



**Anna:** Hello, I'm Anna, and this is 'London Life'. In today's programme we hear an archive interview with Phyllis Pearsall who was born one hundred years ago in 1906 – she died in 1996. Phyllis is famous for researching and writing the first A-Z of London – which is a street by street map of London still used by millions of people today. During the research for her detailed map of London, Phyllis walked 3,000 miles along 23,000 streets in the capital. But why did she do this? Well in 1935 Phyllis was invited to a party in west London but was unable to find the house. So she decided to create a street map for London. She worked from a 'bedsit' in south west London – a bedsit is a small rented room which has a bed, table, chairs and somewhere to cook in it. She used to wake up every morning at half past five to walk the streets of London and she published the first A-Z of London in 1936. Listen now to an interview with Phyllis which was recorded in 1984 by Sue Macgregor. Did Phyllis enjoy doing all the research?

I walked down every long road in London and got to know London intimately. I loved it really because I met all sorts of people while I was doing it.

**Anna:** Phyllis says that she loved walking around London and got to know London "intimately" – by walking along every long road in the capital she acquired a very detailed and expert knowledge of London – an intimate knowledge of London. But was she able to do this accurately or were there sometimes some small mistakes?

Trafalgar Square just about got **left out**. Oh that was a little problem. I had all the card **indexes** – And I had some in shoboxes which I borrowed from friends who had a shoe shop and I pushed one of them out of the window – I had an office in High Holborn. And

fortunately the traffic lights were red – I **tore down** the stairs, **picked off** all the cards, **swept them off** the roofs of cars but of course I couldn't sweep them off the buses. And the buses went by and one of them aboard Trafalgar Square which I didn't find till the next edition.

**Anna:** Well we hear that on one occasion Trafalgar Square – one of the most famous squares in London - was “left out” of the A-Z– it was not included in one of the editions of the A-Z. And Phyllis goes on to explain why this happened. She says that she had some of the card indexes stored in a cardboard box. The card index showed the names of the streets organised in alphabetical order. And one day she accidentally knocked the box out of the window. Listen again to Phyllis and this time try to catch the three phrasal verbs she uses to describe how she rescued the card indexes which had fallen out of her office window.

Trafalgar Square just about got left out. Oh that was a little problem. I had all the card **indexes**. And I had some in **shoboxes** which I borrowed from friends who had a shoe shop and I pushed one of them out of the window – I had an office in High Holborn. And fortunately the traffic lights were red – I **tore down** the stairs, **picked off** all the cards, **swept them off** the roofs of cars but of course I couldn't sweep them off the buses. And the buses went by and one of them aboard Trafalgar Square which I didn't find until the next edition.

**Anna:** Well luckily for Phyllis the traffic lights were red which gave her more time to reach the streets. She “tore down” the stairs – or she ran down the stairs very quickly. She then “picked off” the cards – she picked up or removed the cards from the streets and “swept them off” the roofs of cars – she removed or picked them up from car roofs. So those were the three phrasal verbs: tear down, pick off and sweep off. Unfortunately Phyllis wasn't able to retrieve the index card for Trafalgar Square. It ended up on a bus and so Trafalgar Square didn't appear in that edition of the A-Z. Finally Phyllis tells a story about one of the mistakes made in the A-Z. Who rang her to complain about her map and why?

A lorry driver rang me up with a marvellous collection of **swear words** to say that I had put him into **cul de sac** and his lorry was too long to turn around in the cul de sac. Was he ringing you from the cul de sac? He was ringing me from the cul de sac – he'd managed to get into a house there . But I was very grateful for that information because often **on the spot** information does help us **to put it right** in the next edition.

**Anna:** Well Phyllis says that a lorry driver rang her to say that her directions had led him to drive his lorry into a cul de sac – a cul de sac is a short road which is blocked off at one end. He used “swear words,” rude or offensive words to describe how he was stuck in the cul de sac as his lorry was too long to turn around. Although he was obviously angry with Phyllis she says that she was happy to receive this information from someone who was “on the spot” – he was in the place where the event was happening. So once Phyllis had this on the spot information about the cul de sac she was able to “put it right” or correct it for next edition of the A-Z. Don't forget you're A-z next time you're in London. That's all from this edition of London Life