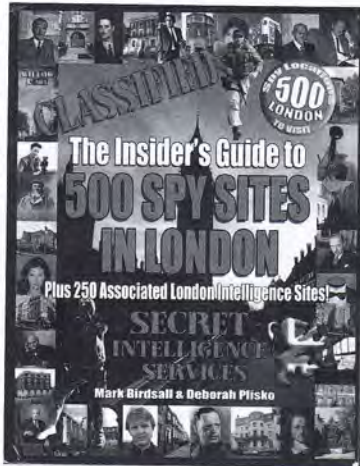


BOOK REVIEW

By David H. Hamer

The Insider's Guide to 500 Spy Sites in London by Mark Birdsall and Deborah Plisco, Eye Spy Publishing, Skipton, UK, 2015, 540 pages, softcover, UK£25/US\$39 +P&P. ISBN: 978-0-9564530-1-3. URL: <http://www.eyespy.com/>

In the Fall 2010 issue of this journal I reviewed 'Insider's Guide to 150 Spy Sites in London' by these two authors and recommended that you, together with your spouse or significant other, put the book in the pocket of your anorak or the back pocket of your jeans and explore the nooks and crannies of the London spy scene. However with this much-enlarged follow-up you might wish to tote, or better still have your SOSO tote, the book in a backpack: this is not a small volume - its 540 pages, each 21x27 Cm [approx. 8x11 inches] weigh in at about 1.5 Kg. [a little over 3 Lb.] - but this is a somewhat less than practical or comfortable solution. The book is intended to allow you to research and compile a list of sites and itineraries in which you may be interested and pre-plan a route accordingly. It is lavishly illustrated with literally hundreds of colour and monochrome pictures from a myriad of sources - some rarely, if ever, seen previously.



The book is really a comprehensive and well illustrated history of British Intelligence beginning with the Secret Service Bureau [SSB] in 1909 and then, within a decade or so, its further development into MI5, MI6 and the Government Code and Cypher School [GC&CS] - now famous for its role in the 'cracking' of the German military ciphers during WW2 from its primary location at Bletchley Park [BP] and various outstations. GC&CS itself 'morphed' into the present Government Communications Headquarters [GCHQ] in April 1946.

I will not attempt to cover each individual chapter - there are twenty-four of them, not including the Introduction and the final Postscript and Index, Guide and Maps but a sampling of the titles include Emergence of the Spy Services, A Most Secret War, Games of Deception, Spy Tradecraft and many others....

An example - Chapter V: The Fourth Spy Agency takes the visitor to the St. James' Park area of London - which just happens to be where my favorite hotel is located and is an area of the city that I know well. The district has a number of locations associated with the history of intelligence with many of these located along St. James' Street itself and the adjacent Caxton Street. Of particular interest is the St. Ermin's Hotel where an entire floor was taken over by MI6 in 1936 to expand its Section D. In his memoirs Kim Philby recounts how he was first interviewed in this hotel when he was recruited by MI6. The hotel's bar is a delight and a wonderful place to begin an

evening of relaxation - but take money. My own preference is for The Albert, an old Victorian pub at the corner of Victoria Street and Buckingham Gate - a five-minute walk. The four-storey Victorian building sits rather incongruously surrounded by concrete and glass skyscrapers that represent modern London.

Towards the end of the book is the nine-page Spy Site Locator and Index that enables the reader to carefully plan, in as detailed a manner as required, a visit or a sequence of visits to the approximately five hundred sites included in the preceding pages. 'Pit stops' and other breaks are suggested from among numerous restaurants, cafes, pubs and other oases that have been visited in person by the writers, guides and their contributors.

500 Spy Sites is a book to be used - recommended as a bookshelf addition to anyone with an interest in the history of the British Intelligence Services and in the many locations in and about London associated with that history.



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[HTTPS://USNCVA.ORG/FRUPACNET.HTML](https://usncva.org/frupacnet.html)

Editor's note: the below appeared in *CRYPTOLOG*, vol. 19, No. 1

S O S: ULTIMATE AND LAST WORD?

- 1 ½ pounds ground beef
- ¼ cup chopped onion
- 1 T. flour
- 1 T. shortening
- 1 16-oz. can stewed tomatoes
- Pinch of Mace or Nutmeg
- Pinch of salt
- Pinch of pepper
- ¾ cup water

In large skillet, braise beef and onions. Add flour and brown. Add tomatoes, spices and water. Let simmer for 10-15 minutes. Serve on toast.

ANOTHER ONE

SOS is made with ground beef. This is the "official recipe" for Army (Navy)? Ground Beef, L. No. 30 Creamed Beef. (Modified to serve 6). Bon Appetite

- 1 1/2 pounds ground beef
- 1/2 cup flour
- Dash of pepper
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 tsps beef-flavored instant bouillon
- 2/3 cup nonfat dry milk
- 3 cups warm water
- 1 Tsp. Worcestershire sauce

Brown beef in its own fat in skillet. Drain excess fat. Add flour, pepper, salt and bouillon to beef. Mix thoroughly and cook about 5 minutes or until flour is absorbed. Reconstitute milk. Add to beef mixture. Add Worcestershire sauce. Heat to a simmer, stirring frequently until thickened. - That's SOS! Spooned onto toast. It's what I used to chow down on after getting off duty at 0600. I haven't had it since. Please, someone stop me before I reenlist!!