Photography Group update

The Photography Group has been in existence for nearly four years and we have been on thirty-four photographic outings. During this time, we have experienced all sorts of weather... very hot, very cold, windy and overcast but not, until our latest outing on 28th February have we had rain!

As we met at Covent Garden tube station there were a few spots of rain, so we decided to skip coffee and start our walk to try and get ahead of the inclement weather which was forecast for later that morning. Unfortunately, the weather forecasters had got it wrong and our entire walk was conducted in ‘on and off’ drizzly showers which was not very pleasant. Every so often, when the rain got too much, we looked for somewhere to have coffee but as soon as we found a suitable location the rain would stop. It would have been easier if the rain had been torrential, we could have simply packed up and gone home! However, we stuck at it and enjoyed (I think) an interesting walk around Covent Garden and the surrounding areas. Naturally, as we returned to Covent Garden at the end of the walk the sun finally put in an appearance.

In medieval times the site of Covent Garden belonged to Westminster Abbey but in the 1530’s the Abbey’s land fell into private hands and in particular the Duke of Bedford. Francis Russell, 4th Earl of Bedford, commissioned Inigo Jones to develop the land for residential purposes. During the early 1630’s Jones laid out the piazza and built fine townhouses on both sides. However, during the turmoil of the Civil War many of the wealthier inhabitants left the area for safer suburbs, notably Mayfair. The once elegant piazza began to deteriorate and became dominated by a sprawling vegetable, fruit and flower market which expanded greatly after Charles II granted a market charter to the Earl of Bedford in 1670. Over the next fifty years the market developed into London’s largest and most famous market while many of Jones’s elegant townhouses were converted into shops, brothels, gambling dens, Turkish baths and coffee houses!

The walk first took us to St Paul’s Church with its fine Tuscan portico, then through the piazza, past the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, the Freemasons Hall, The Royal Opera House and into Neal’s’ Yard.
One of the great things about walking around London with a camera is that you find the most surprising sights.