

Alan Payne is an experienced and qualified tour guide and public speaker, and a keen local historian. Being a 'very personable chap', he has worked successfully with many varied groups. Contact him via the details below to arrange a memorable, tailor-made illustrated talk or walking tour for your group.

# Illustrated Talks & Walking Tours

for Community Groups



My Card



by and with  
**Alan Payne**

What's on the Cards?

Where Time Begins\*

Monsters in Our Midst

*The Diary of a Nobody* brought to Life\*

Monopoly's Lowest\*

Seaside Sauce

The Story Behind Your Cuppa

The Bankside Show\*

\*Available as a talk or a walking tour for small groups



**WHAT'S ON THE CARDS?** is an illustrated talk (with a few demonstrations thrown in) about playing cards. Or rather, the history and mystery of playing cards. I get asked to do this more than any of the others. Perhaps it's because it's such a quirky subject. It came about when I was asked if I had any other talks following my Greenwich armchair tour (see next). I turned to a hobby and

'What's on the Cards?' was the result. We're all familiar with playing cards but how much do we really know about them? You may be surprised by what you see and hear. And why is the suit on the Ace of Spades that much larger than the other three Aces? Why do we have jokers in the pack? Can playing cards be read?

**WHERE TIME BEGINS** is about the World Heritage site of Greenwich. We may take it for granted being on our doorstep but the whole world looks to Greenwich to set the clocks right. This is the 'armchair' version of a walking tour I did many years ago when I first qualified as a tour guide. All the usual suspects are covered plus a few surprises.



**MONSTERS IN OUR MIDST** is the extraordinary story of four southeast Londoners, born around about the same time, who ended up featuring in iconic Hollywood horror movies in the 1930s that are widely regarded today as the best of their kind. William Henry Pratt (who?), Elsa Lanchester, Claude Rains and HG Wells—born within a bus ride's distance of each other, their paths were later to cross on the lot of Universal studios, amidst the

orange groves, on the west coast of the United States.

**THE DIARY OF A NOBODY BROUGHT TO LIFE** is a romp in the footsteps of Charles Pooter—that wonderful comic creation of George and Weedon Grossmith. Join me as we explore the Holloway Road of the 1890s and discover the Pooter's house at 'The Laurels', Brickfield Terrace. Interspersed with choice anecdotes, this was inspired by a project I completed for the University of Westminster when I qualified as a Clerkenwell and Islington tour guide.



**MONOPOLY'S LOWEST** is all about the Old Kent Road. Known principally in the game as the card nobody wants, there's so much to discover as we embark on this



tour of the famous road from one end to the other. Folk used to talk about 'pub crawls' along its length but now there's only two pubs left. It seems the place is dominated by bland retail parks. But keep your eyes open and scratch below the surface and a whole lost world is revealed. Even Del Boy from nearby Peckham makes an appearance. Then there's the former asylum, two quite remarkable examples of ceramic public art, a 19 year old World

War I hero, a recreated Victorian street and an abandoned Soviet tank ...

**SEASIDE SAUCE** is about Donald McGill, a quiet and reserved man from a respectable family in Blackheath, who went on to become the leading pioneer of the humorous seaside postcard. But after decades of success it all turned sour in the 1950s when McGill was prosecuted for obscenity. As we trace his long career and examine many examples of his work, you can make your own mind up. Your reaction to his work will be a good test of the defence he attempted to use in court.



**THE STORY BEHIND YOUR CUPPA** provides the inside story behind our favourite national drink—tea. My dad was a tea taster and blender for a small London tea business, James Ashby and Sons, and I had the pleasure of working with him for a time. The firm is long gone but what are not gone are my fond memories of the place and what I

learnt about tea. How was it first 'discovered'? What's the country's favourite blend? How did they get those chimps to talk in those TV adverts? The famous tea clipper, the Cutty Sark: how did she get her name?

**THE BANKSIDE SHOW** puts the spotlight on an often neglected area of London's rich and varied history concentrating first on Southwark Cathedral (where I have recently qualified as an official guide) and then moving on to explore the delights of the Borough market, Shakespeare's Globe and more ...

