



Leo Hollis:

Leo Hollis is the author of several books about the history of London, all of which he has researched on foot, to reveal the stories locked in the stones, buildings and streets of the city.

Notes from the podcast interview by Andrew Stuck: Recorded in May 2010 and published in May 2011 on <http://talkingwalking.net>

Leo is fascinated by the changes wrought by the Great Fire of London and the achievements of Sir Christopher Wren and Robert Hooke in bringing about the creation of the City of London as we know it today.

Leo's latest book is the "Stones of London- A History of London in Twelve Buildings." 454pp, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £25

The route we follow from in front of the Royal Exchange [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Exchange,_London], is along Canon Street passing the London Stone [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Stone], stepping into the garden of St Swithin's [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Swithin,_London_Stone] (now in the shadow of the new Walbrook Building [<http://www.minervapl.co.uk/developments/?id=438>]), and then turning up Watling Street, to St Paul's Cathedral and in to Paternoster Square. Like every other weekday, our discussions were frequently interrupted by the noise of motor traffic or nearby construction.

Hooke and Wren were founder members of the Royal Society the motto for which is "take no man's word for it". <http://royalsociety.org/about-us/>

Wren borrowed architectural concepts from Europe to create St Paul's Cathedral including the Hagia Sphere in Istanbul [<http://www.turizm.net/turkey/history/hagiasophia.html>], and from the works of Inigo Jones [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inigo_Jones] and Benini [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gian_Lorenzo_Bernini]. Wren failed to establish a school of young architects to continue his work, with the exception of Hawksmoor [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicholas_Hawksmoor]. Unlike Paris, there was no Haussmann to re-align the streets of the city [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haussmann's_renovation_of_Paris], so many of the streets that pre-dated Wren still persist.

Jean Nouvel's building at No 1 New Change <http://www.onenewchange.com/jean-nouvel.aspx>

Leo sees London as a walking city – designed for those on foot, for example London Bridge was erected for pilgrims, and Trafalgar Square for national celebration (and protest), with Karl Marx anticipating the revolution beginning in Hyde Park.

Richard Sennett's The Fall of the Public Man http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Sennett

Leo recommends that in the age of increasing technological mapping and mobile apps, one should just try to get lost in the streets of the city – just doing that would be an act of defiance. He also recommends a walk along the Thames or an exploration of London Squares.