



# **Dr. Johnson's London: Coffee-Houses and Climbing Boys, Medicine, Toothpaste and Gin, Poverty and Press-Gangs, Freakshows and Female Education**

*Liza Picard*

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The practical realities of everyday life are rarely described in history books. To remedy this, and to satisfy her own curiosity about the lives of our ancestors, Liza Picard immersed herself in contemporary sources - diaries and journals, almanacs and newspapers, government papers and reports, advice books and memoirs - to examine the substance of life in mid-18th century London. The fascinating result of her research, *Dr. Johnson's London* introduces the reader to every facet of that period: from houses and gardens to transport and traffic; from occupations and work to pleasure and amusements; from health and medicine to sex, food, and fashion. Stops along the way focus on education, etiquette, public executions as popular entertainment, and a melange of other historical curiosities.

This book spans the period from 1740 to 1770--very much the city of Dr. Samuel Johnson, who published his great *Dictionary* in 1755. It starts when the gin craze was gaining ground and ends just before America ceased being a colony. In its enthralling review of an exhilarating era, *Dr. Johnson's London* brilliantly records the strangeness and individuality of the past--and continually reminds us of parallels with the present day.

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