

Land ownership in Bloomsbury

Key to estates

- 1 Duke of Bedford
- 2 City of London Corporation
- 3 Capper Mortimer
- 4 Fitzroy (Duke of Grafton)
- 5 Somers
- 6 Skinners' (Tonbridge)
- 7 Battle Bridge
- 8 Lucas
- 9 Harrison
- 10 Foundling Hospital
- 11 Rugby
- 12 Bedford Charity (Harpur)
- 13 Doughty
- 14 Gray's Inn



① From Benjamin Disraeli's *Vivian Grey* (1826-7)

'And what was the card?'

'Oh, you need not look so arch! The old lady was not even a faithless duenna. It was an invitation to an assembly, or something of the kind, at a *locale*, somewhere, as Theodore Hook, or John Wilson Croker, would say, "between Mesopotamia and Russell-square"'

② From Dickens, *Pickwick Papers* (1837), chapter 31

There are several grades of lawyers' clerks. There is the artided clerk, who has paid a premium, and is an attorney in perspective, who runs a tailor's bill, receives invitations to parties, knows a family in Gower Street, and another in Tavistock Square; who goes out of town every long vacation to see his father, who keeps live horses innumerable; and who is, in short, the very aristocrat of clerks.

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FLUNKEIANA.

Flunkey (who does not approve of Bloomsbury). "No, Ma'am, I don't object to the 'OUSE, FOR IT'S HARRY, AND THE VITTLES IS GOOD; BUT THE FACT IS, THAT ALL SE CONNECTIONS LIVE IN BELGIUM!"

(4)

From Wilkie Collins's *Heart and Science* (1882-3)

The broad district, stretching northward and eastward from the British Museum, is like the quiet quarter of a country town set in the midst of the roaring activities of the largest city in the world...

... This haven of rest is alike out of the way of fashion and business; and is yet within easy reach of the one and the other.'

(5)

E. V. Lucas, *A Wanderer in London* (1906)

'Bloomsbury, which is the adopted home of the economical American visitor and the Hindoo student; Bloomsbury, whose myriad boarding-houses give the lie to the poet's statement that East and West can never meet...[...] It has few shops and many residents, and it is a stronghold of middle class respectability and learning. The British Museum is its heart: its lungs are Bedford Square and Russell Square, Gordon Square and Woburn Square: and its aorta is Gower Street, which goes on for ever. Lawyers and law students live here, to be near the Inns of Court; bookish men live here, to be near the Museum; and Jews live here, to be near the University College School, which is non-sectarian. Bloomsbury is discreet and handy: it is near everything, and although not fashionable, any one, I understand, may live there without losing caste. It belongs to the Ducal House of Bedford, which has given its names very freely to its streets and squares.[...]

(6)

George R. Sims, 'Ye Bars and Gates' (1891)

Ye bars and gates o' Bloomsbury,
How can ye stand so silent there?
How can ye, knowing ye are doomed,
From some sma' signs o' grief forbear?
He'll break his heart, will Bedford's duke,
Whose grandeur County Councils spurn,
As he bemoans his feudal rights---
Departed never to return

Ye bars and gates, ye're comin' doon;
No more ye'll block the freeman's path,
And make the traveller lose his train,
Or rouse the British cabman's wrath.
Wi' lightsome heart we root ye up,
And leave the streets o' London free;
And there's but one will mourn your loss,
And that's his grace the Duke of B.

(7)

J. M. Barrie, *Peter Pan* (original stage version) (1904)

'The night nursery of the Darling family, which is the scene of our opening Act, is at the top of a rather depressed street in Bloomsbury. We have a right to place it where we will, and the reason Bloomsbury is chosen is that Mr Roget once lived there. So did we in days when his *Thesaurus* was our only companion in London; and we whom he has helped to wend our way through life have always wanted to pay him a little compliment. The Darlings therefore lived in Bloomsbury.'