journey from Big Ben, as far as Lewisham in another direction. Genuine Cockney working-class market, but not a patch on East Street, and for that reason hardly worth the time and trouble to get there. At its best Fridays and Saturdays.

**Northcote Road**, Battersea. Off St John's Road; a long market, all manner of stalls, selling everything. Can be reached by bus. A working-class part of London. But Battersea High Street is a little better for local colour.

**Southwark Park Road**. When you are at Caledonian Market you are within a mile of this market. Best day Saturday, say from eleven to four. Odd street cries and very good value in food.

**Tower Bridge Road**, Bermondsey. A small part of the larger Caledonian Market. Open every day. Genuine Cockney stall-holders. I stood in this market myself for many years with my barrow of books.

**Bethnal Green Road**. Open every day; sells everything. Can be reached by Tube. Is a characteristic part of working-class London. Sclater Street, Cygnet Street, Columbia Road, Cheshire Street, and Buck Lane markets are all in the same district, and all open on Sunday mornings.

**Ermitage Street**, Camberwell. A small market which was once a grand market. Number 12 bus from Big Ben: get off at Camberwell Green. Cockney stall-holders, and mostly food. Saturdays up till two is its best time, but don't make a special journey.

**Chapel Street**, Finsbury. A small and picturesque market, close to Angel Tube Station. Best day is Saturdays, around one to three.

**London Fields**, Hackney. An odd collection of stalls. Open every day. A long journey from Big Ben, but it has some engaging stall-holders, and odd-looking customers.

**Lambeth Walk**, Lambeth. A short walk over Westminster Bridge will get you to Lambeth Walk in fifteen minutes. Once a very famous market, the heart of Cockneyland. Strange cries still rise from the few stall-holders remaining there, but it is dying. The district is fast being rebuilt owing to bombing, and it is losing its character.

**Greenman Street**, Islington. Open every day. A long journey, and 'The Wastes' at Mile End Road is better, but the customers make this an interesting place. Go by Underground.


**Beresford Square**, Woolwich. Open every day. Nearest station is Woolwich Arsenal. Hardly worth the time or trouble to see unless you happen to be in the neighbourhood. Nothing here for the seeker of antiques.

**Blandford Street**, Marylebone. Another rather long journey to a market that is in no way exceptional... mainly food. Lower Marsh is better for a similar market—but the customers are different.

**Draycott Street**, Chelsea. Off King’s Road. Can be reached by Tube to Sloane Square. The market is small. The customers are more interesting than the stall-holders, for this is the home of the artist and the beatnik.
LAVENDER HILL, Clapham. A very small and colourful market. Can be reached by bus. Working-class area of London, rather off the beaten track.

WELL STREET, Hackney. A small collection of stalls, mostly food. The Bethnal Green area is better for similar stalls, but Well Street has a good cross-section of working-class Londoners.

WHITECROSS STREET. Nearest Underground station is Moorgate; then a short walk. A very old market; I've known it for over forty years. It's rather like Leather Lane, being a market for city workers. It sells everything; best time for a visit is around noon. By three it's dead, and all the stalls vanished. It's not far from Farringdon Street, Exmouth, and Leather Lane markets, and each one has a style of its own.

CHAPEL STREET, Marylebone. (Not to be confused with the market of the same name in Finsbury.) Nearest Tube is Edgware Road. A tight and bright and busy little market. There is another market of much the same character in Bell Street, just five minutes' walk away from Chapel Street. Of the two, Chapel Street is the best. Many breezy stall-holders here, at both markets.

SEATON PLACE, Euston. A small, pleasant market, mostly selling food, rather like Warwick Way. Near to Warren Street Tube Station.

CHARLTON STREET, close to St Pancras Station. Has about a hundred stalls and very colourful. If you are 'doing' Seaton Market, Charlton is but ten minutes' walk away. Mainly sells food.

GOLDSBORNE ROAD, Notting Hill. When you are in Portobello Road you may like to continue into this market, which is at the end of the Portobello Road, on the right. It's a very odd market, and well worth attention for its strange assorted lot of stall-holders, and odd things on barrows. Not quite so good as Portobello, but should not be missed when you are in this area. Sells everything. Best on Saturdays up till around four o'clock.

QUEEN STREET, close to St Pancras Station. Miscellaneous collection of stalls, a small walk away from Charlton Street.

NILE STREET, Shoreditch. A working-class, gay, and lively market. Very mixed assortment of stalls and barrows. Nearest station is Old Street. It's an odd part of London, and right off the average tourist's track. Open every day, best time around ten, but dead on Thursdays after one.

TACHBROOK STREET, Westminster. Off Vauxhall Bridge Road, near to Warwick Way. A very small but varied market. Open every day, but best on Fridays and Saturdays in the mornings.

WILCOX ROAD. Turning off South Lambeth Road, or can be reached via Wandsworth Road. A picturesque market, rather like Lower Marsh. Best day Saturday, ten till two.

KING STREET. Close to Camden Town Tube Station. Not so brisk or colourful as either Lower Marsh or Wilcox Road. Working-class customers. Varied goods for sale.

CHRISP STREET, Poplar, E.14. This is an interesting example because it is situated and provided for in the Lansbury Project of new dwellings to replace slums of this area. It is a very busy market that completely fits the neighbourhood. Although it's rather a long way (go by Tube) to Poplar, this is a splendid market and in a part of London seldom seen by visitors.

RATHBONE STREET, Canning Town. In the borough of West Ham, a small market of genuine Cockney characters. Was once famous, but is getting less and less. No market on Mondays, and is dead by one on Thursdays.

THE BROADWAY, in Hackney. An impressive title for a not so impressive market. Has many entertaining stall-holders, but is not outstanding in its general set-up. Closed on Thursdays. Go by Tube.

KINGSLAND ROAD, also in Hackney. A long road with a wide variety of stalls and barrows. Best day is Saturday around noon. Not quite so busy as East Street, Walworth, but has its fair share of vocal stall-holders. Go by train to Dalston Junction. Closed down on Thursday afternoons. Some stalls sell antiques in Kingsland Road.
WHITEHORSE STREET, Stepney. (Don't confuse this with Whitecross Street.) It's a considerable distance from Big Ben, but in an area of London that is worth exploration. All manner of stalls, of miscellaneous variety and with many genial characters. Whilst in the area of Stepney, find Watney Street, with another variety of barrows, close by. Open every day, but best time is in the mornings.

MARMONT STREET, Peckham. Go by the same number 12 bus that takes you to East Street and Westmoreland Road. It's a small turning, with a cinema on the corner, out of Peckham High Street. This is a small market of old clothes and oddments that is open only on Thursday and Saturday mornings. It's at its best by eleven and most stall-holders have gone away by one. It's reputed that there are often bargains to be had in this little market.

QUEENS ROAD, Upton Park. Go by Underground. It's a long journey, and not a particularly good market for variety, but it certainly has colour. Should you be in West Ham don't miss it. This is another market reputed to have very good bargains.

ANGEL LANE, Stratford. Go by Underground: A genuine Cockney market; there are few angels here. It's mostly for food and household goods; very few stalls of miscellaneous character.

SHEPHERD'S BUSH. Number 12 bus going along Oxford Street and past Bayswater gets you to this bright little market in thirty minutes or so. Some may argue that it's not a street market, but although all the stalls are covered-in, you, the buyers, are out in the open; although the stall-holders and their goods are protected from the rain the clients can get wet. It's behind the B.B.C. Theatre, close beside the railway bridge. You can also get there by Underground. It's a brisk, busy market and you can hardly move in it on a Saturday afternoon. Its advantage is that they don't need tarpaulins when the rain comes down, and as long as you have a good raincoat it's one of the few that you can visit on a wet day. At Shepherd's Bush, no matter what the day (except Sundays), there is bustle and life and colour.

GARNHAM STREET, in N.16, the borough of Hackney. Kingsland Road, in the same borough, and Ridley Road, close by, are considerably better markets with a great deal more variety. But it's one of those small markets you are likely to miss, and if you are a marketite this is probably a new one for your list.


HOLLOWAY ROAD, Islington. A small market, on Saturdays only; runs from Madras Road to the corner of Liverpool Road. Has a small collection of bric-à-brac and oddments' stalls. Also has fruit, vegetable, and household-goods stalls.

SCLATER STREET, close to Bethnal Green Road. Can be reached by Tube. A very lively Sunday-morning-only market, not so big as Petticoat Lane, but most certainly worth a visit. At its best around eleven. Many odd stalls, odd stall-holders, selling almost everything.

CYGNET STREET, a turning off Sclater Street and a continuation of the above market. Sunday mornings only. Very small, packed, and bustling. Wide variety of goods for sale.

COLUMBIA ROAD, Bethnal Green. Close to Shoreditch Railway Station, and about ten minutes' walk from the two above markets. Again a Sunday-morning market; all manner of stalls and very odd characters. Worth visiting.

CHESHIRE STREET, Bethnal Green. Another Sunday-morning market. Brisk and busy, but not so busy as Petticoat Lane. It's in the near region of the above three markets, and it's certainly worth the ten minutes or so walk from Sclater Street to Cheshire Street, although what they sell is for the most part the same. Many of the stall-holders are 'cards'. Arnold Bennett liked this market.

BRICK LANE SOUTH has a market every day of the week. It's a turning out of Bethnal Green Road. I personally think that Leather Lane and East Street are better markets for many reasons, but it's worth going down when you are visiting this area of London.

ROMAN ROAD, Bethnal Green. If you continue down Bethnal Green Road, crossing over Cambridge Heath Road, you are in Green Street,
and this in turn leads you directly to Roman Road. There is a small market every day of the week in Roman Road, but it's hardly worth the twenty minutes or so extra journey, for Bethnal Green Road itself has more than Roman Road can offer. No market here on Sundays, and is dead on Thursdays by one o'clock.

BLACKWOOD STREET, Walworth. Second turning on the right going down East Street from the Walworth Road. A small but extremely busy market on Sunday mornings only. Noted for its flowers and roots, but in fact sells almost everything. Get there around noon and you'll hardly be able to move for the crowds. Good hunting. Number 12 bus from Big Ben will get you to East Street within twenty minutes.

RAILWAY APPROACH, London Bridge. Nearly opposite Southwark Cathedral (and do make a point of visiting this fine cathedral while in the neighbourhood). Although it would be a very enjoyable walk from Big Ben along the Embankment to London Bridge, it's a very long way. The best method is by Number 12 bus to the Elephant and Castle; alight there and get a 35 bus to the foot of London Bridge. Railway Approach is a very lively market, mostly devoted to flowers, fruit, and vegetables. It seems to be busy every hour of every day, except Sundays. Nothing in this market for the antique seeker, but in the near neighbourhood are many literary shrines connected with Shakespeare, Chaucer, and Dickens. American visitors would find this area of London very interesting.

These seventy street markets do not quite exhaust the number that can be found with diligent seeking. I am aware of street markets in Balham and Tooting, and even farther on the outskirts of London, but you would gain nothing by going so far afield. There is something just a little different in each of those listed above.

Finally, some practical advice. Avoid taking a wallet or a small purse. Divide up your money so that it is in several pockets. Take a nice big shopping bag, and in it put an extra pair of easy walking shoes. You are going to do a good deal of walking touring seventy markets, and at times your feet will be killing you. Finally, don't ever forget your raincoat; it's sure to rain, and these are for the most part open street markets. I wish you many bargains and hundreds of happy hours.

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