

The City at Christmas

On the afternoon of Friday 28 December 2018, a select band of intrepid adventurers from Out & About Group 5 set out by train to London.

Arriving at London Bridge station just as night fell we headed north across London Bridge pausing, together with a surprising number of foreign tourists and visitors to take in the view. To the south, the Shard plus other buildings suitably lit up for the holiday period, to the west, Tower Bridge and HMS Belfast and ahead of us to the north, the City of London with its many tower blocks. The most noticeable being Tower 42, because of the illuminated bright green Christmas tree.

Passing the Monument to the Great Fire of London of 1666, with its golden pinnacle of flames we made our way past the winner of the Carbuncle Cup for the worst new building in the UK 2015, The Walkie Talkie Building which contains the Sky Garden (well worth a visit).

Through the back streets and into a seasonally decorated Leadenhall Market, the origins of which date back to the 14th century. Exiting alongside the Lloyds Building (a Marmite building) which received Grade I listing in 2011 – the youngest building ever to be listed.

Standing on the corner of Lime Street & Leadenhall Street, facing St Andrew (Undershaft) which was built in 1532 in contrast to the Gherkin behind, slowly turn anti-clockwise 360° you view: The Leadenhall Building (the Cheese-grater), The Lloyds Building, The Walkie Talkie Building, The Willis Towers and The Scalpel.

Passing St Katherine Cree built 1630 we pass Holland House with art-deco interior which seems to be a bit of an enigma although Grade 2 listed. Ahead is 30 St Mary Axe better known as The Gherkin, in front of which is the Tomb of the Unknown Roman girl.

Passing St. Helen's Church, Bishopsgate which dates from the 12th Century dramatically contrasting with both the Gherkin in one direction and 22 Bishopsgate, the latest major commercial construction, set to stand 278 m (912 ft) tall with 62 storeys.

An easy crossing of Bishopsgate with minimal traffic, next stop is Tower 42 originally the Nat West Tower. From here we delve into more historic areas passing Austin Friars & Throgmorton Street, an old City of London Police Box down to Threadneedle St, the Royal Exchange, La Maternité former drinking fountain (Grade 2 listed) commissioned in 1878 by the Drapers and Merchant Taylors' Companies and the Cornhill Water Pump, the Bank of England and Mansion House.

Next we pass another Marmite building, the pink & buff striped wedge shaped structure that replaced the old Mappin & Webb building at the Bank junction of Poultry and Queen Victoria Street then onto Cheapside passing St Mary le Bow, rebuilt after the Great Fire of 1666 by Sir Christopher Wren. Entering One New Change and taking the glass lift ascending to the Roof with a view of St Paul's Cathedral, the Thames, South Bank, and west towards the London Eye and Houses of Parliament. Continuing past St Paul's heading south towards the Thames through various old lanes we come to Queen Victoria Street and our final goal, The Blackfriar public house for a well earned meal and refreshment before our journey home but not before a final look to the east from Blackfriars station platform!

With thanks to Peter Stroud & Ruth Evans for the pictures.

John Crippen, Group Leader, Out & About 5

Walk inspired from A London Inheritance - <http://alondoninheritance.com/london-photography/the-city-at-christmas/>