

Exploring London – Archive File of Group Visits

Here is a record of our Exploring London visits from November 2019 through until September 2020. For most recent visits and future plans, go to our [web page](#)

2019

October

The 9th was a busy day for Explorers! In the morning the first of two groups visited the Bloomsbury building of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, which celebrated the 120th anniversary of its foundation on 2 October. The photo shows the group meeting at the Keppel Street entrance, with Victoria Cranna from the Library and Archives, who led the tour. Brenda H has written a detailed report of this first visit [here](#); the visit was repeated on 14 October.



Then in the afternoon a small group of 'Explorers' and members of the Art in London group managed to visit the Hall of the Worshipful Company of Painter-Stainers, one of the oldest of the City of London's Livery Companies. The Hall is usually only open to the public on Open House Weekend and can't accommodate group tours so our group took advantage of an exhibition of Livery Company members' work to see inside. The current hall dates to 1961 and replaces one heavily damaged in 1941. We could see the Court Room (with original charters on the walls) and the Great Hall on the first floor with its fine stained glass windows. Paintings of, and by, Company members were on every wall, as might be expected. It's worth keeping an eye open for future exhibitions, and the next Open House Weekend to see inside [this](#) interesting building.

November



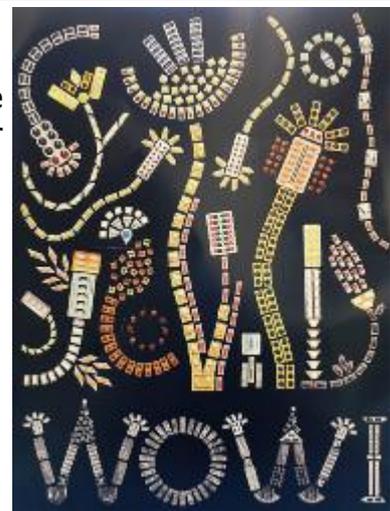
In November, Explorers had further opportunities to visit the premises of Hand & Lock on Margaret Street, W1. This company dates back to 1767 and specialises in exquisite embroidery for couture garments and uniforms. A report on the first visits in March are on the webpage, together with a blog written by fellow-Explorer Rachel. Two photographs, by Margaret V and Jean P taken in November,



show the Hand & Lock guide Rachel describing the history of the company and its work, and the view from the

workshop window along the streets north of Oxford Street, which used to be a thriving centre for the garment trade.

In **November** we visited the headquarters building of the **Royal College of General Practitioners** in Euston Square. Originally built in 1906-8 as the HQ of an insurance company, it has a faux Greek tiled entrance hall and a foyer which now includes a café which members of the public can use! They are hosting the WOWI (What Once Was Imagined) exhibition with 35 pieces of art scattered throughout the ground floor. Pharmacopoeia — a collaboration between artist Susie Freeman and GP Dr Liz Lee — is a unique blend of art and medicine and, while celebrating advances in treatment, also questions over-diagnosis and overprescribing. Topics such as mental health, antimicrobial resistance, chronic disease and contraception were explored. Our favourites were Cigarette Dress, Saved Pills, Armour, Sonia, and Cradle to Grave Pill Dot Diary Banners.



Within walking distance on Euston Road, we were taken to the **Elizabeth Garret Anderson Gallery** at the Unison building. The original entrance hall to the hospital has been restored to the original 1890 appearance and a second room — the gallery — has a domestic interior. Elizabeth Garret Anderson, born in 1836 in Whitechapel, went on to become the first female to gain a medical qualification in the UK (although she had to learn French and travel to Paris to gain her degree). She set up the London School of Medicine for Women where women could be treated by women. She was also a suffragette and in later life became Mayor of Aldeburgh. She died in 1917. This exhibition, which we thoroughly enjoyed, explores all aspects of her life through photographs, projections, video, sound and words. (Kate Wark)

December



Thanks to Explorer Norman W's invaluable connections with Goldsmiths' Hall, another small group of Explorers had a chance to join one of the Goldsmiths' Company's tours of their hall on Foster Lane in the City. The Goldsmiths' company received their first royal charter in 1327 and the hall is the third hall on the site, which the company has occupied since 1339. The current building was designed by Philip Hardwick and was carefully restored after damage during WW2. The opulent interiors were opened up for the tour — and some

members (though sadly, not Explorers) had the opportunity to try on company robes. Margaret V's photo, taken during the visit, shows the impressive staircase — dressed for the festive season!

2020

January

'Explorers' headed west to the museum quarter 'Albertopolis' and visited the Science Museum, where a new permanent gallery 'Science City 1550-1800' is giving a new aspect of London to explore and the temporary exhibition 'The Art of Innovation' was coming to the end of its run. Bob H's report [here](#) gives a view of the exhibition — the group are pictured outside — and explains that we took so much time in it that 'Science City' will have to wait for another visit!



Getting together for tea in January is now a tradition for the large 'Exploring London' Group, with a dual purpose, as the images show. It's the chance to talk together about what we've done in the past



year and exchange ideas about our next visits — and eat cake!

February



It was time for Exploring London's annual visit to Two Temple Place, to visit the impressive building and see the 2020 exhibition. Sourcing display items from regional collections and bringing them to London has been a *raison d'être* for the Two Temple Place exhibitions since the building opened to the public, with themes ranging from Cornish artists to John Ruskin, the Jazz Age to Ancient Egypt. This year the focus is on collectors of textiles: embroidery, costume, design and textile art — 'visionary women' indeed. Explorer Rachel wrote about one of the featured collectors in her blog [here](#). Read Liz's report on the visit [here](#).

March

A group of London Explorers met outside Whitechapel Art Gallery to join guide Rachel Kolsky for an exploration of East London, themed around 'Whitechapel Doorways'. Rachel is well-known for her popular walks in London and thanks to Judith Birch, who made all the arrangements, we had a private two hour tour with her. Little did we know that Covid19 would make this the last 'Exploring London' event for the time being; our scheduled visit to the Mansion House on 20 March was cancelled by the venue, and along with other iU3A groups, the rest of our programme has been suspended for the foreseeable future. But this last event has resulted in an excellent report, with lots of photos — read it [here](#)



April

No visits (Covid)

May

No visits (Covid)

June

No visits (Covid)

July



Derek Harwood led two small groups of Explorers following the 'Sculpture in the City' walking trail of art installations in the City of London. This group photo shows our socially distanced walkers on 19 July; Julie H and Jill L recorded their responses to the first Exploration on 05 July in their report [here](#), which is illustrated with photos by Jill and Derek.

August

Another step forward for 'Exploring London' as a small group of us went across the Thames to revisit the Garden Museum, in the church next to Lambeth Palace. The Museum was one of the first places in London to reopen this summer so it seemed appropriate that we braved August temperatures in the 90s, and made it our first visit to an 'indoor' venue. The Museum itself is always worth a visit, and the gardens were looking verdant and well-tended, but the primary reason for going this time was to see the temporary exhibition about Derek Jarman's house and garden in Dungeness called 'My garden's boundaries are the horizon' — and we saw this clever representation of Prospect Cottage as we went into the exhibition. The report [here](#) has several more photographs — including socially-distanced Explorers about to go into the Museum. We met up again outside for refreshments but forgot to photograph that!



September

No visits (Covid)

See next file for October 2020 onwards.