

Institute of Physics

LONDON AND SOUTH EASTERN BRANCH REMS SECTION

U of H Ramblers City of London Walk 10th OCTOBER 2004

This visit has been organised by Ian Williams

Ian is planning an urban 'wander' starting from beneath the clock in Waterloo station at 1 p.m. Sunday 10 Oct. Ian plans to encompass new and old such as the pedestrian bridges, possibly the Tate Modern, Somerset House, City back alleys and yards on the way to Foster's 'Erotic Gherkin' and Paternoster Square.

Tate Modern stands at the heart of London, linked to St Paul's Cathedral by the new millennium footbridge. The building is a remarkable combination of the old and the new.

The original Bankside Power Station was designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott who was also the architect of Battersea Power Station, the Liverpool Anglican cathedral and the famous British red telephone box. The building consists of a brick-clad steel structure, constructed from more than 4.2 million bricks. It was recently in the press, when a cleaner threw away a transparent bin liner filled with waste paper which was part of a piece by the artist Gustav Metzger, included in the gallery's show *Art and The Sixties*.

Somerset House is a magnificent 18th century building, which houses the celebrated collections of the Courtauld Institute of Art, Gilbert Collection and Hermitage Rooms.

The Swiss Re Building at 30 Saint Mary Axe is nicknamed the "erotic gherkin". It is a new 41 storey high, round, tapered building designed by Lord Foster and has become an obvious part of the London skyline. It was built between 2000 - 2003 on the site of the Baltic Exchange (severely damaged by an IRA bomb in 1992) at a cost of about £150M. It is the second tallest structure in the City, after the NatWest tower - now named Tower 42. But Canary Wharf will remain the highest building on the London skyline.

Paternoster Square is home to a 23 metres high column. This is the largest free-standing monument, to be built in London in the last Century. At the top of the column there is an intricately carved corinthian capital. Nine months in the making, the capital started life as a 50 tonne block of Portland Combe field Whitbed stone. Trimmed down to 25 tonnes during the rough cut, the finished capital was whittled down to a mere 10 tonnes. The capital sits atop the shaft of the column which comprises five pieces of Portland each weighing six tonnes. This in turn sits on a base stone of about four tonnes. The whole column is mounted on a Portland limestone and De Lank granite water feature with eight water cascades, all produced at our workshop in Chichester. The main feature of the column is a 3 metre-high gold leafed copper urn with flamed finial which is illuminated at night by the latest fibre-optic lighting. Below the column there is a plant room housing the sophisticated pumps and filtration system for the cascade.

REMS members and their guests are invited to join in. Just turn up on the day.