

Leisurely Walks (October 2022 to September 2023)

Here is a record of our leisurely walks in iU3A. There's a link to the detail of each walk at the end of each section. For more recent walks, go to our web page [here](#)

October

Hackney Wick to Victoria Park: on an overcast morning we set off from Highbury & Islington on the Overground to Hackney Wick. We crossed the A12 via the footbridge and entered Victoria Park via Cadogan Terrace. We enjoyed stops at The Old English Garden and the Burdett-Coutts Fountain and from there it was a short walk to the coffee stop at the Pavilion cafe overlooking the lake. After stopping to identify some of the bird life on the lake we made our way to the Canal Gate, where we briefly joined the cyclists and joggers on the canal path to Mare Street. From there it was a short walk to London Fields. By that time the sun had come out and it was quite warm. We had a short break sitting in front of the Flower Ladies and then made our way via the Lido to Hackney Town Hall where we got buses back to Islington.



November

Vauxhall and Westminster: On a squally November morning seven of us turned out for a walk around gardens and cafes in Vauxhall and Westminster. We hurried along the busy roads of Vauxhall and found a welcome side-turning away from the traffic fumes into Vauxhall Grove, where we meandered through a delightful little tree-lined enclave to Bonnington Square.

Bonnington Square garden has a small community garden with the seemingly ever-open Italo cafe, which serves mouthwatering Italian-inspired food and snacks, and excellent coffee. We stopped to refresh our taste buds and to enjoy the wintry sun, which filtered down through the trees. Then on, back across the busy roads to Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, a large green space boasting another new cafe, the Tea House Theatre.





This cafe offered an enticing display of cakes and tea and some of us bought a cake to take away for later. On we went and walked along the Albert Embankment as far as Lambeth Bridge and Westminster. But clouds caught up with us and the rain descended, so we took shelter in the Garden Museum, where there was a shop with unusual gifts for early Christmas presents and yet another cafe — this one offering tea, ginger biscuits and hazelnut brownies.

Anyone would think we did nothing but stop and eat in our journey across London, but the record showed that we had walked three miles, once we completed the final leg across Victoria Tower Gardens (site of the final bit of the queue for the recent lying in state of Queen Elizabeth II).

December

Gospel Oak to Kenwood: there were five of us for the walk in bright sun from Gospel Oak up to Kenwood and coffee in the Brew House. As the light was ideal for seeing the pictures three opted to spend a little time in the house whilst Cheryl and I, after a very short visit, followed the planned route back to Hampstead Heath station. Details [here](#).

January 2023



Crystal Palace Park: six Leisurely Walkers set out on a cold and frosty morning for Crystal Palace Park. It was a longish Overground journey but the carriage was warm and practically empty giving us the chance to catch up with friends. We started with a wander through the dinosaur area, which was enhanced by the frozen lakes and low sunshine. After a coffee stop we continued on a circuit of the park past the maze and the concert bowl to ascend the upper terraces with rather sunny but hazy views over South East London and the South Downs. Stopping to take photos in front of the recently restored sphinxes, we carried on further up to the site of Joseph Paxton's original Crystal Palace and the old walled garden. Then a downhill stroll ended back at the station cafe where some of us stayed for a quick lunch before our journeys home. Details [here](#).

February

Finsbury Park: this was a simple local walk from Highbury & Islington station. We started through Highbury Fields, passed the Emirates stadium (and its new large scale artwork) to the Ecological Centre in Gillespie Park and on to Finsbury Park. With half term on it was rather busy but the seven of us enjoyed a well-earned coffee in the sunshine with views down over the city. Some decided to walk back, others opted for the bus. Details [here](#).



March



Olympic Park: the weather was very pleasant on the day, cold but clear, just right for a Leisurely Walk. We looked at flats in the East Village (former Athletes Village) including Cavesson House with its imitation Parthenon reliefs. This housed the Greek Team during the Olympics. On to Chobham Manor, the first of the five legacy neighbourhoods, with the Sir Ludwig Gutman Health and Wellbeing Centre and a new school for 14-18-year-olds. Had coffee in the Veloparc. Good views of the park and of cyclists on the track inside. Crossed the River Lea to Here East, the former Media Centre, now an innovation centre and technology campus. Headed towards the Copper Box

past more new flats to the emerging East Bank to see the new V&A, London College of Fashion, BBC Music Studios, Sadler's Wells and UCL. The walk ended at the Aquatics Centre. Details [here](#).

April

Bethnal Green: on a sunny but nippy morning three of us met at Highbury & Islington station to take the Overground to Shoreditch High Street. Our walk took us through what, in the 1850s, was the worst slum in London but is now known as The Boundary Estate and is made up of 20 blocks of flats, each five storeys high and made of red brick. The Bandstand in Arnold Circus sits in the middle of the estate. From there we walked to Columbia Road and stopped to look at the railings on the Columbia Road school — these railings are all that remain of the original Columbia Road market which was opened in the 1860s. After a tour of the garden at Hackney City Farm and a coffee stop nearby we



headed towards Bethnal Green Road, stopping to admire the Queen Adelaide Dispensary and the remains of a Banksy, both in Pollard Row. Our walk continued along Bethnal Green Road to the memorial to the 173 people who died there in 1943 following a crush on the uneven steps down to the air raid shelter. We walked back through Weavers Fields, crossed Brick Lane and were soon back at Shoreditch. Details [here](#).

May



Brixton to Brockwell Park: on an unexpectedly sunny and warm day we strolled through lively Brixton, crossing Windrush Square and St Matthew's Churchyard to reach the peaceful Brixton Community Orchard. This green space in an urban area holds a variety of fruit trees, all in blossom that day. Carrying on across Rush Common to enter Brockwell Park we spent some time in the Walled Garden appreciating the variety of plants and flowers (see Frances under the wisteria-clad pergola). Walking up to Brockwell Hall to take in the views of the London skyline, we enjoyed a coffee break at the cafe, opting to sit in the shade before meandering down towards the Lido. Here we caught a glimpse of the swimmers enjoying the sunshine before catching the bus for the short journey back to Brixton station. Details [here](#).

June

Rotherhithe: this was a walk through Redriff from Surrey Quays, formerly Surrey Docks, to Rotherhithe. The route went alongside Greenland Dock then turned north through Russia Dock Woodland to Stave Hill and the Eco Park. It then turned east to join the Thames Path opposite Canary Wharf, which we then followed upstream to Rotherhithe. It was a hot day and numbers dropped off as the walk proceeded but two made it to the end. Details [here](#).

July

The City: this walk was a walk with a twist. We used the 'Sculpture in the City' trail visiting 16 sites to view the art. Apart from viewing and contemplating the sculptures, some of which we liked, some of which we weren't impressed by, we passed many of the 'Morph' installations and generally admired the city with its old and new architecture. We also went up the Sky Garden to take in great panoramic views of London. The 'Sculpture in the City' is available through the summer, more information [here](#).



August

Lesnes Abbey and Woods: Less than 10 minutes walk from Abbey Wood station on the Elizabeth line we entered Abbey Wood Park, taking a winding and undulating path past the dipping pond and around the ruined Abbey and the Monk's Garden. Passing the viewing platform, which framed views of the City skyline, we walked up through the ancient woodland — now a nature reserve. The woods were quiet and shady but rather steep in places, so we took time to stop and look at the Green Man and Lady of the Woods tree carvings. There was a light shower as we emerged down from the woods and queued at the outdoor cafe. Luckily, it did not last long and we were able to relax in the bright sunshine while sitting on the stone benches with our drinks overlooking the abbey ruins. We took a different route through the park back to the station with plans to visit again next spring at bluebell time. Details [here](#).

September 2023

Westminster to Vauxhall: this was a gardens and cafes walk. Three members enjoyed this walk and all enjoyed it. Details [here](#).