

# A Bentham Wa

## 6. 36 Percy Street.

When Bentham's Auto-Icon was created in 1832 (see item 8), it was kept in the consulting rooms of its maker Dr Thomas Southwood Smith at Finsbury Square, but when Smith gave up these premises in the winter of 1832, the Auto-Icon was moved to the studio at 36 Percy Street of the artist Margaret Gillies, with whom Smith had lived since the early 1830s. From this address the Auto-Icon was transported to London in March 1832. *Walk down Percy Street, and turn left into Tottenham Court Road. Continue north down Tottenham Court Road, past Goodge Street Underground Station. Turn left into Whitfield Gardens* 310 metres, or 330 yards.

## 7. Whitfield Gardens.

A new outdoor art installation at Whitfield Gardens, named after the Rev. George Whitefield, an evangelical preacher who founded a chapel on this site in 1714, includes a portrait of Jeremy Bentham. The installation by Art + Architecture consists of twelve panels each containing an hour-glass representing the history of the area from Whitefield onwards trickling through to mingle with the images of today and tomorrow. The panel in which Bentham features is entitled 'Utopia - Aesthetics and Anaesthetics', and also includes Shillibeers Omnibus, Charles Dickens who lived in Fitzrovia as a boy, and Robert Liston who performed the first operation using general anaesthetic at University College Hospital. *From Tottenham Court Road turn right into Torrington Place, and left into Gower Street, entering UCL through the main gates. Take the right-hand door in the Portico Facade into the South Cloisters* 500 metres, or 542 yards.

## 8. Auto-Icon, South Cloisters, UCL, Gower Street.

Bentham left his body to medical science in his first will, written at the age of 21 in 1769, when only the corpses of hanged murderers were available to further anatomical knowledge, diagnosis, and treatment. In a later will of 1826, in the hope of encouraging others to do the same, Bentham left his body to be the subject of a public lecture, and later to be dissected at the Webb Street Anatomical School. At this time he also began to develop the idea of the Auto-Icon: man in his own image: the actual corpse could replace memorial sculpture. Bentham hoped his fellow-utilitarians might meet with his Auto-Icon on occasion to remember his life and ideas. The Auto-Icon is capable of many interpretations: is it a joke, a refutation of the Christian belief in corporeal resurrection, a lesson to combat fear of the dead, or a product of altruistic rational thought?

*Retrace your steps into Gower Street, cross over the road, head in a southerly direction and turn first right into University Street.*

## 9. Jeremy Bentham Pub, University Street.

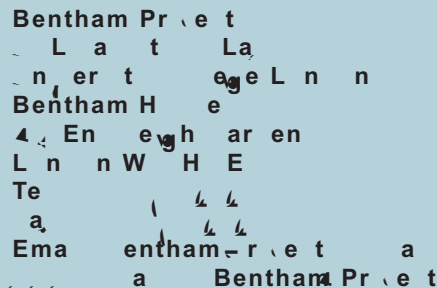
Have a drink!

# Jeremy Bentham and the Bentham Project at UCL

Jeremy Bentham (17 June 1748 - 18 March 1832) lived all his life in London. Educated at Westminster School, London, and Queen's College, Oxford, he was admitted to Lincoln's Inn in 1773 to begin training as a lawyer. His father hoped Bentham would become Lord Chancellor one day. In fact Bentham devoted his life to reform through his writing. Bentham believed the proper purpose of the law, as of all human action, was to promote utility, or to use the more famous statement of the principle of utility: 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number'. Working for most of his life at Queen's Square, Bentham used the principle of utility as a critical tool with which the value of laws, institutions, practices, and beliefs could be tested, and, if found wanting, improvements suggested.

Some, but not all, of Bentham's works were published in his lifetime, and a new, authoritative edition of *The Collected Works of Jeremy Bentham* is being produced by the Bentham Project at UCL. So far over one-third of the planned sixteen volumes which will constitute the edition have been published.

The Bentham Project attracts a constant stream of academic visitors from all over the world. It maintains an informative and highly-regarded website, which includes a Bentham bibliography, and the *e-Journal of Bentham Studies*. It has produced an online database catalogue of the Bentham papers, about 100,000 manuscripts, at Bentham Library.



Designed and written by Catherine Fuller, and photographed by Deborah Crea, Bentham Project. Map and leaflet design by the Drawing Office, Department of Geography.

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