

A Selection of Museums, Archives and Collections in Westminster

Alexander Fleming Laboratory Museum

Did you know?

Alexander Fleming, discoverer of penicillin, painted pictures using different coloured bacteria.

Photographs of these pictures are held at the Alexander Fleming Laboratory Museum.

Discover for yourself the secrets of this laboratory, reconstructed to show it as it was in 1928 when a chance observation led to the development of a lifesaving antibiotic that changed the world.

The Museum also offers a series of entertaining and informative illustrated lectures, which are available to be booked by outside venues and groups. Contact Trust Archivist & Alexander Fleming Laboratory Museum Curator on 020 3312 6528 or Kevin.Brown@imperial.nhs.uk

www.imperial.nhs.uk/aboutus/museumsandarchives/index.htm



Benjamin Franklin House

Did you know?

In 1761, from his lodgings in Craven Street, Benjamin Franklin invented a musical instrument named the Glass Armonica.

Inspired by the sound produced from sets of musical wine glasses, he devised an instrument consisting of 37 glass bowls mounted on an iron spindle.

The spindle would be operated by a foot pedal, which caused the bowls to rotate. The player would apply pressure to the rims of the bowls with wet hands to create music.

Among the earliest composers to write music for the Glass Armonica, were Gluck and Mozart.

A fully playable replica is held in the collection at Benjamin Franklin House, 36 Craven St, WC2N 5NF. This model has much smaller bowls and spins by electronic motor. Franklin, famous for his work on electricity, would no doubt have approved.

In the heart of London, just steps from Trafalgar Square, is the world's only remaining Franklin home: Benjamin Franklin House, now open to the public as a dynamic museum and educational facility.

www.benjaminfranklinhouse.org/site/sections/default.htm



BDA Museum

Did you know?

Toothpaste used to be made out of charcoal and brick dust and came in interesting flavours such as rose, carnation and tomato.

The historical collections tell the fascinating story of how people have - or haven't - looked after their teeth.

The Museum has 30,000 items in its care, and actively collects objects which reflect the development of the profession in the UK.

It also has an extensive collection of fine art depicting dentistry. Such drawings, cartoons, paintings, sculpture and woodcarvings are a valuable source of information about providers of dental care and different treatments for toothache

www.bda.org/museum



British Optical Association Museum

Did you know?

The first artificial eyes were made for the dead rather than the living, so that the owner could see in the next life.

Later, exactly the same technology was used to make prosthetic devices for people who had been injured in battle or disfigured by disease.



Some examples from Ancient Egypt are on show at The British Optical Association Museum at the College of Optometrists in Craven Street, the oldest and one of the best optical collections in the world.

The Public is welcome to visit the museum (by prior appointment) and tour its surprisingly varied collections, incorporating fine and decorative art, rare and unique objects, spectacles, lenses and scientific testing apparatus. In the meantime, we invite you to explore at:

www.college-optometrists.org/en/knowledge-centre/museyeum

Handel House Museum

Did you know?

Jimi Hendrix lived in the top floor flat of 23 Brook Street with his English girlfriend Kathy Etchingham in 1968.

The flat is now the administrative office of Handel House Museum, and opens to the public every year at Open House Weekend in September.

Handel House Museum, 25 Brook Street W1, was home to the great baroque composer George Frideric Handel from 1723 until his death in 1759. This landmark address is where Handel composed some of the greatest music in history, including Messiah, Zadok the Priest and Music for the Royal Fireworks.

The only composer museum in London, it celebrates Handel's life and works, by displaying portraits of Handel and his contemporaries in finely restored Georgian interiors and bringing live music back to his house.

www.handelhouse.org



Credit: Matthew Hollow

Institution of Civil Engineers

Did you know?

7th June 2011 marks the 250th anniversary of the birth of John Rennie, and a celebration of civil engineering magnificence.

Described by portrait painter Thomas Lawrence as "*Jupiter - for there never was a more magnificent head*" his civil engineering reputation today relies on the strength, durability and elegance of his bridges and the scale of his dock and harbour works, including Southwark Bridge, Waterloo Bridge, London Docks and Bell Rock Lighthouse.

The Institution of Civil Engineers, founded in 1818 with the aim to "*foster and promote the art and science of civil engineering*" is the oldest professional engineering Institution in the world.

During July and August ICE will be organising a number of events to commemorate Rennie: an exhibition, special journal issue and Lecture.

<http://www.ice.org.uk>



London Transport Museum

Did you know?

London Transport Museum provides opportunities for volunteers, work experience, work placements and internships. You will find more information at www.ltmuseum.co.uk/about-us/opportunities

Enjoy a lively programme of exhibitions, events and family activities to explore the history and future of transport in London.

Visit the interactive exhibitions and see the collections of posters, photographs and unique documentary films.

See the vehicles used by Londoners since 1800: from Sedan Chairs to the very first *TfL/Barclays Cycle for Hire*, number 00001.

www.ltmuseum.co.uk



The Museum of Soho

Did you know?

Soho was once a hunting cry, first recorded in the fifteenth century: "Sohoe, ye hare ys founde!"

This is a virtual museum, started c1990 by a group of amateurs, keen to preserve any material relating to the history of Soho.

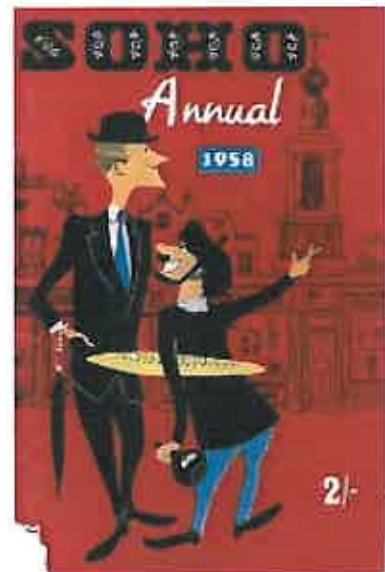
Our main objectives are:

- to create a safe haven for any artefacts and documents
- to ensure that these items are recorded professionally
- to create a database and locations guide for the whole collection
- to investigate digital media for future development of the museum

Explore the history, places and communities through the fascinating images and articles on www.themuseumofsoho.org.uk

What can you do?

mosoho is always looking for volunteers, so if you have a skill or free time to give, e-mail us at info@themuseumofsoho.org.uk



Parliamentary Archives

Did you know?

The longest Act of Parliament held in the Parliamentary Archives is the *Land Tax Act 1821*.

Made of 757 membranes of parchment, it is estimated to be 348 metres long, nearly a quarter of a mile, when unrolled.

The Act appointed commissioners to collect the Land Tax and contains approximately 65,000 names, the largest number of commissioners ever appointed.

The Parliamentary Archives holds the historic records of the House of Lords and House of Commons dating back to 1497. They are available via a public search room and enquiry service

<http://www.parliament.uk/archives>



The RIBA British Architectural Library

Did you know?

The RIBA Library is one of the most important architectural libraries in the world. Its books and periodicals are regarded as the national collection on architecture in the United Kingdom.

The Drawings Collection celebrates the achievements of British architects from the Renaissance to the present day with over 1 million drawings.

The Photographs Collection holds over 1.5 million images covering pre-history to the present, including related subjects such as interior design, topography, construction and planning.

The Library is open to all and admission is free.

www.architecture.com/LibraryDrawingsAndPhotographs/Home.aspx



Royal Academy of Music Museum

Did you know?

Each July a bronze bust of Sir Henry Wood, one of Britain's most famous conductors, is removed from its niche in the Duke's Hall of the Royal Academy of Music, and placed on the platform at the Royal Albert Hall.

It is garlanded with a chaplet of laurel and remains here throughout the *BBC Promenade Concerts*, in celebration of Sir Henry Wood's 50-year career as conductor of The Proms.

The Academy has completed the cataloguing and digitisation phases of the *Henry Wood scores project*.

Anyone with an interest in Sir Henry Wood can now explore his unique collection of scores and manuscripts through the online catalogues of the museum and library.

The museum and research centre is free of charge.

For opening times, please see www.ram.ac.uk/museum



Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

Did you know?

The *Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists* has agreed to maintain and manage the archive collections and library of the *Royal College of Midwives*, so these will once again be accessible to Members and researchers.

The RCOG has a long association with the RCM, and plans are afoot to use both **heritage collections** to demonstrate the life-saving changes which the two Royal Colleges have been instrumental in achieving since they were founded.

Contact: archives@rcog.org.uk or library@rcog.org.uk

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists heritage collections cover the development of women's health care over the past 500 years. The museum is open by appointment and includes the world's first obstetric forceps and texts and items charting events in this specialty.

The Library and Archive collections contain unique material relating to obstetrics and gynaecology and cover the important role of the College, since its foundation in 1929.

www.rcog.org.uk/what-we-do/information-services



Royal College of Surgeons of England

Did you know?

The Royal College of Surgeons of England **Museums and Archives** hold over 600 collections of deposited papers, photographs, sketches and lecture notes, as well as the College's own historical records.

Contact: archives@rcseng.ac.uk

The **Library and Surgical Information Services** contain over 9500 rare books as well as current texts. The subjects covered include anatomy, surgery, natural history, anthropology and midwifery.

Contact: library@rcseng.ac.uk or 0207 869 6555

<http://surgicat.rcseng.ac.uk>



Royal Institution of Great Britain - The Faraday Museum

Did you know?

The museum is also the site of Michael Faraday's original 1850s laboratory which you can visit for yourself.

The Royal Institution has been the home of scientific research and communication for over 200 years. Collections include the original apparatus, inventions and discoveries made in its laboratories by scientists such as Faraday and Humphry Davy whose work at the Ri play a key part in the development of the modern world, such as the first electric generator and the miners' safety lamp.

Entrance is free and interactive e-Guides are available www.rigb.org



Royal Opera House Collections

Did you know?

In the front of House areas, there are free exhibitions, usually open Monday to Friday 10.00am - 15.30pm, which celebrate the work of the Royal Opera House and commemorate key individuals and events.

Royal Opera House Collections record the history of The Royal Opera House with its resident companies, and the previous theatres that have stood on the site in Covent Garden since 1732.

The cafe and restaurant offer outstanding views of the Covent Garden Piazza, Westminster Cathedral, London Eye and many other landmarks.



Backstage tours are bookable at the Box Office: 020 7304 4000 to check front of House opening times.

www.rohcollections.org.uk

AIM25

Did you know?

AIM25 is a major project to provide electronic access to descriptions of archives in over one hundred higher education institutions, learned societies, cultural organisations and livery companies within the greater London area. Please visit www.aim25.ac.uk for more information.