

# *Shops*

Among London's main attractions are the long streets full of shops, some of which are famous throughout the world. All of those listed here were visited during 2011. Our survey teams found that access to shops has improved considerably in recent years. In particular there are fewer split levels, more accessible toilets, and more BCF. However, few have textphone details on their website and there are still a small number with unexpected split levels.

**Importantly, attitudes have changed, and staff members are more often understanding of special needs than was the case ten years ago.**

In this chapter we have concentrated mainly on the Oxford Street/Regent Street area, as well as including famous shops like Harrods, Harvey Nichols, Peter Jones and Fortnum and Mason. We have also included a few shops on Kensington High Street, and around Victoria. We have only visited and described a tiny percentage of London's shops, so please do not be limited by listings in this section.

**Nearly all the big shops we have described have accessible toilets.**

Access is generally good, although the majority of the big stores have central escalators. The lifts are less obvious and may even be slightly difficult to find. Signage is highly variable.

Most big department stores have a store guide/listing near the main entrance, or at the bottom of escalators, but these do not normally take account of access issues. A few have printed plans of the layout of each floor (which may be downloadable from their website), but these aren't always very clear or accurate. Departments are sometimes moved around without the list being amended. Sometimes you'll bump into some narrow gaps, especially when displays are being reorganised, and there are also occasional unexpected split levels with several steps between one level and another.

**For shop locations, see the map, and note that the numbering along Oxford Street (which is very long) is shown.** Shops get extremely busy, particularly during the whole of the Christmas period, and when there are sales. Car parking also gets more difficult then.

Near Oxford Street there are CPs with BB spaces and lifts, one attached to Selfridges, one behind Debenhams and one in Bryanston Street, near Marble Arch. The UGCP at Cavendish Square does not have lifts.

**In the suburbs**, there are many new and accessible shopping centres, with accessible toilets and BCF. We have included a brief description of the two Westfield shopping malls which opened recently.

In the suburbs, the Shopmobility schemes are of considerable importance. Each

is independently run and financed, but a central office coordinates information, and details can be found at [www.shopmobilityuk.org](http://www.shopmobilityuk.org). A list of the schemes in and around London in November 2011 is included at the end of this chapter.

Remember the **street and open-air markets** for shopping, which have, in principle, good access although they may be crowded, and in streets/areas with bumpy surfaces.

**In the text, shops are listed in alphabetical order. Where there is more than one branch in the same area we have listed them together, but shown them separately on the map.**

### Debenhams

334 Oxford Street, W1C 1JG *Tel:* 0844 5616-161

*website:* [www.debenhams.com](http://www.debenhams.com)

A large department store on six floors, located between Vere Street and Marylebone Lane. It measures about 30m by 70m, and has split levels on both the GF and LGF.

Step-free entrances from the Vere Street corner and the central doors from Oxford Street, but there are +2 steps from the Marylebone Lane corner and +3 from Henrietta Place.

The GF split level has  $\pm 5$ , bypassed by a platform lift (W80 L100) on the Marylebone Lane side, by the Staff Only doors. The main lifts (D80+ W160 L135+) go from the upper GF level at the back of the store towards Henrietta Place.

The basement/LGF split level with  $\pm 8$  is also bypassed by a platform lift (W80 L100). **Wheelchair toilet (D85 ST90)** and BCF on the 3rd floor in the opposite corner of the shop from where the lifts are.

Although access has been improved with the provision of the platform lifts, the decision not to provide ramps remains disappointing, and it took a lot of pressure over a number of years to get anything at all done. The owners carried out a multi-million pound redevelopment, and access issues were clearly not a priority.

### Fortnum and Mason

181 Piccadilly, W1A 1ER *Tel:* 020 7734-8040

*website:* [www.fortnumandmason.com](http://www.fortnumandmason.com)

One of London's traditional shops established more than 300 years ago with its own unique style. It sells a remarkable range of upmarket foods and other goods, and offers several opportunities for wineing and dining.

There are two step-free entrances from Piccadilly, avoiding steps at the entrances from Jermyn Street. All the floors are spacious, but most are carpeted. Three lifts give step-free access to all six floors. Curiously these aren't all the same size.

Two are wide but shallow (with L70) while the third (on the far left) is more rectangular, with L100, which would be easier for most chair users. A separate lift (D110 W140 L135) goes from the LGF to the 2nd floor. The upmarket St James's Restaurant on the fourth floor has step-free access.

The Fountain Restaurant is -12 steps from the GF, but only +1 from the entrance on the corner of Duke Street and Jermyn Street. **Wheelchair toilet (D100 ST80)**. The Gallery Restaurant is +10 from the GF but step-free via a staff lift (D80 W120 L160). There are four more **wheelchair toilets**. All are spacious, but none are signed (except on the door). Staff members are very helpful, and will point you in the right direction:

- on the 1st floor (**D85 ST120**) to the right from the three lifts, and by a staircase;
- on the 2nd floor (**D80 ST100**) to the left from the single lift. There's a spacious BCF in the next room;
- on the 4th floor (**D80 ST110**) where the St James's Restaurant is
- on the LGF in the Wine Bar (**D85 ST80**).

## Foyles

113-119 Charing Cross Road, WC2H 0EB *Tel:* 020 7437-5660

*website:* [www.foyles.co.uk/book-shops-in-london](http://www.foyles.co.uk/book-shops-in-london)

*e-mail:* [customerservices@foyles.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@foyles.co.uk)

A world-famous bookstore, which claims to have the widest range of titles of any bookshop in the UK. It also has a café, gallery and some in-store literary and music events.

Located on the corner with Manette Street.

Step-free entrance on Charing Cross Road. In Manette Street there is +1 step. The shop is huge. It measures some 70m by 20m and is spread over five floors. There are two visible central lifts (D75 W90 L200) opposite the information desk that go to G, 1, 2, 3, but not B. A 'hidden' lift (D70 W100 L80) is situated in the stairwell around the right hand side of the information desk, this one allows access to all floors. The café on the 1st floor has a ramped entrance, and is then flat throughout. **Adapted toilet (D70 ST53)** doubling up with BCF, on the left hand side of the entrance of the café. Be warned that a considerable number of customers use this toilet, because it is convenient, even though there are clear signs asking people to use the toilets on other floors.

## Hamleys

188-196 Regent Street, W1R 6BT *Tel:* 0870 333-2455

*website:* [www.hamleys.com](http://www.hamleys.com)

The world's largest toyshop is on seven floors. The shop is nearly always busy. There is flat access everywhere. It has central escalators. Two lifts (D105 W185 L145) on the left go to all floors. **Wheelchair toilet (D90 ST85)** on the fifth floor. Separate BCF alongside.

## Harrods

87–135 Brompton Road, Knightsbridge, SW1X 7XL *Tel:* 020 7730-1234

*website:* www.harrods.com

**A department store with a world famous reputation and an imposing facade.**

It is said that you can buy anything - from a horse, to a house, to a hearse !

It is on the Brompton Road between Hans Crescent (which has been partially pedestrianised alongside the store), and Hans Road. The SW1 postal boundary goes all the way around the store. Valet parking is available.

The store is huge, and measures roughly 100m by 120m, spread over seven floors. There are floor plans on the website, and printed plans are readily available throughout the store. The various departments do move around, and we were told that there's a new plan produced almost every month.

Harrods has a considerable problem in making the store fully and easily accessible. It is a listed building resulting from combining two adjacent buildings about a hundred years ago. There are a lot of level differences on most of the floors, but fortunately, changing level is done mainly by ramps. There are, however, some residual steps/split levels and the store plans do not (currently) show where these are. You may therefore encounter some unexpected barriers. Once inside, we found that the floor plans are quite difficult to follow, as they don't show clearly enough where the through routes are, nor any of the internal (or external) steps. In addition, it's easy to get slightly disorientated inside. Good landmarks are the Egyptian Escalator, and the block of six lifts. **There seem to be helpful staff everywhere. There are eleven different entrances:**

- **all those from the Brompton Road, from the pedestrianised Hans Crescent and from Basil Street, are step-free** (that is doors 3 to 10 inclusive);
- down the Hans Road side there are +4 steps at door 2, a similar number just inside door 1 (though there's a platform lift to bypass these), and +3 at door 11.

The main way of changing level is by escalator, but there are four groups of lifts, although they're not always very easy to find !

**The lifts are shown on the plans**, and on the GF you can find them:

- by door 5, where there's a single express lift (D90 W180 L250) going to floors LG/G/4 and 5. This is the only one going to the 5th;
- some little way in from door 3, where there are six lifts going to the floors from LG to the 4th;
- a little way in from doors 1 and 11 (but note the steps there) there are two lifts (D90 W250 L100) from the LGF to 4th, and these are the ones for getting to the LGF accessible toilet (see below);
- a little way in from door 10 there are two slightly smaller lifts going from the GF to the 4th.

When you're inside the shop, and on other floors, as we have said, the lifts can be quite difficult to find. In addition, although many of the split levels in the shop

have been ramped, **there are some serious issues with steps:**

- just inside door 1 (although there's a well disguised platform lift); and,
- on both the 3rd and 4th floors, where you may have to go quite a long way around to bypass the steps.

It would be very helpful if these were shown clearly on the plan, together with the through routes on each floor. This would make moving around much easier, and we have suggested this to the management.

Note that at a number of the restaurants and café's the layout uses a bar with tall stools, not suitable for everyone. The best route to the Georgian Restaurant on the 4th floor (for a fancy afternoon tea among other things) is via the lifts near door 10.

There are several **wheelchair toilets**, though none are well signed:

- on the LGF, reached only by the lifts nearest doors 1/11. When we visited it was strictly only an **adapted toilet** as the ST space was restricted to W65 by the toilet roll dispenser on the wall. When we visited it was the other side of the Wines department;
- on the 1st floor near where door 3 would be, alongside a staff toilet (**D80 ST70**). Note that for the conventional mens and womens toilets in the middle of this floor there are steps (+3 or +2), and there are BCF by the womens;
- on the 2nd floor in the central area, not far from the six lifts, with a ramp to the accessible toilet which is by the mens;
- on the 4th floor, again in the central area, with a ramped accessible toilet by both the mens and the womens.

## Harvey Nichols

109 Knightsbridge, SW1X 7RJ *Tel:* 020 7235-5000

*website:* [www.harveynichols.com/stores/london](http://www.harveynichols.com/stores/london)

*e-mail:* [contactknightsbridge@harveynichols.com](mailto:contactknightsbridge@harveynichols.com)

Exclusive store known particularly for ladies' outfitting. There are some general departments, together with a comprehensive food store and eating facilities on the 5th floor.

Located on Knightsbridge, and between Sloane Street and Seville Street and measuring just 50m by 50m, but on eight floors.

There's a step-free entrance from Knightsbridge, and two more from Sloane Street. Further down Sloane Street another entrance has +4 steps.

**Visiting parts of the store is not as easy as perhaps it should be.** The store guide listings are almost unreadable (because of the small font used). The building is bedevilled with split levels, particularly +4 steps to 25% of the GF, -1 and then -4 steps in either direction on level minus one, and ±lots of steps on level minus two. By contrast, most of the upper floors, including the 5th are step-free.

Signage is poor, and some of the staff don't seem to understand the question "How do I find the step-free route ?".

There are two lifts (D70 W120 L100) in the middle of the store and on the edge of the +4 split level. These go to all floors. In addition, there are two express lifts which only go from the GF to the 5th. These are in opposite corners of the store, and the one (D80 W130 L120) with step-free access is by the entrance from Sloane Street on the corner with Knightsbridge. The other one by an entrance from Seville Street involves  $\pm 3$  steps (so be careful not to use this lift when you leave if steps are an issue).

On the 5th floor, part of the café area has movable chairs. The Yo! Sushi bar has one space where a chair user can slot in but it is very well hidden and is in the most difficult spot to get to. There's also a restaurant and bar nearby.

There's just one **wheelchair toilet (D80 ST75)** with BCF, and it's just outside the womens toilets near the bar on the 5th floor. For such a big store, this is a very minimal facility.

## Hatchards

187 Piccadilly, W1J 9LE *Tel:* 020 7439-9921

*website:* [www.hatchards.co.uk](http://www.hatchards.co.uk)

*e-mail:* [books@hatchards.co.uk](mailto:books@hatchards.co.uk)

A smallish but well-stocked bookstore, the oldest surviving one in London, founded in 1797.

Located opposite the Royal Academy, and next to Fortnum's.

Flat entrance, and nearly all step-free, with a lift (D80 W105 L140) at the back of the store which goes to all five floors. On the 2nd and 3rd floors there are +2 steps to about 10% of the floor area.

## Heals

196 Tottenham Court Road, W1T 7LQ *Tel:* 020 7636-1666

*website:* [www.heals.co.uk](http://www.heals.co.uk)

A store with a wide range of modern, designer and contemporary furniture and homewares. Located about 100m from Goodge Street tube station between Torrington Place and Alfred Mews.

Step-free at the entrance and throughout the store. Two lifts to the right from the entrance (D70 W105 L120).

**Adapted toilet** with BCF on the 1st floor, **(D80 ST70 but the inward opening door fouls the BC shelf behind it)**. To find it from the lifts, go forward about 20m, and then turn right.

## House of Fraser

318 Oxford Street, W1C 1HF *Tel:* 0844 800-3752

*website:* [www.houseoffraser.co.uk](http://www.houseoffraser.co.uk)

*e-mail:* [oxfordst@hof.co.uk](mailto:oxfordst@hof.co.uk)

A department store situated between Chapel Place and Old Cavendish Street. It occupies an area of about 25m by 75m.

There's +1 (large) step at the entrance on the corner of Chapel Place, but the entrances from Old Cavendish Street are both step-free. Seven floors are reached via five lifts (D140 W170 L140) located on the Chapel Place side of the store. There's a **wheelchair toilet (D90 ST110)** and separate BCF on the 5th floor, on the Chapel Place side of the building.

### House of Fraser

101 Victoria Street, SW1E 6QX Tel: 0844 800-3762

*website:* www.houseoffraser.co.uk

*e-mail:* victoria@hof.co.uk

This used to be known as the Army & Navy. Located by the junction with Artillery Row.

Step-free access from the entrances from Victoria Street, but +3 steps from Howick Place.

The store is flat throughout, and two lifts (D100 W200 L200) link all four floors (LG, G, 1st, 2nd). On the 2nd floor near the lifts, there's an **adapted toilet (D70 ST40)** and a basic BCF with no running water. The toilet was well adapted for a disabled walker but would be a challenge for a chair user.

### John Lewis

300 Oxford Street, W1A 1EX Tel: 020 7629-7711

*website:* www.johnlewis.com

Large department store located between Oxford Circus and New Bond Street (or more specifically, Holles Street and Old Cavendish Street).

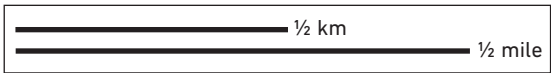
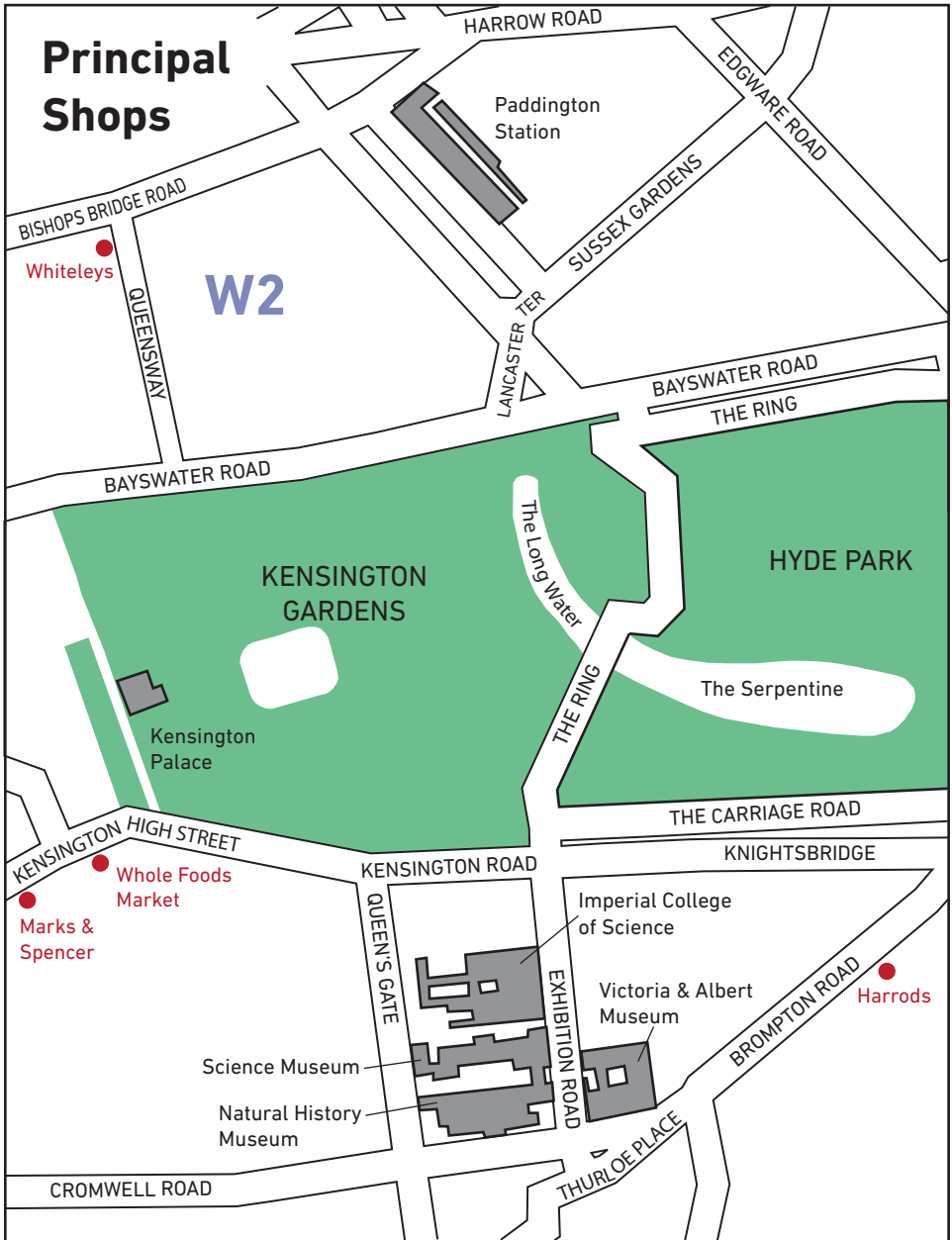
It is on seven floors with flat or ramped entrances. It measures about 80m by 80m and is step-free throughout. Floor plans (rather small) can be downloaded from the website, and these are good at showing the lifts and accessible toilets.

There are central escalators, together with eight lifts (D115 W180 L155). From the main entrance from Oxford Street, four lifts are some 20m inside, if you go straight. They are nearer the Old Cavendish Street side of the shop. The other set of four lifts are at the back of the shop near Cavendish Square.

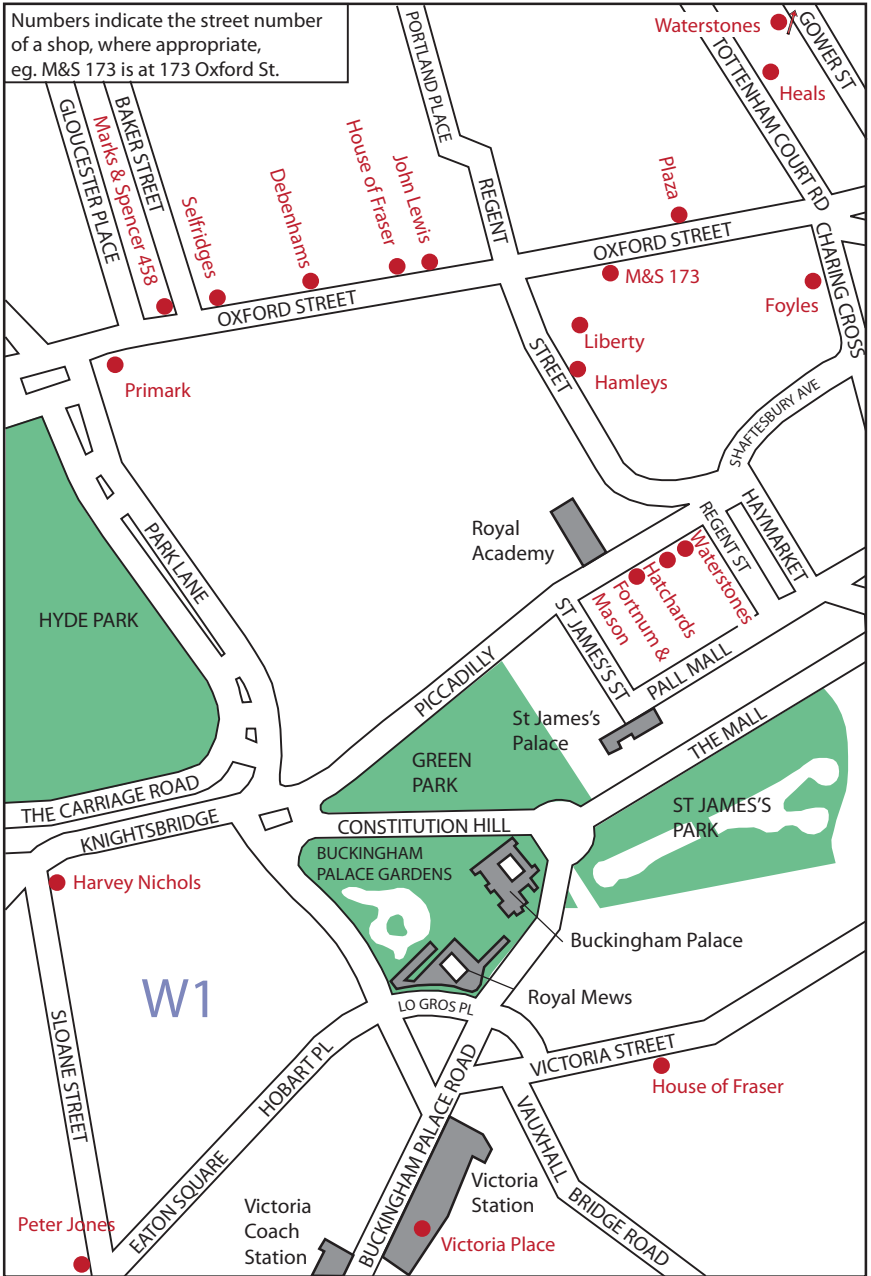
There's a Brasserie and a Bistro on the 3rd floor with flat access, and a ramp in one to access the balcony.

There are **wheelchair toilets** (correctly called and signed 'accessible toilets') on the:

- 1st floor, by the lifts and stairs to Cavendish Square
- 2nd floor, by the lifts and stairs to Cavendish Square
- 3rd floor, by the lifts and stairs to Cavendish Square, and just outside the womens toilet
- 4th floor just outside the parents room which has BCF; and
- 5th floor also outside a parents room where there are BCF.







## Liberty's

Great Marlborough Street, W1B 5AH Tel: 020 7734-1234

website: [www.liberty.co.uk](http://www.liberty.co.uk)

e-mail: [londonstorecustomerservices@liberty.co.uk](mailto:londonstorecustomerservices@liberty.co.uk)

A department store with wonderful character. Liberty designs and patterns are known the world over. Located just off Regent Street with its frontage starting at Kingly Street. It measures about 80m by 30m.

It is housed in a Tudor-style building with three atriums topped by glass lanterns. The central one has a series of magnificent oak panelled galleries.

There are three entrances. The one from the Kingly Street corner has +3 steps.

The other two from Great Marlborough Street (GMS) are flat.

There's a store guide - which you would find useful if you are planning to look around several departments. When we visited, it was only easily available at the entrance from Kingly Street (with the steps).

The store is spread over six floors, and there are two pairs of lifts. The two larger ones (D100 W200 L200) are off the main central atrium and opposite the entrance from GMS. The smaller lifts which only take six people (D80 W120 L100) are located near the Kingly Street corner.

The store is flat throughout slightly cramped at times. The café on the 2nd floor has a ramped entrance.

There's a **wheelchair toilet (D80 ST80)** with BCF on the 4th floor. It is located on the Kingly Street side of the building by a big staircase. When exiting the central lifts, turn left, and go straight ahead.

## Marks and Spencer (Kensington)

113 Kensington High Street, W8 5SQ Tel: 020 7938-3711

website: [www.marksandspencer.com](http://www.marksandspencer.com)

A large department store measuring about 40m by 70m on four floors. Located alongside the Kensington Arcade, outside High Street Kensington station.

It is step-free throughout. There are two lifts, both about half-way back in the shop on the left side. The smaller lift (D85 W105 L130) goes only to B/G/1st floor. The larger one (D130 W205 L245) also goes to the 2nd floor. There's a split level with  $\pm 3$  steps on the 1st floor, bypassed by ramps alongside the escalators.

**Wheelchair toilet (D85 ST105)** and BCF on the 2nd floor, reached by turning left out of the lift, and then right, at which stage you'll see the signs.

A step-free exit/entrance on the GF leads to the station and into the Arcade.

## Marks and Spencer (Pantheon)

173 Oxford Street, W1D 2JR Tel: 020 7437-7722

website: [www.marksandspencer.com](http://www.marksandspencer.com)

Large store measuring about 30m by 80m, located some 200m from Oxford

Circus towards Tottenham Court Road.

Step-free throughout via a single lift (D90 W130 L175) which is on the left about halfway down the store (on the GF).

There are **wheelchair toilets** and separate BCF:

- on the 1st floor on the opposite side of the building from the lift; and,
- on the LGF (the Food Hall). When you come out of the lift, turn right, right again after about 10m, and then they are signed.

## Marks & Spencer (Marble Arch)

458 Oxford Street, W1C 1AP Tel: 020 7935-7954

website: [www.marksandspencer.com](http://www.marksandspencer.com)

Large department store near Marble Arch, on the corner with Orchard Street. Has two entrances, one step-free from Oxford Street, and the other on the corner of Orchard Street with +2 steps.

It has five floors all accessed by two central lifts (D140 W190 L200) which are quite well hidden on the GF, but are near the escalators. The shop measures approximately 40m by 80m. There is step-free access throughout.

There are **wheelchair toilets**:

- in the basement, located in the far right corner of the store (from the lifts), and there are separate BCF;
- on the 3rd floor (**D90 ST80**), well hidden and almost opposite the lift exit, but go right, left and then left again.

## Peter Jones

Sloane Square, SW1W 8EL Tel: 020 7730-3434

Textphone: 18001 + 020 7730 3434

website: [www.peterjones.co.uk](http://www.peterjones.co.uk)

customer services: 08456 049-049

Large John Lewis department store measuring about 100m long by 30m wide, with entrances on all sides. Most are step-free, including those from Sloane Square, Kings Road and Cadogan Gardens, but from Symons Street there are +2 steps. Most entrances have pairs of quite heavy double doors. Only the Kings Road entrance nearest Sloane Square has automatic doors.

**Peter Jones has exceptionally helpful information for disabled shoppers on its website** reached from the Home page, under Facilities and Catering on the side menu, then on the page headed Peter Jones Facilities, the fifth item is, Easier shopping for disabled customers. We summarise it here, because (compared with others) it's so good - providing a template for others to copy - BUT the page isn't easily found, even from the site Search facility.

**Help with your shopping** - just ask any of our staff, or contact our Personal Shopping Advisor in advance, on 020 7808-4201 or

*email:* PJ\_personal\_shopping@johnlewis.co.uk

**Telephone shopping** - Typetalk/Text Direct is available on 18001 + 020 7730 3434.

**Hearing loops** - please ask any of our staff for details about mobile hearing loops. Fixed loops are available at the Information Desk on the Ground floor and the Customer Service department on the Sixth floor.

**Accessible parking** - Kensington and Chelsea Council provides 2 spaces for BB holders in Cadogan Gardens, Kings Road end.

**Accessible toilets** - in the Basement, and on the Sixth floor near the restaurant.

**Accessible fitting rooms** - In Fashions, Lingerie and Menswear.

**Wheelchairs for loan** - For details please contact our Customer Collection Point on the Ground floor or ask any member of staff. To check availability please ring in advance.

**Wide access lifts** - available with access to all floors at the Sloane Square end of the shop.

**Public telephone at accessible height** - located at the Customer Collection Point on the Ground floor.

**Large print or audio tape** - please ask our staff if you need literature in alternative formats and we will do our best to provide it.

The store is huge, and spread over eight floors from the basement or LGF to the 6th floor.

Towards the Cadogan Gardens end there's a central open space with escalators going up in the middle, overlooked by surrounding balconies on each floor. There are two sets of lifts, both on the Kings Road side of the store. The first is more clearly visible, and from the Sloane Square entrance you'll find the four lifts (D135 W165 L145) on your left, just before the first Kings Road entrance. The second set of three lifts (D100 W115 L145) is more hidden, and they're alongside the other Kings Road entrance nearer to Cadogan Gardens. These do not go to the 6th floor.

The shop is step-free throughout.

There are **wheelchair toilets**:

- in the basement, using the Cadogan Gardens end lifts (**D90 ST100**) to the left coming out of the lifts
- on the 1st floor using the Sloane Square end lifts (**D85 ST80**) to the right coming out of the lifts
- on the 3rd floor to the right from the Sloane Square end lifts. In addition there's a parents room in the Nursery area with BCF, near the Cadogan Gardens end lifts

- on the 6th floor directly opposite the Sloane Square end lifts, (**D95 ST95**) with an inward opening door but a very large cubicle. There's a separate parents room with BCF nearby.

## Plaza

120 Oxford Street, W1D 1LT *Tel:* 020 7637-8811

*website:* [www.theplazaoxfordstreet.co.uk](http://www.theplazaoxfordstreet.co.uk)

A small shopping centre in the shell of an old department store called Bournes. Step-free but slightly sloped main entrance. On two floors. The lift (D80 W80 L120) is on the left side of the building, and gives access to the Food Court on the 1st floor. Only about 20% of the seating is step-free and the rest involves +2 steps. The **wheelchair toilet (D85 ST90 NKS)** and separate BCF are on the 1st floor. From the lift, turn left, then left again, and they're about 15m more on your left.

## Primark

499 Oxford Street, London W1C 2QQ *Tel:* 020 7495-0420

*website:* [www.primark.co.uk](http://www.primark.co.uk)

Primark's largest store, near Marble Arch and measuring approximately 80m by 30m, located on the corner with Park Street. Flat entrances. On two floors, with two lifts (D90 W110 L175) located centrally at the back of the store. One was out of service when we visited. The store is very crowded and busy. There are no toilets for shoppers.

## Selfridges

400 Oxford Street, W1A 1AB *Tel:* 0800 123-400

*website:* [www.selfridges.com](http://www.selfridges.com)

*e-mail:* [customerservices@selfridges.com](mailto:customerservices@selfridges.com)

One of London's biggest department stores. Each of the five floors measure roughly 180m by 80m. If you look up store location on the website you will find a good street plan for finding the CP and also the floor plans. Signage in the store is only moderately good, and is misleading in places. Copies of the floor plans are readily available, and although quite difficult to follow in any detail, they're better than nothing !

To get to the CP, use Wigmore Street, turn south into James Street, then right into Barrett Street, right again into Duke Street, then left into Edward Mews with the store on your left. Note that for the CP the Sat Nav code is W1U 1AT. Height restriction 2.3m. The CP is controlled by an attendant who will organise your parking when its busy, and BB holders can show their badge to enable their car to be parked conveniently. In 2011 the CP costs £7 for 2 hours and £23 for 8 hours, which is cheaper than other nearby CPs.

The seven storey CP has three lifts (D80 W130 L130) providing step-free access

to the shop from level G and level 3. Level 3, confusingly leads you to floor 2. There are entrances to the store on three sides, but the ones from Orchard Street are stepped (except into the Food Hall). There's a major difference in height/level between Orchard Street and the main GF. At the central entrance on Oxford Street there are revolving doors, but there are conventional doors W80 on either side to bypass these. Other entrances have conventional doors. From the Food Hall, entered step-free on the Orchard Street side of the store, there is a minimum of -10 steps to get to the main floor level. These can be bypassed by using a platform lift (W80 L100), but this isn't well signed. There's a split level on the main GF involving +3 and -3-3 steps, all of which are bypassed by nearby ramps.

The main way of getting from floor to floor is by using the many escalators. The store has only two lifts (D120 W190 L150) located in the centre and near the main Oxford Street entrance. When we visited, one was out of action, resulting in quite long waits.

The café by the food hall and the restaurant by Duke Street have stepped access. The other seven eating places have flat access.

There are **wheelchair toilets** (most of which have nearby BCF, and all are unisex):

- on the LGF by the womens toilet on the Duke Street side of the store (the mens there has +4 steps)
- on floor 1 by the mens
- on floor 2 near the CP exit
- on floor 3 near the lifts, just outside the womens, and,
- on floor 4 just outside the womens, and again, near the lifts.

The toilets on floor 2 were very busy when we visited, and the quietest one was that on floor 4, but that'll vary from day to day.

Immediately opposite Selfridges main entrance on Oxford Street is a 24-hour Tardis-type **wheelchair toilet (D70+ ST70+ NKS)**, at the end of Balderton Street.

## Victoria Place

115 Buckingham Palace Road, Ecclestone Bridge SW1W 9SJ

Tel: 020 7931-8811

*website:* [www.victoriaplaceshopping.com](http://www.victoriaplaceshopping.com) [not working when we went to press. We were told it was being revamped]

Two floors of shops and eating places built above Victoria Station with ramped access from Ecclestone Bridge Road. From the station there appears to be only escalator access, but there is a lift (D110 W150 L220) to the first floor from halfway down platforms 13/14 (for the Gatwick Express). The platforms are open, so just walk or wheel down. At the upper level, you come out alongside the taxi rank, and to get to the shops, go a little way back (about 25m) along the rank and there are some doors on your left leading into the shops area. On the

first floor, there's a good number of shops, virtually all with flat access. On the second floor there's a whole range of eating places including a number of fast food outlets, and a couple of restaurants. All have step-free access to some of their seating with movable chairs and tables. There are some places with high bar stools. On the 2nd floor, there's a **wheelchair toilet (D80 ST130 NKS)**. Access to the second level is normally by escalator, but there is a service lift (D75 W100 L150) available. Use the intercom button at the bottom of the escalators (on the left) to contact security, or ask any shopholder to get hold of someone for you, and you'll be escorted to and from the lift.

### Waterstones

82 Gower Street, WC1E 6EQ *Tel:* 0843 290-8351

*website:* [www.waterstones.com](http://www.waterstones.com)

*e-mail:* [enquiries@gowerst.waterstones.com](mailto:enquiries@gowerst.waterstones.com)

Europe's largest academic bookstore, located on the corner of Torrington Place. Two step-free entrances, and five floors of books. Two lifts (D80 W100 L135) one to the left of the Torrington Place entrance, and the other in the music section accessed from Gower Street. There's a café on the LGF, and there used to be an accessible toilet, but this has been taken out of use as it would have cost too much to refurbish.

### Waterstones

203-206 Piccadilly, W1J 9HD *Tel:* 020 7851-2400

*website:* [www.waterstones.com](http://www.waterstones.com)

A large bookshop located about 100m from Piccadilly Circus on the left, and past Eagle Place. At the entrance -5 steps are bypassed by a platform lift (D80 L120) to the right. On the GF there's a split level with -5 and a further -3 to the Jermyn Street entrance/exit. The -5 can be bypassed by using another platform lift, which also provides access to a small mezzanine.

All the other floors in the bookshop (floors 1 to 4) are accessed using the two central lifts (D75 W120 L140) from the GF. These provide the step-free link to the LGF with a café and a **wheelchair toilet** (which is protected by a keypad, so you'll need to get the number from a staff member).

The lifts also go to the 5th floor where there's a restaurant and bar, with a fine view from one end. There's another **wheelchair toilet (D80 ST100)** straight ahead from the lifts and just past the end of the bar on this floor.

### Whiteleys

151 Queensway, W2 4YN *Tel:* 020 7229-8844

*website:* [www.whiteleys.com](http://www.whiteleys.com)

*e-mail:* [info@whiteleys.com](mailto:info@whiteleys.com)

Shopping and eating centre on three floors built in the shell of a once famous department store. The complex covers an area of approximately 150m by 50m. It contains a modern eight screen cinema.

The CP is approached off Queensway from Redan Place, and has ten BB spaces near the two entrances on the second floor. In 2011 it cost £1.50/h, and as it's a surface CP, it can accommodate vehicles up to 2.7m high.

There are three entrances from Queensway:

- one segment of the curved entrance at the Porchester end is step-free
- the middle entrance (where the lifts are) is step-free, and
- at the Redan end there's at least +1 small step [7cm].

There's flat/lift (D105 W200 L115) access inside. Note that there's a separate lift down to M&S from the CP. The site plans are good, but quite difficult to see from a chair users eyeline.

Shops are on the GF and 1st floors, the cinemas and restaurants are on the 2nd floor, while the 3rd contains offices. There's an easyInternet café on the 2nd floor. There are **wheelchair cubicles (D90 ST90)** and BCF in both the mens and womens toilets on the 2nd floor at the Porchester end of the building (at the opposite end from the cinema).

## Whole Foods Market

The Barkers Building, 63-97 High Street Kensington, W8 5SE

*Tel:* 020 7368-4500

*website:* [www.wholefoodsmarket.com](http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com)

A huge market on two floors (GF/B), with a fascinating collection of cafés/bars on the 1st floor, housed in part of the old Barkers building. It measures about 40m by 50m and is located on the corner with Young Street.

It has a wide range of all kinds of organic and locally grown products, and the intention is to promote healthy eating. It had more than a hundred different olive oils - the largest collection that I've ever seen ! There was also a clear explanation of the outcomes for local communities in terms of health and education, from Fair Trade sales.

There are two lifts:

- a glass one (D90 W120 L300) near the centre of the store; and,
- an even larger one (D100 W200 L200) at the back.

The cafés/bars on the 1st floor have different styles, but all sell fast but wholesome food.

Much of the seating consists of high stools, but about 30% is at a conventional height with moveable chairs.

There are **wheelchair toilets:**

- on the GF at the back of the store, which includes BCF;
- on the 1st floor by the big lift at the back, where there are separate BCF in both the mens and womens areas.

## The two Westfield malls

Two particularly big shopping malls opened during 2011 on either side of London, both with Shopmobility schemes. These are Westfield London at



Shepherd's Bush in the west, and Westfield Stratford City next to the Olympic Park at Stratford, in the east. Both have good adjacent bus stations. The Stratford one is linked to the accessible DLR, to the Jubilee line with many accessible stations and to NR services. The Shepherds Bush one has an accessible Overground station (but with a big step off the train).

They are significant because of their size and relative accessibility.

## Westfield London

Ariel Way, Shepherd's Bush, W12 7GF Tel: 020 3371-2300

website: [www.uk.westfield.com/london](http://www.uk.westfield.com/london)

e-mail: [wlreception@westfield-uk.com](mailto:wlreception@westfield-uk.com)

The Westfield shopping centre at Shepherd's Bush is huge.

The centre lies between Wood Lane and the West Cross Route spur to the A40, and between Shepherd's Bush tube station (where there's a new bus station) and White City tube (which also has a new bus station).

The Overground station is accessible by lift, but using the tube station involves escalators. It is regrettable that when the station exit was rebuilt to face Westfield no provision was made to incorporate a lift - presumably on the grounds of cost. When using Satnav, enter the postcode W12 7SL. The CP is off Ariel Way which is a new road (and roundabout) linking to Wood Lane on one side to the dual carriageway spur West Cross Route on the other. The UGCP can take 4500 cars on three levels with a height restriction of 2.15m. If you come by car then go to the Middle CP, where the Shopmobility desk is in Lift Lobby 2 at the end of Aisle 50 with 30 BB spaces. There is a substantial number of BB spaces on all levels, and the vacant ones are indicated by blue LED signs. To obtain four hours of free parking, BB holders need to go past the Shopmobility desk and get their ticket processed and stamped (Mon-Fri only). Alternatively there is a drop-off point on Westfield Way.

The centre covers an area measuring something like 600m by 400m with shops on two levels. It has several major department stores including Debenhams, Marks & Spencer and House of Fraser. It also has a wide range of restaurants, of upmarket shops and a multiplex cinema (Vue). In the middle of the main block there's a huge Atrium.

From an access viewpoint it's necessary to understand where the main blocks of lifts are, and where they go. There are plans at various places, and you can ask for a paper copy of the map/plan from the information points, and from the valet parking spot in Lift lobby 1 on the Middle level CP. You can also get one at the Shopmobility desk.

The information about the centre on the web is minimal.

There are **six wheelchair toilets** together with BCF on each main floor, and a *Changing places* facility by the *Shopmobility* office.

## Westfield Stratford City

2 Stratford Place, Montfichet Road, Olympic Park, E20 1EJ Tel: 020 8221-7300

website: [www.uk.westfield.com](http://www.uk.westfield.com)

e-mail: [ukwscereception@westfield-uk.com](mailto:ukwscereception@westfield-uk.com)

The Westfield shopping centre at Stratford is huge, measuring some 300m by 400m. It is on the edge of the Olympic park, between Stratford Regional and Stratford International stations. It can be approached from the High Street side via a long pedestrian bridge over the railway lines. Lifts bypass the steps. From Stratford Regional station there are lifts to get directly to the shopping centre. The three CPs have a total capacity for 5000 cars. CP A with nine levels is entered from the A12 (follow the orange signs). It includes 14BB spaces near the Shopmobility office (at the John Lewis/Waitrose end of the centre). CP B is entered from the High Street and Warton Road, and CP C is entered from the A112.

The centre is on four floors, but slightly bizarrely, the elevated level you reach from the pedestrian bridge (over the railway) or from Stratford Regional station is called the LGF. The other floors are the GF, 1st and 2nd, with shops and eating places on most while the top floor has a multi-screen cinema with as many as 17 digital screens (contact Vue Tel: 08712 240240).

There are **wheelchair toilets** adjacent to the mens and womens toilets in three blocks on each floor (LGF, GF and 1st). There are *Changing places* toilets (NKS) in the middle of the avenue on the GF and 1st floors. If you need a key, contact a staff member.

The website makes almost no reference to 'access' issues.

## Shopmobility list

A Shopmobility scheme usually has an office with adjacent BB parking spaces, and offers manual wheelchairs which can be borrowed or hired. Most also have electric scooters which are particularly useful to elderly people who cannot walk very far, or who find that carrying things is difficult. Some schemes can provide volunteer escorts if necessary, some of whom are trained to guide people with visual impairments. All require registration with proof of identity documents, and for the scooters, some training is required before they can be used.

There may be an annual membership fee and/or a small hire charge each time their equipment is used.

Opening times are variable, and depend both on demand, and on the availability of staff. Opening is also dependent on the availability of volunteers, and of finance. Some schemes open every day, others open for perhaps two or three days a week.

They operate in areas where the local shopkeepers and/or shopping mall operators provide much of the funding. However the nature of the shopping centre can vary widely. For example:

- the Brent Cross centre is a separate ‘dedicated’ shopping mall, as are the two Westfield malls;
- in Ealing, the office is in a smallish covered mall while the main covered centre is across the road, and there’s a whole range of shops along various surrounding streets;
- in Hounslow, the *Shopmobility* facility is in a new block next to a large Asda supermarket. The main covered mall is in the Treaty Centre about 500m away, and there are other shops in the High Street and elsewhere;
- in South Wimbledon the ‘depot’ for administering the hire of chairs and scooters is opposite an industrial estate, and the shops on Merton High Street are some 500m away.

### *Shopmobility schemes*

We did a ring-around towards the end of 2011, and these were the ones we found and spoke to. Some of the numbers given will be where you can leave a message for them to ring back, if nobody is available to answer the phone at the time.

**Bexley Heath**, c/o The Bexley Accessible Transport Scheme  
The Mall Shopping Centre (BHS End), The Broadway (off Albion Road),  
DA6 7JJ *Tel:* 020 8301-5237

**Brent Cross**, Brent Cross Shopping Centre (by the North Circular Road),  
Prince Charles Drive, Hendon, NW4 3FP *Tel:* 020 8457-4070

**Bromley**, The Glades CP (off Kentish Way), level 1 section B,  
High Street, Bromley, BR1 1DN *Tel:* 020 8313-0031

**Camden**, Shopfront, 29a Pratt Street, NW1 0BG *Tel:* 020 7482-5503

**Croydon**, Whitgift CP (4th barrier along)  
Wellesley Road, Croydon, CR0 2AG *Tel:* 020 8688-7336

**Ealing**, Units 19-20, The Arcadia Centre  
Spring Bridge Road (off The Broadway), Ealing, W5 2ND *Tel:* 020 8579-1724

**Edmonton**, 4 Monmouth Road (end of Edmonton Green shopping centre),  
Edmonton, N9 0LS *Tel:* 020 8379-1193

**Enfield**, Enfield Civic Centre, Silver Street, EN1 3XY *Tel:* 020 8379-1193 (it’s a satellite scheme of Edmonton)

**Epsom and Ewell**, Ashley Centre CP, Ashley Avenue  
Epsom, KT18 5BY *Tel:* 01372 727-086

**Harrow and Wealdstone**, 37 St George’s Centre,  
St Ann’s Road, Harrow, HA1 1HS *Tel:* 020 8427-1200

**Hillingdon**, off Chippendale Way, in the CP on 2nd floor,  
Chimes Shopping Centre, Uxbridge, UB8 1GD *Tel:* 01895 271-510

**Hounslow**, Blenheim Centre, Prince Regent Road,  
Hounslow, TW3 1NL *Tel:* 020 8570-3343

Ilford, Redbridge Disability Association, Exchange CP, The Exchange Mall  
High Road, Ilford, IG1 1BY *Tel:* 020 847-6864

**Kensington and Chelsea**

Three days a week a truck with scooters will be at Queen's Gate, off Kensington Gore, near the Albert Memorial in Kensington Gardens. On the other days it will be based at Kensington Town Hall and Sutton Estate, Chelsea.

Office and storage at: Westway Community Transport, 240 Acklam Road, W10 5YG *Tel:* 020 8960-9020

**Kingston-on-Thames**, Eden Walk CP, Union Street, KT1 1BL

*Tel:* 020 8547-1255

**Lewisham**, Unit 46/46A, The Lewisham Centre

Lewisham, SE13 7EP BB Parking on Rennell Street *Tel:* 020 8297-2735

**Orpington**, operated by VTB Mobility Limited,

266 High Street, Orpington, BR6 0NB *Tel:* 01689 837-800

**South Wimbledon/Merton**, operated by Scootability

High Path Resource Centre, 63 High Path, SW19 2JY *Tel:* 020 8648-1001/7727

**Havering/Romford** has two *Shopmobility* schemes operating quite near each other in different shopping malls

*The Brewery*, 1 The Brewery, Waterloo Road, RM1 1AU *Tel:* 01708 722-570  
AND

*Liberty Shopping Centre*, RM1 3RL *Tel:* 01708 765-764

**Sutton** on Level 3 St Nicholas Centre CP

St Nicholas Way, Sutton, SM1 1AY *Tel:* 020 8770-0691

**Walthamstow** (CP off 45 Selborne Walk)

Selborne Walk Shopping Centre, Walthamstow, E17 7JR *Tel:* 020 8520-3366

**Wandsworth**, 45 Garratt Lane, SW18 4AD *Tel:* 020 8875-9585

**Westfield London, Shepherds Bush** (described above)

*Tel:* 020 3371-2401

**Westfield Stratford City** (described above)

*Tel:* 020 8221-7374