

London Calling! November 2016



What a fantastic week we all had, organised so proficiently by Hilda. A week certainly at a pace to pack in as much as possible in and around our wonderful capital of London. I think most of us needed to put our feet up to recover, when we got home!!

Also notable was that these were a really great group of friendly ladies who were enthusiastic, energetic and certainly up for everything that Hilda had in store for us. Every single day was a highlight and had a 'wow' factor. Hilda managed to find things that even the London members had never visited.

Our first day based on the Thames was certainly a great team building day, as we all met at Deptford Creek to do a bit of mud larking (digging around in the low tide mud for treasures) and an interesting walk up this tributary to the Thames whilst learning about the history and conservation of this area. We even did a bit of fishing and caught small fish, leeches and shrimps. All this whilst wearing waders in the creek on a freezing cold November day. I found it fascinating that where we were standing would be under 12 feet of water in another 12 hours!! From walking in the Thames, we went to investigate the Thames Barrier and then went high over the river on the Emirates cable car at dusk, where we could see the city lights coming on and the first of the Guy Fawkes Night fireworks around the city – a magical experience. Our first day concluded with catching a clipper back into the City with Hilda giving us a very interesting and knowledgeable commentary about what we were passing.

Every single day was a highlight. We visited Bletchley Park where we learned all about the code breakers during the war. Chislehurst Caves – a labyrinth of tunnels with history going back to pre-Romans. The Kings Cross development and St Pancras coroner's court and graveyard, where we had a fascinating tour of the new and the old. A guided tour of the Dulwich Picture Gallery, followed by going into Dulwich College where we could view Shackleton's boat, the James Caird, which left us all in awe and feeling so privileged to have been able to view such an artefact.

Our guided tour of Highgate Cemetery was a fascinating insight into Victorian cemeteries and how it is now being kept up. A guided tour of the graffiti of Brixton was another day of learning about something new.

We visited two very interesting and atmospheric theatres (Pentameter and Wilson's Music Hall) for some top class evening entertainment.

The week ended for me with the Lord Mayor's Parade, evensong at St Pauls and fireworks over the Thames and finally the service of Remembrance on Whitehall. We ended our week together after much laughter, adventures, learning and fun, a tired but wholly happy group and more than grateful to Hilda for her ingenuity, organisation and passion in organising this amazing week. It could not have been better!!

