



# House of Spies: St Ermin's Hotel, the London Base of British Espionage

*Peter Matthews*

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St. Ermin's Hotel has been synonymous with British espionage since the 1930s, when the SIS (MI6) was situated nearby at 54 Broadway. Bristling with intelligence officers such as Ian Fleming and Noël Coward, the hotel was initially revealed by the notorious double agent Arthur Owens, code named SNOW, to be a covert base for the Secret Intelligence Service's Section D, before three gloomy private rooms on the third floor became the birthplace of Winston Churchill's SOE in the early days of World War II. During the late 1940s, the traitorous spies Kim Philby and Guy Burgess would hand over intelligence to their Russian counterparts when they regularly met in the hotel's Caxton Bar, while St. Ermin's proximity to government offices ensured its continued use by both domestic and foreign secret agents. This first book on the history of the hotel reveals the remarkable stories of the spies who met there and the secrets they were sharing.



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