

Times Out 2026 Trip Reports

Theatre Royal, Windsor
Wednesday 4th February



On the evening of 4th February 13 of our members went to see Barnum at the Theatre Royal Windsor.

It is based on the life of the showman B.T. Barnum covering the period 1835 - 1880 wherever he took his performing companies.

B.T. Barnum was played by Lee Mead who actually walked the tightrope during the performance.

The show featured an ensemble of 20 actor-musicians playing 150 different instruments and was choreographed by Oti Mabusi.

The show was colourful and full of action with singing dancing and some very risqué acrobatics one of the best musicals we have seen and well recommended.

Brooklands Motoring and Aviation Museum Tuesday 3rd March

On a beautiful sunny day in March 5 of our group met at Brooklands Motoring and Aviation Museum. When we got there we went straight to the café for coffee and some had a bite to eat.

After that we wandered around the various parts of the museum that contained not only planes and cars but buses, motor cycle and cycles.

Some of us managed to have a go on the F1 simulator, a simulation of an F1 car going around Brooklands.

Getting into the car and having an exciting drive was the easy part, getting out of the car was a little more difficult.

Some of the group had a guided tour through the Concord aircraft that was on display there whilst others did some more wandering.



Sultan of Oman's Plane



Second class seats for the servants

A wonderful museum well worth a visit. A great day out and the weather made it even better.

Royal Ballet and Opera House, Covent Garden Wednesday 18th March



On another pleasant day out in March; 20 of our group went up to London by train and walked from Waterloo to the Royal Ballet and Opera House, Covent Garden just in time for refreshments before our tour.

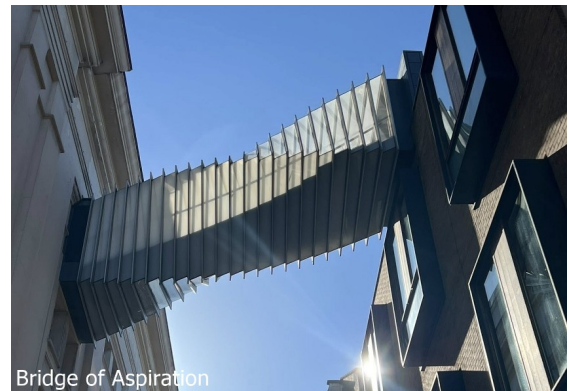
Our designated tour leader was not available so the guy who manages the tours took us round, he was excellent and very knowledgeable.

The tour started with a bit of history of the building and the Royal Ballet and Opera or RBO, as they are known. Next

we went up to the highest level, entered the auditorium and sat and listened to a bit of rehearsal of Rigoletto, a bit of one of the raunchy scenes. The sound of the unamplified voices was amazing even where we were sitting. This was due to the careful design of the building.

The next part of the tour took us to the bridge that joins the Opera House to the Royal Ballet School just across the road, the bridge is named “The Bridge of Aspiration”.

The bridge was quite an engineering feat; not only did it have to join the two buildings which were at different levels, it also had to obscure the view from the street looking up, obscure the view from the bridge to the neighbouring apartments and look good. You will see from the pictures that all these challenges were successfully overcome.



We went on across the bridge and through to the ballet school to see a ballerina practising.

Finally we visited the workshop where all the props were made. They were currently making quite a complex model of a donkey; until fairly recently a live donkey was used in the ballet “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” but all future performances will use this model (similar to the War Horse models).

What a very informative tour, highly recommended.

Bank of England and Museum of London Docklands Tuesday 24th April



On Tuesday 24th April 15 of our members went up to Waterloo by train and then took the Waterloo and City line to Bank, a short walk from the Bank of England Museum.

After passing security we split up and wandered through the museum; at some points a staff member gave a short talk on a particular part of the bank’s history.



Gold Bullion Reserves

Beneath the bank there is a vault with huge gold reserves, the bank store it there for other countries. Of course we had to have a go at lifting a gold bar which is deceptively heavy.

After this we took the Docklands Light Railway to Canary



A Bar of Gold

Wharf where we had lunch and then walked around the Museum of London Docklands. This is quite a small but interesting museum.



Docklands



Crossrail Place Roof Garden

As we have some time to spare we walked around Canary Wharf, the Crossrail roof garden and Jubilee Park, a quiet oasis in the bustle of the wharf.

Because we happened to coincide the trip with a London Underground strike we made our way home via London Overground to Clapham Junction and onwards to Bracknell.

Greenwich Maritime Museum and Observatory Wednesday 20th May



On Wednesday 20th May 6 of our members went up to Waterloo by train and then took the Thames Clipper from Embankment Pier to Greenwich; it took about an hour on the boat.

5 of us decided to splash out on a 1 hour guided tour around parts of the museum whilst the remaining 1 took the steep uphill path to the observatory.

The guided tour was excellent with a very knowledgeable guide.

Because we had spent an hour or so looking around before the tour we had had enough by the end so sat and had a cup of coffee before returning to Waterloo via the Thames clipper.

There is so much to do at Greenwich – Maritime Museum, special exhibits within the museum, the Observatory, the Cutty Sark plus some lovely walks. Maybe we should go again one day?



Maritime Museum Tour

Wokingham Theatre Charity Evening Wednesday 3rd June



On the evening of Wednesday 3rd June 26 of our members went to the Wokingham Theatre to see the play “Romantic Comedy” on the annual charity evening to support the Bracknell, Wokingham and Ascot branch of the Samaritans.

The play had just five main characters and the acting was excellent. As the title suggests the play was quite funny in parts especially the lead male character who certainly has a lot of lines to learn. Everyone we spoke to enjoyed the evening and we will surely go next year.

Our thanks to our member Barbara who arranged the tickets for us.

Longstock Park Water Gardens Thursday 16th July

For various reasons, the dry weather being one of them, only 2 people ended up going to these water gardens and they commented that the dry weather had taken its toll on the flowers. We will try to arrange it again for next year.

Wokingham Historic Walk Friday 14th August



On a bright, sunny August morning at 09:30 twelve of us started out from the Cantley Park car park to do a Blue Plaque and Mosaic walk of Wokingham town centre.

The walk was arranged and lead by Barbara, one of our members, and it took us up to and around the town looking at some of the more interesting buildings.



The old market town of Wokingham (originally called Oakingham) has a wealth of old and interesting buildings from 14th century cottages, 16th century Tudor school house to 20th century Electric Theatre which is now occupied by the Nationwide Building Society.



We also saw several of the 10 mosaics that are scattered around the town.

If you are interested in this fascinating little town you can find a lot more detailed information in the town's [Trail Leaflet](#).

Our thanks to Barbara Denyer for arranging the walk and giving us lots of interesting information at each stop we made.

Poppy Factory, Richmond Wednesday 9th September



On Wednesday 9th of September 20 of our members visited the Poppy Factory in Richmond.

We travelled on the 11:00 AM train from Bracknell and had a 20 minute walk from Richmond station to the factory.

We were given an introductory talk by a guide and watched a short film on the history of the site.

We had plenty of time to look at the displays and were invited to make two versions of the poppy; the regular poppy you buy each year and a more ornate one for use in the wreaths that they make there.

Nowadays the regular poppies are made by machine at another factory in Kent but all poppy wreaths are still made by hand in Richmond.



There were examples of all the Royal Wreaths and Armed Forces Wreaths on display (see bottom left picture for some of them).

We finished the tour by having tea and cake which were included in the price.



Some of the wreaths placed at the Cenotaph. The Blue one is S.A.S.



A wreath being made.



Queen Elizabeth II's wreath